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1 Introduction

The support to 3GPP is provided by a 3GPP support team which is an integral part of the ETSI Mobile Competence Centre (MCC) which created in March 1999. Since the support services required by both 3GPP and ETSI SMG are very closely related, MCC now provides the support services required by both of these bodies.

The 3GPP Project Co-ordination Group (PCG) is responsible for the overall management of 3GPP support services and a progress report will be provided to PCG on a quarterly basis. However, the day to day support services provided by MCC are under the technical direction of the TSGs and TSG SA therefore also provides a convenient place for MCC to report.

2 Organization

The internal organization of MCC is illustrated in figure 1. The allocation of available resources is still in the process of being agreed with the TSG Chairmen and to some extent this process will continue for several months. The main reason for this delay is that the existing personnel are overburdened and additional resources are being sought to correct this. As additional resources become available, the allocation of tasks will be reviewed to ensure maximum efficiency.

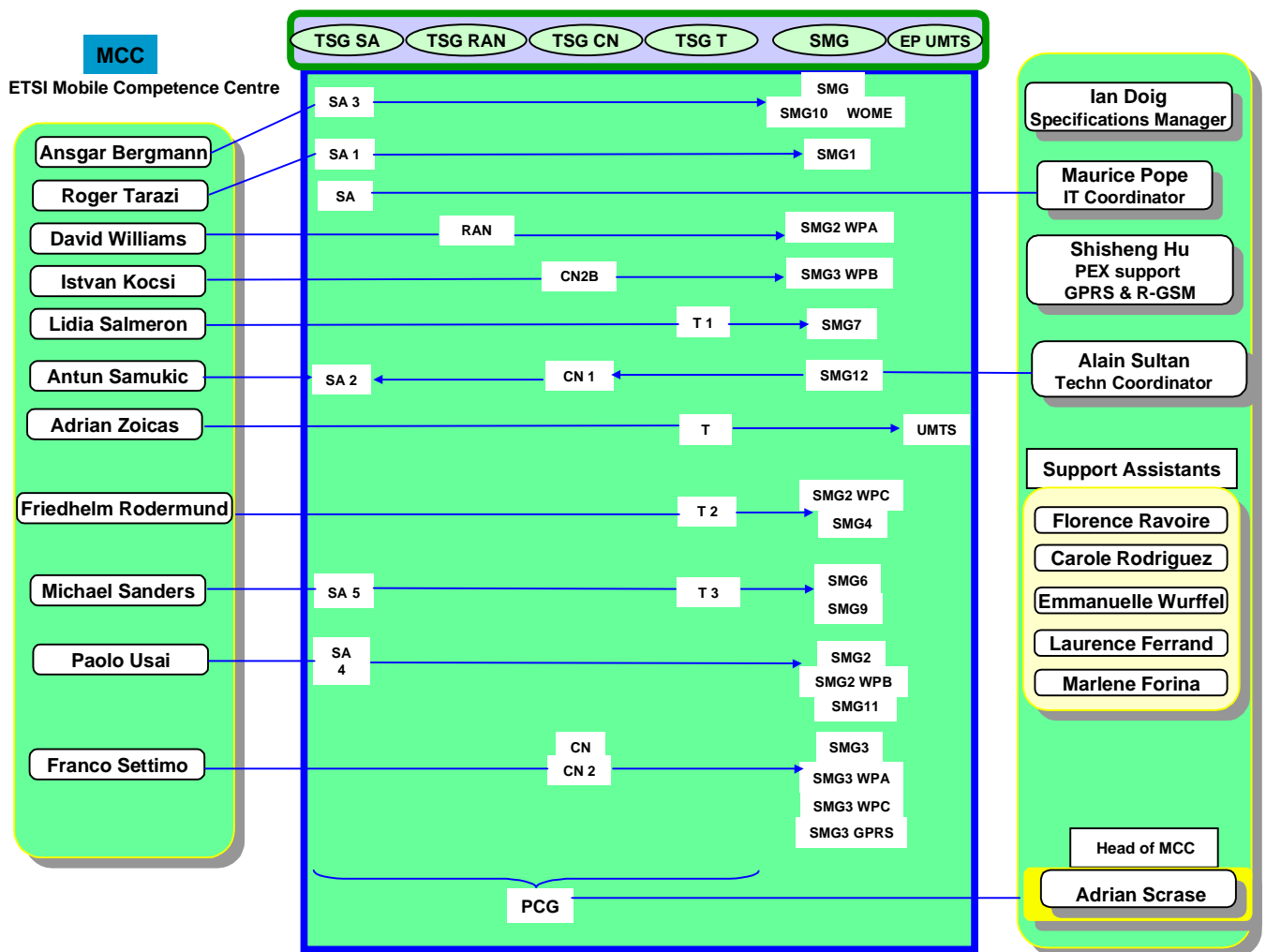
Figure 1 shows that in most cases the Support Officers are allocated both a 3GPP and related SMG support task. The work taking place in the related bodies is very similar in nature and due to this similarity the related groups often hold co-located or joint meetings. The use of the same Support Officer for these related bodies seems a natural choice, improves technical consistency and provides maximum efficiency.

The personnel within MCC are provided by the 3GPP Organizational Partners. ETSI currently provides personnel both from the staff complement of the ETSI Secretariat and from ETSI Members who provide their experts under contract. Other Organizational Partners are in the process of providing experts to take part in these activities.

