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SERIES A: ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF ITU-T

IETF and ITU-T collaboration guidelines

ITU-T A-series Recommendations – Supplement 3

Supplement 3 to ITU-T A-series Recommendations

IETF and ITU-T collaboration guidelines

Summary

This Supplement provides guidance to aid in the understanding of collaboration on standards development between ITU-T and the Internet Society (ISOC)/Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).

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

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As of the date of approval of this publication, ITU had not received notice of intellectual property, protected by patents, which may be required to implement this publication. 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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1   Scope

This Supplement provides guidance to aid in the understanding of collaboration on standards development between ITU-T and the Internet Society (ISOC)/Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).

In IETF, work is done in Working Groups (WG), mostly through open, public mailing lists rather than face-to-face meetings. WGs are organized into Areas, each Area being managed by two co-Area Directors. Collectively, the Area Directors comprise the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG).

In ITU-T, work is defined by study Questions which are worked on mostly through meetings led by Rapporteurs. Questions are generally grouped within Working Parties (WPs) led by a WP Chairman. Working Parties report to a parent Study Group led by an SG Chairman.

2   Introduction

The telecommunication industry is faced with an explosion in growth of the Internet and other IP (Internet Protocol) based networks. Operators, manufacturers and software/application providers alike are reconsidering their business directions and standards development organizations and forums and consortia are facing an immense challenge to address this situation.

These challenges were considered by TSAG in September 1998 and IETF shortly thereafter, when it was initially recognized that ITU-T and ISOC/IETF were already collaborating in a number of areas, and that this collaboration must be strengthened within the context of changes in work emphasis and direction within ITU-T on studies related to IP-based networks.

For example, many Study Groups already address aspects of IP-based networks. There are many topics of interest to ITU-T Study Groups in the IP area that should be investigated (e.g. signalling, routing, security, numbering and addressing, integrated management, performance, IP telecom interworking, access). Since many of these topics are also being investigated by IETF, there is a requirement for close collaboration.

The current level of cooperation between ITU-T and IETF should be built upon to ensure that the competence and experience of each organization is brought to bear in the most effective manner and in collaboration with the other.

This Supplement provides guidelines for collaboration between ITU-T and IETF.

3   Guidance on collaboration

This clause builds on existing collaborative processes, and details some of the more important guidance points that each organization should be aware of for effective collaboration.

3.1   How to interact on ITU-T or IETF work items

Study Groups that have identified work topics that are IP-related should evaluate the relationship with topics defined in IETF. Current IETF Working Groups and their charters (IETF definition of the scope of work) are listed in the IETF archives (see 3.5).

A Study Group may decide that development of a Recommendation on a particular topic may benefit from collaboration with IETF. The Study Group should identify this collaboration in its

work plan (specifically in that of each Question involved), describing the goal of the collaboration and its expected outcome.

An IETF Working Group should also evaluate and identify areas of relationship with ITU-T and document the collaboration with the ITU-T Study Group in its charter.

The following clauses outline a process that can be used to enable each group to learn about the other's new work items.

3.1.1   How ITU-T learns about existing IETF work items

The responsibility is on individual Study Groups to review the current IETF Working Groups to determine if there are any topics of mutual interest. Should a Study Group believe that there is an opportunity for collaboration on a topic of mutual interest, it should contact both the IETF Working Group Chair and the Area Director(s) responsible.

3.1.2   How ITU-T learns about proposed new IETF work items

IETF maintains a mailing list for the distribution of proposed new work items among standards development organizations. IETF forwards draft charters for all new and revised Working Groups and Birds Of a Feather session announcements to the IETF NewWork mailing list. An ITU-T mail exploder is subscribed to this list.

