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**Separation of Control and User Plane for Proxy Mobile IPv6
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Abstract

This document specifies a method to split the Control Plane (CP) and User Plane (UP) for a Proxy Mobile IPv6 based network infrastructure. Existing specifications allow a mobile access gateway (MAG) to separate its control and user plane using the Alternate Care of address mobility option for IPv6, or Alternate IPv4 Care of Address option for IPv4. However, the current specification does not provide any mechanism allowing the local mobility anchor (LMA) to perform an analogous functional split. To remedy that shortcoming, this document specifies a mobility option enabling a LMA to provide an alternate LMA address to be used for the bi-directional user plane traffic between the MAG and LMA. With this new option, a LMA will be able to use an IP address for its user plane which is different than the IP address used for the control plane.

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1. Introduction

A PMIPv6 infrastructure comprises two primary entities: LMA (local mobility anchor) and MAG (mobile access gateway). The interface between MAG and LMA consists of the control plane and user plane. The control plane is responsible for signaling messages between MAG and LMA such as the Proxy Binding Update (PBU) and Proxy Binding Acknowledgement (PBA) messages to establish a mobility binding. In addition, the control plane components in the MAG and LMA are also responsible for setting up and tearing down a bi-directional tunnel between the MAG and LMA. The user plane is used for carrying the mobile node's IP traffic between the MAG and the LMA over the bi-directional tunnel.

Widely deployed mobility management systems for wireless communications require separation of IP transport for forwarding user plane and control plane traffic. This separation offers more flexible deployment options for LMA and MAG entities in Proxy Mobile IPv6 as described in [[I-D.wakikawa-req-mobile-cp-separation](#)]. To meet this requirement, Proxy Mobile IPv6 (PMIPv6) requires that the control plane functions of the LMA to be addressable at a different IP address than the IP address assigned for the user plane. However, PMIPv6 does not currently specify a mechanism for allowing the LMA to separate the control plane from the user plane. The LMA is currently required to associate the IP address of the tunnel source with the target IP address for the control messages received from the MAG.

The control plane and user plane components (of the MAG and LMA) are typically co-located in the same physical entity. However, there are situations where it is desirable to have the control and user plane of the MAG and LMA in separate physical entities. For example, in a WLAN (Wireless LAN) network, it may be desirable to have the control plane component of the MAG reside on the Access Controller (also sometimes referred to as Wireless LAN Controller (WLC)) while the user plane component of the MAG resides on the WLAN Access Point. This enables all the control plane messages to the LMA to be centralized while the user plane would be distributed across the multiple Access Points. Similarly there is a need for either the control plane and user plane component of the LMA to be separated according to different scaling requirements, or in other cases the need to centralize the control plane in one geographical location while distributing the user plane component across multiple locations. For example, as illustrated in Figure 1, the LMA and MAG could have one control session established for PMIPv6 control signaling, while maintaining separate connectivity via GRE or IP-in-IP tunneling for forwarding user plane traffic.

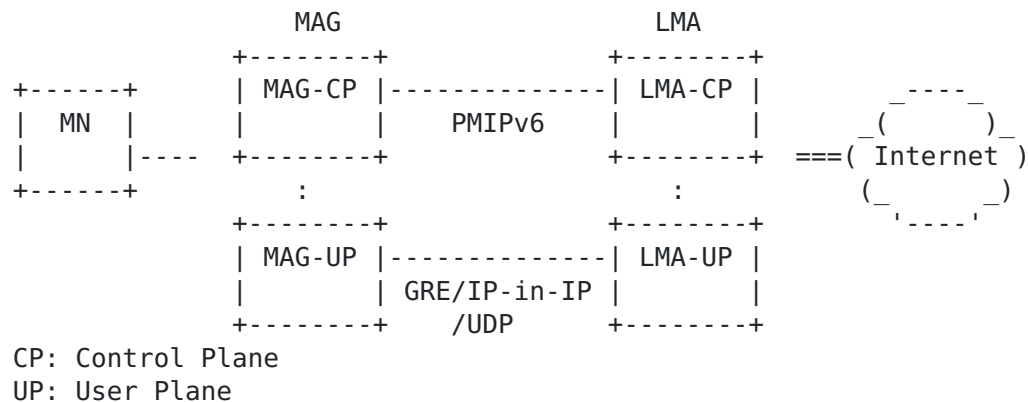


Figure 1: Functional Separation of the Control and User Plane

[RFC6463] and [RFC6275] enable separating the control and user plane in the MAG. In particular, [RFC6463] defines the Alternate IPv4 Proxy Care of Address Option, and [RFC6275] defines an Alternate Care of Address for IPv6 address. The MAG may provide an Alternate Care of Address in the PBU, and if the LMA supports this option then a bi-directional tunnel is setup between the LMA address and the MAG's alternate Care of address. However, these documents do not specify a corresponding option for the LMA to provide an alternate address to the MAG.

