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SERIES A: ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF ITU-T

**Working procedures for the Special Study
Group on IMT-2000 and Beyond**

ITU-T Recommendation A.9

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Working procedures for the Special Study Group on IMT-2000 and Beyond

Summary

This Recommendation describes the specific working procedures for the Special Study Group (SSG) on IMT-2000 and Beyond that are modifications or enhancements to the working procedures applicable to all study groups including the SSG. These modifications and enhancements include regular reporting to TSAG, more specific requirements on supporting Questions, and reduced process requirements for physical meetings. One clause provides detailed procedures in support of organizing and conducting electronic meetings, and two appendices address practical aspects for optimizing the preparation and exchange of documents for electronic meetings.

Source

ITU-T Recommendation A.9 was approved by ITU-T Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (2001-2004) under the WTSA Resolution 1 on 14 November 2003.

FOREWORD

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency in the field of telecommunications. The ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) is a permanent organ of ITU. ITU-T is responsible for studying technical, operating and tariff questions and issuing Recommendations on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis.

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), which meets every four years, establishes the topics for study by the ITU-T study groups which, in turn, produce Recommendations on these topics.

The approval of ITU-T Recommendations is covered by the procedure laid down in WTSA Resolution 1.

In some areas of information technology which fall within ITU-T's purview, the necessary standards are prepared on a collaborative basis with ISO and IEC.

NOTE

In this Recommendation, the expression "Administration" is used for conciseness to indicate both a telecommunication administration and a recognized operating agency.

Compliance with this Recommendation is voluntary. However, the Recommendation may contain certain mandatory provisions (to ensure e.g. interoperability or applicability) and compliance with the Recommendation is achieved when all of these mandatory provisions are met. The words "shall" or some other obligatory language such as "must" and the negative equivalents are used to express requirements. The use of such words does not suggest that compliance with the Recommendation is required of any party.

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As of the date of approval of this Recommendation, ITU had not received notice of intellectual property, protected by patents, which may be required to implement this Recommendation. However, implementors are cautioned that this may not represent the latest information and are therefore strongly urged to consult the TSB patent database.

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ITU-T Recommendation A.9

Working procedures for the Special Study Group on IMT-2000 and Beyond

1 General

1.1 The working procedures described below are applicable only to the Special Study Group (SSG). On the points not explicitly referred to by this Recommendation, the working procedures that apply to other regular study groups shall apply.

1.2 The working procedures described here are intended to increase the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of the ITU to marketplace needs.

1.3 The working procedures described below shall take effect as soon as practicable in order to gain experience in their application. Additions or modifications to the working procedures proposed by this Special Study Group to TSAG and approved by TSAG shall be applied until the next WTSA.

2 Reporting to TSAG

2.1 The Special Study Group shall report on its activities and progress to each TSAG meeting, including indication of any Recommendations the Special Study Group has determined or consented, together with observations on its working procedures and their effectiveness.

3 Working procedures other than for approving Recommendations

3.1 The Special Study Group and its subgroups shall work electronically to the maximum extent possible, with paper copies of documents provided only on request. Participants should make use of the templates provided by the TSB to ensure compatibility of documentation for all participants. The Special Study Group should explore new electronic methods to test their effectiveness for conducting the work. In using these electronic methods, the ITU principles of openness and transparency shall be maintained to ensure full participation of the membership. Clause 5 provides procedures for electronic meetings.

3.2 The Special Study Group and its subgroups shall not be bound by 1.1.2/A.1 governing regular study groups concerning the frequency of physical meetings. The Special Study Group shall hold the minimum number of physical meetings necessary to meet its objectives in a timely manner. If it is necessary for more than one subgroup to hold a physical meeting, the dates and venue should be aligned as far as possible, to assist in the participation and coordination of the work.

3.3 Working parties, rapporteurs and other subgroup (e.g., editors) meetings in addition to those which have been approved at a full SSG meeting, may be held between SSG meetings on request of the working party chairman, rapporteur or subgroup leader in consultation with the Special Study Group management team and after confirming their approval by electronic means. A minimum of one month's notice to the SSG membership is required for all such additional meetings, whether physical, teleconference or electronic. The Working Methods Coordinator shall work closely with the TSB in order to optimize this process. Rapporteurs have the responsibility to announce such meetings of their groups to all SSG members using the e-mail reflector noted in 3.6.