It is recommended that each Study Group subscribes to this ITU-T exploder, which is maintained by TSB. Members of the SG-specific listname may include the SG Chairman, SG Vice Chairmen, Working Party Chairmen, concerned Rapporteurs, other experts designated by the SG and the SG Counsellor. This will enable the SGs to monitor the new work items for possible overlap or interest to their Study Group. It is expected that this mailing list will see a few messages per month. Each SG Chairman, or designated representative, may provide comments on these charters by responding to the IESG mailing list at iesg@ietf.org clearly indicating their ITU-T position and the nature of their concern. Plain-text e-mail is preferred on the IESG mailing list.

It should be noted that the IETF turnaround time for new Working Group charters is two weeks. As a result, the mailing list should be consistently monitored.

3.1.3   How IETF learns about ITU-T work items

The ITU-T work programme is documented in the Questions of each Study Group. These can be found on the ITU-T website.

Study Groups should send updates to the IETF NewWork mailing list as they occur.

Area Directors or WG Chairs should provide comments to the relevant SG Chairman in cases of possible overlap of interest.

3.2   Representation

ISOC, including its standards body IETF, is a Sector Member of ITU-T. As a result, ISOC delegates are therefore afforded the same rights as other ITU-T Sector Members (see 3.2.1). Conversely, ITU-T delegates may participate in the work of IETF as representatives of ITU-T (see 3.2.2). To promote collaboration, it is useful to facilitate communication between the organizations as further described below.

3.2.1   IETF recognition at ITU-T

Participants from IETF may participate in ITU-T meetings as ISOC delegates if the appropriate IETF Working Group (or area) has approved their attendance. This approval will be communicated to TSB in the form of a registration for a particular ITU-T meeting by the Internet Architecture Board (IAB) Chair.

3.2.2 ITU-T recognition at ISOC/IETF

ITU-T Study Group Chairmen can authorize one or more members to attend an IETF meeting as an official ITU-T delegate speaking authoritatively on behalf of the Study Group (or a particular Rapporteur Group). The Study Group Chairman communicates the ITU-T list of delegates by e-mail to the Working Group Chair, with a copy to the Area Directors, and also to the Study Group.

Each ITU-T Study Group Chairman, or a designated representative, can attend IETF meetings with no meeting fee, due to the reciprocal membership agreement between ITU and ISOC.

3.2.3 Communication contacts

To foster ongoing communication between ITU-T and IETF, it is important to identify and establish contact points within each organization. Contact points may include:

1)   **ITU-T Study Group Chairman and IETF Area Director**

An IETF Area Director is the individual responsible for overseeing a major focus of activity with a scope similar to that of an ITU-T Study Group Chairman. These positions are both relatively long-term (lasting several years) and offer the stability of contact points between the two organizations for a given topic.

2)   **ITU-T Rapporteur and IETF Working Group Chair**

An IETF Working Group Chair is an individual who is assigned to lead the work on a specific task within one particular Area with a scope similar to that of an ITU-T Rapporteur. These positions are working positions (lasting a year or more) that typically end when the work on a specific topic ends. Collaboration here is very beneficial to ensure the actual work gets done.

3)   **Other contact points**

It may be beneficial to establish additional contact points for specific topics of mutual interest. These contact points should be established early in the work effort, and in some cases the contact point identified by each organization may be the same individual.

Note that the current IETF Area Directors and Working Group chairs can be found in the IETF Working Group charters. The current ITU-T Study Group Chairmen and Rapporteurs are listed on the ITU-T web page.

3.2.4 Communication

Informal communication between contact points and experts of both organizations is encouraged. However, note that formal communication from an ITU-T Study Group, Working Party or Rapporteur to an associated IETF contact point must be explicitly approved and identified as coming from the Study Group, Working Party or Rapporteur Group, respectively. Formal communication from ITU-T to IETF should be addressed to the appropriate Working Group Chairs and Area Directors with a copy to the e-mail address "statements@ietf.org". These communications are placed by IETF onto a statements liaison-web page at http://www.ietf.org/IESG/liaison.html. An individual at IETF is assigned responsibility for dealing with each communication that is received. The name and contact information of the responsible person is listed with the links to the communications on this web page.