This specification therefore defines a new mobility option that enables a local mobility anchor to provide an alternate LMA address to be used for the bidirectional tunnel between the MAG and LMA as shown in Figure 1.

The LMA Control Plane and the LMA User Plane functions are typically deployed on the same IP node and in such scenario the interface between these functions is internal to the implementation. Deployments may also choose to deploy the LMA Control Plane and the LMA User Plane functions on separate IP nodes. In such deployment models, there needs to be a protocol interface between these two functions and which is outside the scope of this document. Possible options for such interface include OpenFlow [OpenFlow-Spec-v1.4.0], FORCES [RFC5810], use of routing infrastructure [I-D.matsushima-stateless-uplane-vepc] or vendor specific approaches. This specification does not mandate a specific protocol interface and views this interface as a generic interface relevant more broadly for many other protocol systems in addition to Proxy Mobile IPv6.

2. Conventions and Terminology

2.1. Conventions

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC 2119](#) [[RFC2119](#)].

2.2. Terminology

3GPP terms can be found in [[RFC6459](#)]. Other mobility related terms used in this document are to be interpreted as defined in [[RFC5213](#)] and [[RFC5844](#)]. Additionally, this document uses the following terms:

IP-in-IP

IP-within-IP encapsulation [[RFC2473](#)], [[RFC4213](#)]

GRE

Generic Routing Encapsulation [[RFC1701](#)]

UDP Encapsulation

Encapsulation mode based on UDP transport specified in [[RFC5844](#)]

LMA Control Plane Address (LMA-CPA)

The IP address on the LMA that is used for sending and receiving control plane traffic from the MAG.

LMA User Plane Address (LMA-UPA)

The IP address on the LMA that is used for sending and receiving user plane traffic from the MAG.

MAG Control Plane Address (MAG-CPA)

The IP address on the MAG that is used for sending and receiving control plane traffic from the LMA.

MAG User Plane Address (MAG-UPA)

The IP address on the MAG that is used for sending and receiving user plane traffic from the LMA. This address is also referred to as the Alternate Care of Address.

3. Additional Fields in Conceptual Data Structures

To support the capability specified in this document, the conceptual Binding Update List entry data structure maintained by the LMA and the MAG is extended with the following additional fields.

- o The IP address of the LMA that carries user plane traffic.
- o The IP address of the LMA that handles control plane traffic.

4. LMA User Plane Address Mobility Option

The LMA User Plane Address mobility option is a new mobility header option defined for use with PBU and PBA messages exchanged between the LMA and the MAG. This option is used for notifying the MAG about the LMA's user plane IPv6 or IPv4 address. There can be multiple instances of the LMA User Plane Address mobility option present in the message, one for IPv4 and the other for IPv6 transport.

The LMA User Plane Address mobility option has an alignment requirement of $8n+2$. Its format is as shown in Figure 2:

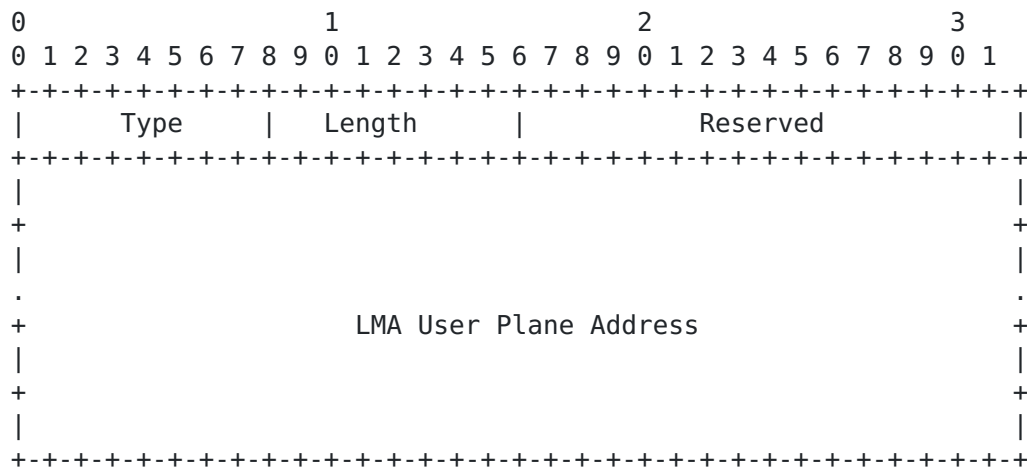


Figure 2: LMA User Plane Address option format

Type

<IANA-1> To be assigned by IANA.

