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Internet Engineering Task Force and International  
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Standardization Sector Collaboration Guidelines

Status of this Memo

This memo provides information for the Internet community. It does not specify an Internet standard of any kind. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

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Abstract

This document provides guidance to aid in the understanding of collaboration on standards development between the International Telecommunication Union -- Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) and the Internet Society (ISOC) / Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). It is an update of and obsoletes RFC 2436. The updates reflect changes in the IETF and ITU-T since RFC 2436 was written. The bulk of this document is common text with ITU-T Supplement 3 to the ITU-T A-Series Recommendations.

Note: This was approved by ITU-T TSAG on 30 November 2001 as a Supplement to the ITU-T A-Series of Recommendations (will be numbered as A-Series Supplement 3).

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## 1. Scope

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

In the 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 the 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 a 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 the 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 the 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., signaling, routing, security, numbering & addressing, integrated management, performance, IP - telecom interworking, access). Since many of these topics are also being investigated by the IETF, there is a requirement for close collaboration.

The current level of cooperation between the ITU-T and the 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 document provides guidelines for collaboration between the ITU-T and the IETF.

### 3. Guidance on Collaboration

This section 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 the IETF. Current IETF Working Groups and their charters (IETF definition of the scope of work) are listed in the IETF archives (see section 3.5).

A Study Group may decide that development of a Recommendation on a particular topic may benefit from collaboration with the 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 the ITU-T and document the collaboration with the ITU-T Study Group in its charter. The following sections outline a process that can be used to enable each group to learn about the other's new work items.

##### 3.1.1 How the 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 the ITU-T learns about proposed new IETF work items

The IETF maintains a mailing list for the distribution of proposed new work items among standards development organizations. The 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 subscribe to this ITU-T exploder,

which is maintained by the 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 Counselor. 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](mailto:iesg@ietf.org) clearly indicating their ITU-T position and the nature of their concern. Plain-text email 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 the 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 web site.

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 or interest.

## 3.2 Representation

ISOC, including its standards body IETF, is a Sector Member of the 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 the IETF as representatives of the 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 the 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 the TSB in the form of a registration for a particular ITU-T meeting by the 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 activities of the Study Group (or a

particular Rapporteur Group). The Study Group Chairman sends the ITU-T list of delegates by email to the Working Group chair, with a copy to the Area Directors, and also to the Study Group. Note that, according to IETF process, opinions expressed by any such delegate are given equal weight with opinions expressed by other working group participants.

### 3.2.3 Communication Contacts

To foster ongoing communication between the 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 (of 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 (of 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 the ITU-T to the IETF should be addressed to the appropriate Working Group Chairs and Area Directors with a copy to the email address "statements@ietf.org." These communications are placed by the IETF onto a liaison statements web page at <http://www.ietf.org/IESG/liaison.html>. An individual at the 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 the IETF and the 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 emailed from one body contact 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 the IETF, the mailing list is the primary vehicle for discussion and decision-making. It is recommended that 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 the ITU-T, the 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. Initially proposed concepts and specifications typically can be circulated by email (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, Internet Drafts or RFCs may also be sent between the organizations as described below.

Internet Drafts are available on the IETF web site. The ITU-T can make selected ITU-T documents available in a common FTP area on the ITU-T web site. 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 are in 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 [RFC2223]) and submit it to the Internet Draft editor (email [internet-drafts@ietf.org](mailto:internet-drafts@ietf.org)). Alternatively, the

Study Group, Working Party or Rapporteur Group could agree to post the document on a web site 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 eligible for publication 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 & IETF

It is envisaged that the processes of 3.3.1 & 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 section 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 Recommendation 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 RFC2026, 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:

RFC2223 - Instructions to RFC Authors, October 1997  
<http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2223.txt>



RFC2026 - The Internet Standards Process Revision 3, October 1996  
<http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2026.txt>

RFC2418 - 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/lid-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 liaison statements:  
<http://www.ietf.org/IESG/liaison.html>

IETF 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 info, etc.)

ITU-T Main page: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-T>

List of all ITU-T Recommendations:  
<http://www.itu.int/publibase/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:

- Recommendation A.1 - Study Group work methods
- Recommendation A.2 - Preparation of written contributions
- Recommendation A.4 - Communication process between ITU-T and forums and consortia
- Recommendation A.5 - Include reference to documents of other organizations in ITU-T Recs
- Recommendation A.8 - Alternative Approval Process for Recommendations: <http://www.itu.int/itudoc/itu-t/rec/A>

ITU T Procedures including:

- Resolution 1 - Rules of Procedure for ITU-T
- Resolution 2 - Study Group responsibility and mandates

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

Authors 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>

#### 4. Security Considerations

Documents that describe cooperation procedures, like this one does, have no direct Internet security implications.

#### 5. Non-normative references

[RFC2026] Bradner, S, " The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3", BCP 9, RFC 2026, October 1996.

[RFC2223] Postel, J. and J. Reynolds, "Instructions to RFC Authors", RFC 2223, October 1997.

[RFC2436] Brett, R., Bradner, S. and G. Parsons, "Collaboration between ISOC/IETF and ITU-T", RFC 2436, October 1998.

#### 6. Acknowledgements

This document is based on the text from RFC 2436 and benefited greatly from discussions during the November 2001 ITU-T TSAG meeting.

#### 7. Changes since RFC 2436

The wording has been cleaned up in a number of places, a few additional references have been provided, and the details of the cooperation process have been modified slightly.

- Sec 3.2.1 - Registration for IETF representatives to ITU-T meetings is now done by IAB Chair instead of the ISOC VP for Standards.
- Sec 3.2.2 - Notice of ITU-T delegates to IETF Working Group meetings is now sent to the Working Group chairs and appropriate Area Directors instead of the ISOC VP for Standards.
- Sec 3.2.4 - Official communications from the ITU-T to the IETF now are sent to the appropriate Working Group Chairs and Area Directors with a copy to the email address "statements@ietf.org" instead of to the ISOC VP for Standards. A description of the new IETF liaison statements web page was added. Official approval of messages from the IETF to the ITU-T is now indicated by having the appropriate Working Group Chairs and Area Directors copied on the message.
- Sec 3.3 - A description of the new ITU-T common FTP area was added.
- Sec 3.3.1 - The appropriate Area Directors now review documents to be sent to the ITU-T instead of the ISOC VP for Standards.
- Annex A was removed as unneeded.

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