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SERIES A: ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF ITU-T

Focus groups: Working methods and procedures

ITU-T Recommendation A.7

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Source

ITU-T Recommendation A.7 was revised by ITU-T Telecommunications Standardization Advisory Group (2001-2004) and approved under the WTSA Resolution 1 procedure on 21 June 2002.

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.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

ITU draws attention to the possibility that the practice or implementation of this Recommendation may involve the use of a claimed Intellectual Property Right. ITU takes no position concerning the evidence, validity or applicability of claimed Intellectual Property Rights, whether asserted by ITU members or others outside of the Recommendation development process.

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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Focus groups: Working methods and procedures

1   Scope

The objective of focus groups is to help advance the work of the ITU-T parent study group and to encourage the participation of members of other standards organizations, including experts and individuals who may not be members of ITU. Procedures and working methods are established to facilitate the financing of focus groups, the completion of work on a well-defined topic and the documentation of the results.

The role of the parent study group is clearly defined, together with a checklist (see Annex A) which is to be used when determining whether or not to form a focus group.

2   Establishment, terms of reference and leadership

2.1   Establishment

A focus group may be established to help advance the work of ITU-T study groups.

A proposal, including terms of reference, to set up a focus group on a specific topic can come from study groups (initiated by ITU-T membership) or from TSAG.

A study group shall have the necessary authority to approve the formation of a focus group and becomes its parent study group. Criteria for establishing a focus group are summarized in Annex A.

The Director of TSB and the Chairman of TSAG shall be advised accordingly.

2.1.1   Initiation and establishment of focus groups to address technical issues between study group meetings

Exceptionally, in response to urgent marketplace needs, a focus group for the purpose of studying technical issues (i.e. those which have no regulatory or policy implications) may be established between study group meetings.

A proposal, including terms of reference, to set up a focus group on a specific technical topic (within the mandate of the parent study group) may be submitted by any member to a focus group review committee for their consideration. This review committee will consist of the parent study group leadership (chairmen/vice-chairmen/working party chairmen), the TSAG Chairman and the Director of TSB.

Following agreement by the review committee to initiate the focus group, the proposal will be posted on the ITU-T Web Site and the study group membership and other study group chairmen notified by e-mail. Following the posting, the focus group may proceed.

The establishment of the focus group shall be considered for approval by the next meeting of the study group.

2.2   Terms of reference

The specific topic for a particular focus group is to be well defined (prior to approval), and the terms of reference must include a plan of action with a clear indication of the expected deliverables and the time schedules for completion.

The relationship of this work to that of the parent study group must be indicated, in addition to relationships with other ITU study groups, standards organisations, forums and consortia, etc., and the degree of urgency of the specific topic.

It is intended that a focus group will complete its work in a short period of time, typically 9-12 months, following approval of its formation. In appropriate circumstances, and subject to a Study Group's review and approval, the term and scope of a Focus Group may be extended.

2.3 Leadership

A chairman and vice-chairman are initially appointed by the parent study group. If needed, after the initial formation of the focus group, subsequent management appointments will be made by the focus group.

3 Participation

Participation is open to any individual from a country which is a member of ITU who wishes to contribute to the work. This includes individuals who are also members of international, regional and national organizations.

Participation in focus groups should not be used as an alternative to ITU membership.

A list of participants is to be maintained for reference purposes.

4 General financing of focus groups

Each focus group will determine its own method of financing.

Focus groups will not draw on ITU-T funds or resources except for the use of TIES and for those situations where deliverables and progress reports are made available to ITU-T, as in clause 10.

Non-ITU members must pay a fee, determined by the TSB, for the use of TIES.

4.1 Financing of meetings

It is suggested that financing of meetings and their preparation be accomplished by volunteer hosting in a similar manner to rapporteur groups, or on the basis of financial arrangements determined by the focus group.

5 Administrative support

Focus groups can establish their own method of providing and financing administrative support between meetings.

Where administrative services are requested from TSB, the costs, except costs for the use of TIES, are to be covered by the focus group concerned.

6 Meeting logistics

The frequency and location of meetings is decided by each focus group. Electronic Document Handling methods should be used as much as possible to advance the work rapidly, e.g. by using electronic conferences, World Wide Web.

7 Working language

The language to be used will be mutually agreed by the focus group participants.

8 Technical contributions

Any participant may submit a technical contribution directly to the focus group in accordance with the time schedule adopted. Electronic document transfer methods should be used whenever possible.

9 Patent policy

The TSB patent policy shall be used.

10 Deliverables

Deliverables can be in the form of technical specifications, reports, etc. and are expected to form input to the work of the parent study group.

10.1 Approval of deliverables

Focus groups can establish their own rules of approval. However, it is expected generally that approval shall be obtained by consensus in which each focus group participant can express an opinion.

10.2 Printing and distribution of deliverables

Focus groups may select the method of printing and distribution of deliverables, including the target audience. Deliverables to the parent study group should be in the form of contributions.

The use of the World Wide Web is encouraged.

All costs must be covered by individual focus groups. ITU-T will not be expected to offer any printing and distribution services free of charge, except for progress reports submitted according to clause 11, and deliverables to study groups.

11 Progress reports

Focus group progress reports are to be provided to the parent study group meeting.

These progress reports to the parent study group should include the following information:

–   an updated work plan, including a schedule of planned meetings;
–   status of work with reference to the work plan, including a list of outputs and the study groups for which they are intended;
–   summary of contributions considered by the focus group;
–   list of attendees at all meetings held since the last progress report.

The parent study group chairman should keep TSAG advised of the progress of the focus group.

12 Meeting announcements

The formation of a focus group will be announced in co-operation with the parent study group and TSAG via ITU publications and other means, including communication with other organizations and/or experts, technical journals and the World Wide Web.

The process of announcing subsequent meetings can be decided by the focus group.

13 Working guidelines

Focus groups may develop additional internal working guidelines as required.

Annex A

Checklist criteria

The following checklist criteria are to be used as a guide by the parent study group when determining whether or not to form a focus group:

–   The output of the focus group will help advance (e.g. time and/or content) existing or planned work of an ITU-T study group;

–   A parent study group has been determined;

–   The focus group has clear terms of reference with defined deliverables and time schedule;

–   Deliverables are planned to be completed within the time period (generally 9-12 months) prior to the next parent study group meeting;

–   The focus group has a realistic plan for financing its activities, either through volunteer hosting, special funds, or a combination of both.

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