Length

8-bit unsigned integer indicating the length of the option in octets, excluding the type and length fields.

Reserved

This field is unused in this specification. The value **MUST** be set to zero (0) by the sender and **MUST** be ignored by the receiver.

LMA User Plane Address

Contains the 32-bit IPv4 address, or the 128-bit IPv6 address of the LMA User plane. When the LMA User Plane Address Mobility option is included in a PBU message, this field can be a zero length field, or it can have a value of `ALL_ZERO`, with all bits in the 32-bit IPv4 address, or the 128-bit IPv6 address set to zero.

When including the LMA User Plane Address mobility option in the PBU, the MAG must apply the following rules:

- o When using IPv4 transport for the user-plane, the IP address field in the option can be either a zero-length field, or a 4-octet field with `ALL_ZERO` value.
- o When using IPv6 transport for the user-plane, the IP address field in the option can be either a zero-length field, or a 16-octet field with `ALL_ZERO` value.

When the LMA includes the LMA User Plane Address mobility option in the PBA, the IP address field in the option **MUST** be set to the LMA's IPv4 or IPv6 address carrying user-plane traffic.

- o When using IPv4 transport for the user-plane, the IP address field in the option **MUST** be the IPv4 address carrying user-plane traffic.
- o When using IPv6 transport for the user-plane, the IP address field in the option **MUST** be the IPv6 address carrying user-plane traffic.

The encapsulation mode that will be chosen for the user-plane between the MAG and the LMA has to be based on the considerations specified in [\[RFC5213\]](#) and [\[RFC5844\]](#).

5. Protocol Configuration Variable

This specification defines the following configuration variable, which must be configurable (e.g., by the system management) on the LMA and MAG mobility entities. The configured value for this protocol variable **MUST** survive server reboots and service restarts, and **MUST** be the same for every LMA and MAG in the network domain

supporting PMIPv6.

Domain-wide-LMA-UPA-Support

This variable indicates whether or not all the mobility entities in the PMIPv6 domain support the LMA User Plane Address mobility option.

When this variable on the MAG is set to zero (0), the MAG MUST indicate whether it supports this feature, by including the LMA User Plane Address mobility option in the PBU. If the option is not present in the PBU, the LMA SHALL disable this feature for the mobility session corresponding to the PBU.

Setting this variable to one (1) on the MAG indicates that there is domain-wide support for this feature and the MAG is not required to include the LMA User Plane Address mobility option in the PBA. In this case, the MAG MAY choose not to include the LMA User Plane Address mobility option in the PBU.

When this variable on the LMA is set to zero (0), the LMA MUST NOT include the LMA User Plane Address mobility option in the PBA, unless the MAG has indicated support for this feature by including the LMA User Plane Address mobility option in the PBU message.

Setting this variable to one (1) on the LMA indicates that there is domain-wide support for this feature and the LMA SHOULD choose to include this LMA User Plane Address mobility option in the PBA even if the option is not present in the PBU message.

On both the LMA and the MAG, the default value for this variable is zero (0). This implies that the default behavior of a MAG is to include this option in the PBU and the default behavior of a LMA is to include this option in a PBA only if the option is present in the PBU.

6. IANA Considerations

This document requires the following IANA actions.

- o Action-1: This specification defines a new mobility header option, LMA User Plane Address mobility option. The format of this option is described in [Section 4](#). The type value <IANA-1> for this mobility option is to be allocated from the Mobility Options registry at <<http://www.iana.org/assignments/mobility-parameters>>.

RFC Editor: Please replace <IANA-1> in [Section 4](#) with the assigned value and update this section accordingly.

7. Security Considerations

The LMA User Plane Address mobility option defined in this specification is for use in PBU and PBA messages. This option is carried like any other mobility header option as specified in [\[RFC5213\]](#). Therefore, it inherits security guidelines from [\[RFC5213\]](#).

The LMA-UPA address provided within the LMA User Plane Address mobility option MUST be a valid address under the administrative control associated with the LMA functional block.

If the LMA-UP and the LMA-CP functions are hosted in different entities, any control messages between these two entities containing the LMA User Plane Address mobility option MUST be protected by IPsec.

8. Acknowledgements

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