Conversely, formal communication from an IETF Working Group or Area Director must also be explicitly approved and identified before forwarding to any ITU-T contact. This approval is indicated in IETF communication by copying the appropriate Working Group Chairs and Area Directors.

Formal communication is intended to allow the sharing of positions between IETF and ITU-T outside of actual documents (as described in 3.3). This would cover such things as comments on documents and requests for input. The approved communication is simply e-mailed from one body's contact point to another (the appropriate mailing lists, as described in 3.2.5, may be copied).

3.2.5 Mailing lists

All IETF Working Groups and all ITU-T Study Group Questions have associated mailing lists.

In IETF, the mailing list is the primary vehicle for discussion and decision-making. It is recommended the ITU-T experts interested in particular IETF Working Group topics subscribe to and participate in these lists. IETF WG mailing lists are open to all subscribers. The IETF Working Group mailing list subscription and archive information are noted in each Working Group's charter.

In ITU-T, TSB has set up formal mailing lists for Questions, Working Parties and other topics within Study Groups (more detail can be found on the ITU website). These mailing lists are typically used for discussion of ITU-T contributions. Note that individual subscribers to this list must be affiliated with an ITU-T member (at this time, there is no blanket inclusion of all IETF participants as members; however, as a member, ISOC may designate representatives to subscribe). Alternatively, ITU-T members operate personal mailing lists on various topics with no restrictions on membership (e.g. IETF participants are welcome).

3.3 Document sharing

During the course of ITU-T and IETF collaboration, it is important to share working drafts and documents among the technical working groups. Initial proposed concepts and specifications typically can be circulated by e-mail (often just repeating the concept and not including the details of the specification) on both the IETF and ITU-T mailing lists. In addition, working texts (or URLs) of draft Recommendations or RFCs (Internet Drafts) may also be sent between the organizations as described below.

Internet Drafts are available on the IETF website. ITU-T can make selected ITU-T documents available in a common FTP area on the ITU-T website.

Although a communication can point to a URL where a non-ASCII document (e.g. Word) can be downloaded, Word attachments to an IETF mailing list are discouraged. It should also be recognized that the official version of all IETF documents uses ASCII.

3.3.1 IETF to ITU-T

IETF documents (e.g. Internet Drafts) can be submitted to a Study Group as a Contribution from ISOC. In order to ensure that IETF has properly authorized this, the IETF Working Group must agree that the specific drafts are of mutual interest, that there is a benefit in forwarding them to ITU-T for review, comment and potential use and that the document status is accurately represented in the cover letter. Once agreed, the appropriate Area Directors would review the Working Group request and give approval. The contributions would then be forwarded (with the noted approval) to TSB for circulation as a Study Group Contribution (see 3.2.4).

3.3.2 ITU-T to IETF

A Study Group or Working Party may send texts of draft new or revised Recommendations, clearly indicating their status, to IETF as contributions in the form of Internet Drafts. Internet Drafts are IETF temporary documents that expire six months after being published. The Study Group or Working Party must decide that there is a benefit in forwarding them to IETF for review, comment and potential use. Terms of reference for Rapporteur Group meetings may authorize Rapporteur Groups to send working documents, in the form of Internet Drafts, to IETF.

In these cases, the document editor would be instructed to prepare the contribution in Internet Draft format (in ASCII and optionally postscript format as per RFC 2223) and submit it to the Internet

Draft editor (e-mail: internet-drafts@ietf.org). Alternatively, the Study Group, Working Party or Rapporteur Group could agree to post the document on a website and merely document its existence with a short Internet Draft that contains a summary and the document URL. The URL can point to a Word document as long as it is publicly available and with the understanding that it will not be able to be published as an RFC in that format.

Both the Rapporteur and the Document Editor should be identified as contacts in the contribution. The contribution must also clearly indicate that the Internet Draft is a working document of a particular ITU-T Study Group.