3.4 In addition to physical meetings, subgroups of the Special Study Group, as much as possible, are encouraged to hold teleconferences and electronic meetings.

3.5 For study group or working party meetings, which are physical meetings convened by Collective Letter, documents must be submitted a minimum of five working days before the meeting starts.

For rapporteur meetings, conference calls, electronic meetings, etc., input documents or notice (title or subject) of input documents must be submitted a minimum of ten working days before the meeting starts in support of deciding whether to hold the meeting. The list of such planned contributions shall be posted on TIES as soon as practicable for the information of all members. The objective is to provide the input documents five working days before the meeting. These input documents shall be posted on TIES, irrespective of physical or non-physical meetings or meeting venue, and be accessible to all members.

The Working Methods Coordinator shall work closely with the TSB to ensure maximum accessibility and timely notice of electronic documents to all members of the SSG.

Where appropriate, the SSG shall use input documents types as used by other study groups.

Meeting reports must be made available quickly, with an objective of two weeks after the end of the meeting.

3.6 Meetings of the Special Study Group or a working party of the Special Study Group shall be announced through the usual collective letters issued for such meetings. Electronic reminders are not needed in this case.

For other subgroup meetings, whether teleconferences, electronic or physical, where such meetings were proposed and approved at a meeting of the SSG, electronic reminders are not required. For other subgroup meetings, whether teleconferences, electronic or physical, where such meetings were not proposed and approved at a meeting of the SSG, but were proposed and agreed per 3.3 above, notice shall be sent electronically one month before the meeting using a suitable e-mail reflector maintained by the TSB for the SSG. This electronic notification shall be carried out by the subgroup leader (e.g., the rapporteur for a rapporteurs meeting). The TSB shall post a notification for all meetings and provide a link to the relevant meeting logistics information in the "meeting schedule" web page of the SSG website, using information provided by the subgroup leader for teleconferences or electronic meetings, or by the host for physical meetings.

3.7 Proposed new Questions shall not be 'approved' by the study group at the meeting where they were drafted, unless there has been appropriate consultation on the proposed new Question before the study group meeting. The consultation should be transparent to all SSG members and allow review by Member States and Sector Members to occur before the study group considers the new Question. This is in accordance with Resolution 1, section 7.1.7.

Providing there is consensus on the proposals for modifications of existing Questions, such proposals may be approved at the meeting at which they are proposed.

To ensure transparency and open review of new Questions before they are submitted for approval, the Chairman of the Special Study Group shall notify SSG members using the SSG e-mail reflector if it is proposed to approve a new Question at the next study group meeting. The Chairman should ensure the text of the proposed new Question is distributed using the e-mail reflector at least two months before the study group meeting. A summary of the rationale for the proposed new Question should also be included.

Four members (Member States and Sector Members) should support a Question. Being listed as a supporting organization for Questions brings with it certain obligations. Examples of the obligations are included in Resolution 1, section 7.3.2. Supporting organizations should do at least one of the following:

- provide a rapporteur or editor for the work (not both from one organization);
- offer to host at least one meeting for the activity;
- commit resources to actively participate consistently in the studies under the Question, through the submission of contributions.

The type of support should be recorded with the supporting organization.

When less than four supporting organizations are identified for a proposed new Question, then that proposed Question shall not be studied, as this indicates insufficient interest by the membership of the ITU. This shall not exclude the study of the proposed new Question at a future time, when sufficient interest is demonstrated.

Providing there is consensus on the proposals for refinement of existing Questions, such proposals may be approved at the meeting at which they are proposed.

Active participation is needed to progress the work of Questions. Clause 1.4.3/A.1 deals with the deletion of Questions.

4 Output

4.1 The outputs of the Special Study Group shall be Recommendations. The Special Study Group shall apply approval procedures as in other study groups in the case of Recommendations.

4.2 The Special Study Group may also produce other forms of output as specified for other study groups, such as Implementors, Guides, Supplements, etc.

4.3 The Special Study Group may investigate alternative types of output of a lesser status than ITU-T Recommendations, e.g., normative technical specifications or interim Recommendations, and may make proposals for such types of output and associated approval procedures to TSAG to consider for approval.

5 Procedures for electronic meetings

5.1 General e-meeting requirements

Electronic rapporteurs, editors or other subgroup meetings (e-meetings) may be held. Study group and working party meetings shall be physical meetings. To facilitate progressing the SSG work and to minimize the cost (both monetary and time) associated with face-to-face meetings, electronic meetings are encouraged.

The decision whether to use an electronic meeting or some other form of meeting (face-to-face, conference call, etc.) should be made with due regard to the nature of the work to be undertaken and should be agreed by the group concerned.

No specific mechanism is prescribed for e-meetings. A variety of technologies and mechanisms may be adopted as available, subject to the needs of the meeting and compliance with the procedures in this Recommendation. However, no special requirements should be imposed on e-meeting participants other than having a suitable TIES account to enable access to the meeting documents, Internet access, and a browser or FTP client.

The terms of reference established for a specific e-meeting should be narrow and focused to minimize as far as possible the duration of the meeting and to maximize its efficiency. The terms of reference and dates for e-meetings should be agreed and advertised as for other SSG subgroup meetings.

E-meetings shall not overlap with face-to-face meetings in the SSG. E-meetings should not normally overlap with other e-meetings within the SSG. An effort should be made to avoid overlap with key meetings of related bodies.

As e-meetings taking place over several time zones may create difficulties in coordination of delegation positions, members must have ready on-line access to all e-meeting documentation (including material produced by drafting activity.) To this end, all e-meeting documentation must be hosted on TIES.

To avoid the potential of abortive work and mistaken perception of consensus, e-meetings should be scheduled to allow participants adequate time to analyse the results of the previous meeting and to

prepare and obtain approval of inputs for the next meeting. (Four weeks is the recommended minimum interval.)

To avoid the possibility of requiring work on "weekends" due to time zone differences, and to allow time for uploading contributions prior to the meeting, it is recommended that e-meetings either start on a Thursday and end on a Tuesday the second week following, or start on a Tuesday and end on the following Tuesday. This approach facilitates the coordinated establishment of meeting schedules within the study group.

5.2 E-meeting duration and schedule

The duration of e-meetings should not normally exceed 14 consecutive calendar days.

Due consideration shall be given to scheduling of the electronic discussions when e-meetings straddle weekends, noting the time zones for all the participants. Activities should be scheduled such that the discomfort or other difficulties associated with working outside normal working hours shall be shared as equitably as practicable across all the participants and all the regions involved. Formal interaction during "weekends" should be avoided. Real-time interactive activity should be limited to a maximum duration of two hours. Session start and stop times should be expressed in UTC as a common reference point which participants may use to determine local times for their own participation.

5.2.1 Preparation for the e-meeting

Successful e-meetings require that adequate planning and preparation be undertaken prior to each meeting.

All contributions to the meeting should be made available on TIES as indicated in 3.5. A drop box should be available for participants to upload documents for submission. Every effort should be made to minimize the volume of data to be downloaded. Suggestions for reducing the size of files to be downloaded are given in Appendix A.

As for other study group subgroup meetings, if the convener, in consultation with the SSG Chairman, considers that there are insufficient contributions to start the e-meeting, then the meeting shall be cancelled as indicated in 3.5.

The convener shall produce a list of delegates registered for the e-meeting, and ensure that all registered delegates are informed of appropriate access arrangements such as the TIES address for the e-meeting, usernames and passwords for discussion forum boards, use of drop box, etc.

The e-meeting participants shall sign in at the meeting to indicate their presence. The convenor shall produce a list of who signed in at the e-meeting in the meeting report.

To avoid unnecessary delays in distribution of documents created during the meeting (e.g., working documents and drafting material), and to provide full and unrestricted document access to all participants at all times, such documents should be made immediately available to all participants from TIES.

5.2.2 E-meeting conference calls

The e-meeting shall start with a conference call (maximum duration two hours) to agree, for example, on:

- the meeting agenda;
- allocation of contributions and working documents;
- the reaffirmation of the meeting's objectives;
- items of procedure (e.g., deadlines to complete specific activities during the meeting);
- any other urgent matters requiring real-time discussion.