3.3.3 ITU-T and IETF

It is envisaged that the processes of 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 will often be used simultaneously by both an IETF Working Group and an ITU-T Study Group to collaborate on a topic of mutual interest.

It is also envisaged that the outcome of the collaboration will be the documentation in full by one body and its referencing by the other (see 3.4 for details). That is, common or joint text is discouraged because of the current differences in procedures for document approval and revision.

Where complementary work is being undertaken in both organizations that will result in Recommendations or RFCs, due allowance should be given to the differing perspectives, working methods, and procedures of the two organizations. That is, each organization should understand the other organization's procedures and strive to respect them in the collaboration.

3.4 Simple cross-referencing

ITU-T Rec. A.5 describes the process for including references to documents of other organizations in ITU-T Recommendations. Information specific to referencing IETF RFCs is found at http://www.itu.int/itudoc/itu-t/sdo/ref-a.5/isocietf.html.

IETF RFC 2026, specifically section 7.1.1, describes the process for referencing other open standards (like ITU-T Recommendations) in IETF RFCs.

3.5 Additional items

3.5.1 Several URLs to IETF procedures are provided here for information:

– IETF RFC 2223 – Instructions to RFC Authors, October 1997

   http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2223.txt

– IETF RFC 2026 – The Internet Standards Process – Revision 3, October 1996

   http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2026.txt

– IETF RFC 2418 – IETF Working Group Guidelines and Procedures, September 1998

   http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2418.txt

– Current list and status of all IETF RFCs:

   ftp://ftp.ietf.org/rfc/rfc-index.txt

– Current list and description of all IETF Internet Drafts:

   ftp://ftp.ietf.org/internet-drafts/1id-abstracts.txt

– Current list of IETF Working Groups and their charters (includes Area Directors and Chair contacts, mailing list information, etc.):

   http://www.ietf.org/html.charters/wg-dir.html

– RFC Editor pages about publishing RFCs:

   http://www.rfc-editor.org/howtopub.html

– Current list of liaisons:

http://www.ietf.org/IESG/liaison.html

– Intellectual Property Rights Notices:

http://www.ietf.org/ipr.html

3.5.2 Current ITU-T information can be found on the ITU website (includes contacts, organization, Recommendations for purchase, mailing list information, etc.):

– ITU-T main page:

http://www.itu.int/ITU-T

– List of all ITU-T Recommendations:

http://www.itu.int/publication/itu-t/

– ITU-T Study Group main page for Study Group NN (where NN is the 2-digit SG number):

http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/studygroups/comNN/index.html

– ITU-T Special Study Group on IMT-2000 and beyond:

http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/studygroups/ssg/index.html

– Intellectual property policies, forms and databases:

http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/dbase/patent/index.html

– ITU-T operational matters including:

• ITU-T Recommendation A.1 (2000), *Work methods for study groups of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T)*.

• ITU-T Recommendation A.2 (2000), *Presentation of contributions relative to the study of questions assigned to ITU-T*.

• ITU-T Recommendation A.4 (2002), *Communication process between ITU-T and forums and consortia*.

• ITU-T Recommendation A.5 (2001), *Generic procedures for including references to documents of other organizations in ITU-T Recommendations*.

• ITU-T Recommendation A.8 (2000), *Alternative/approval process for new and revised Recommendations*.

http://www.itu.int/itudoc/itu-t/rec/A

– ITU-T procedures including:

• Resolution 1 – Rules of procedure of the ITU-T Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T)

• Resolution 2 – Study Group responsibility and mandates

http://www.itu.int/itudoc/itu-t/wtsa-res/index.html

– Author's Guide for drafting ITU-T Recommendations:

http://www.itu.int/itudoc/itu-t/guide/64657.html

– Templates for contributions:

http://www.itu.int/itudoc/itu-t/com2/template/w2000tem/index.html

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