Approximately halfway through the e-meeting, a conference call (checkpoint) may be arranged (maximum duration two hours) with the meeting participants. The purpose of this call is to briefly review progress so far and the organization for the remainder of the meeting.

The e-meeting may be closed by a conference call (maximum duration two hours) to agree on:

- the conclusions and agreements of the meeting;
- further work.

5.2.3 E-meeting documentation

All contributions to the meeting should be made available on TIES as indicated in 3.5. Documents generated during the meeting shall be made available to all participants in an expeditious manner with the assistance of the TSB, the e-meeting convener or other e-meeting participants who have write privileges on TIES.

All interim meeting documentation (including working draft material created at the request of the meeting chairman in the course of drafting activity) shall be "Working Documents" (WDs) which exist for the duration of the meeting only in accordance with normal ITU-T procedures.

5.2.4 E-meeting drafting activities

Establishment of drafting activities must be agreed by meeting participants. A leader of the drafting activity should be identified. Drafting activities should take place during the course of the e-meeting using any means agreed by those involved in the drafting activity. Results of a drafting activity are to be submitted for approval to the e-meeting before closure of the e-meeting. When a drafting group concludes its work and submits its results to the e-meeting for approval, that drafting activity ceases.

A suggested approach for e-mail activities as a means to conduct a drafting activity is given in Appendix B.

5.2.5 Conclusion of the meeting

The substance of the report shall be agreed before the conclusion of the meeting. The report of the meeting should be made available to the Special Study Group within a short time of the completion of the meeting, with an objective of one week after the end of the meeting. The availability of the report should be announced using a suitable e-mail reflector maintained by the TSB. It is the responsibility of the e-meeting convener to do this.

Appendix A

Suggestions for reducing the size of files to be downloaded

The following suggestions should be considered to assist delegates in minimizing the time and effort needed to download files for e-meetings:

- When using Microsoft Word, do not use the "Fast Save" option. This reduces file size by consolidating changes into the main part of the file instead of appending a list of changes to the text which are processed when the file is displayed.
- Manage Microsoft Word style sheets associated with a document to avoid style proliferation that may result from consolidating documents from multiple sources.

- When documents include diagrams that exist elsewhere and are unchanged, do not include them but insert a brief text reference to where the existing unchanged diagram may be found. This minimizes repetitive downloading of often significant data volume associated with diagrams.
- When diagrams or graphics need to be inserted, create the diagram or graphic in a separate file and then use "Insert/Picture/From File..." instead of "Edit/Copy" followed by "Edit/Paste" or "Edit/Paste Special...". The latter approach may result in file size changes on the order of ten times the size of the graphic compared to the former approach.
- Use ellipses (...) or other descriptive means to indicate skipped text to avoid repeating unchanged text when proposing text changes.
- Avoid including multiple proposals in one document; these should be handled in multiple documents in order to minimize the amount of information in each document and therefore to minimize the time needed to download any one document.
- Consider using commonly available compression tools to minimize the file size.
- When creating pdf files, select options to avoid unnecessarily high levels of resolution and the associated file size impacts from graphics included in these documents.

Appendix B

Suggested approach for e-mail activities as a means to conduct a drafting activity

Where drafting requires it, e-mail discussion may be held during the meeting; considering that all participants in the e-meeting agree. These e-mail discussions shall be open to all e-meeting participants, and be specific based on a single thread of discussion. The discussion thread shall be indicated at the beginning of the e-mail title, in the e-mail header, to allow ease of e-mail management and tracing of the discussion thread in common e-mail clients. The syntax of the discussion thread shall be indicated by [abcde] (where abcde = text string). The abcde text string discussion thread indicator shall be chosen by the e-meeting drafting activity contact point in liaison with the e-meeting chairman. The discussion thread shall be closed before the closure of the e-meeting drafting activity. The results of these e-mail activities shall report to the e-meeting drafting activity contact point.

Several discussion (more than one) threads may take place in one e-meeting drafting activity; however, these should be minimized as many threads will make participation very difficult and nearly impossible (the suggested limit is (X) where X = 5). It is not recommended to hold complete e-meetings (rapporteurs, working party or study group) by e-mail as the number of discussion threads will become too many and it will become extremely difficult to draw clear conclusions afterwards.

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