Within MCC the following tasks have been defined: Support Officers, Technical Co-ordinator, Specifications Manager, Support Assistant, and IT Co-ordinator. The personnel undertaking these tasks work under the technical direction of the TSG Chairmen and under the day to day management of the Head of MCC. Formal task descriptions have been prepared and these are currently being considered by the TSG Chairmen. A brief illustration of what these tasks entail is provided below for the information of TSG SA.

2.1 Support Officers

The Support Officers provide the core support to the TSGs and their Working Groups. They attend meetings of their groups where they prepare document lists, meeting reports, manage work items, edit specifications under change control and generally support the relevant chairpersons by undertaking delegated tasks. The Support Officers are also responsible for implementing approved change requests and for providing the resulting new working versions of specifications to the standardization group experts. In effect, the Support Officer services all of the day to day needs of his group and is the person to whom the Individual Member should look to if they require information or assistance.



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Figure 1 Current allocation of resources within MCC

2.2 Technical Co-ordinator

TSG SA has the responsibility for project co-ordination within 3GPP. This is described in the terms of reference agreed at TSG-SA#1. The key objectives of the project co-ordination role in TSG SA are to ensure that the work in all four TSGs is co-ordinated, to ensure that there is no overlap of work, that there are no gaps between the activities of the TSG, that the work in each TSG is consistent with the requirements of other TSGs, and that dependencies and links between the work in different TSGs are identified. TSG SA is also responsible for the tracking of progress and to ensure that the work programme as a whole is on target (this function being delegated to TSG SA by the PCG). The main task of the technical Co-ordinator is to assist TSG SA in carrying out these tasks and to collect and maintain the detailed schedule of work items across all TSGs. This includes the tracking of dependencies and identification of any issues relating to progress for discussion and resolution at TSG-SA.

The current assumption is that the Support Officer allocated to SA2 and SMG12 is best placed to perform the Technical Co-ordination role since these two bodies provide the best overview of the specification activities being undertaken both in SMG and in 3GPP. However, it is not yet clear how much support TSG SA will require in performing the Technical Co-ordination role and consideration will be given to providing dedicated resources for this work if that is required.

2.3 Specifications Manager

The management of the specifications being produced by 3GPP/SMG will become increasingly complex and a task of high priority for MCC is to ensure that the exact status of every specification is known and clearly recorded at all times. A dedicated Specifications Manager has been defined to perform this task. The Specifications Manager will also be

responsible for identifying Specification "Release packages" and for the overall management of the 3GPP Work Programme data bases including the management of the 3GPP/SMG Change Request data base.

The maintenance of the 3GPP Working Methods documentation has been assigned to MCC and the Specifications Manager will lead this work. He will also be responsible for training new personnel in the application of the working methods.

2.4 Support Assistants

The Support Assistants perform all of the back office functions required for the efficient running of MCC. Their duties range from providing administrative support during TSG meetings to maintaining the 3GPP web site. They take care of the 3GPP email exploder lists, make travel arrangements, process timesheets and generally assist the Support Officers in the day to day work. Each Support Assistant has been assigned tasks for which they are primarily responsible as well as those for which they provide back-up in cases of absence.

2.5 IT Co ordinator

From the outset, 3GPP declared their intent to use modern electronic working methods within their standardization activities and already the dissemination of documentation is mainly performed in electronic media only. The task of the IT co-ordinator is to ensure that the IT requirements of MCC are collected and addressed in a co-ordinated manner and to ensure that appropriate tools are provided where necessary. Included in this task is the co-ordination of field trials being undertaken with the use of wireline/wireless LANs and flash memory cards during meetings. The task is not expected to occupy a great deal of time but is nevertheless important if improvements are to be made in electronic working methods.

2.6 Head of MCC

The Head of MCC is responsible for the overall management of day to day operations including the management of financial and human resources. The allocation of tasks is performed in conjunction with the relevant Chairmen. The Head of MCC is also responsible for preparing an annual budget forecast, for identifying sources of funding, and for preparing quarterly reports to the 3GPP PCG.

3 Quality

MCC is included within the quality system of the ETSI Secretariat and as such must meet the requirements of ISO 9002. A quality documentation system is nearing completion which is in the form of an Intranet accessible by all personnel. Although MCC was only created on 8 March it has already been subjected to an external quality audit as part of the continuous assessment of the ETSI Secretariat compliance with ISO 9002. MCC met the requirements of the external audit although a more thorough audit is expected later this year.

4 Prioritization of MCC tasks

The tasks to be performed by MCC have already been prioritized, recognising that there will always be a greater demand for support than can be serviced.

The following list is a reproduction of the priorities which have been set:

- Produce clean updated versions of the Specifications and to make them available as soon as possible after the TSG meetings This enables WGs to continue to work and produce Change Requests on correct clean versions. Note that this implies that if meeting support is required, then WG/SWG/WP meetings should not normally be planned directly after the TSG meetings (minimum 2 weeks).
- Provide strict version control management of specifications under change control.
- Produce a Status list following TSG SA meetings.
- Provide meeting support in the following priority order, however, where resource is limited, priority should be given to support of meetings that are expected to have a high output (Specifications/CRs etc.)
 - i) Provide support to TSGs (including provision of Secretary function).
 - ii) Provide support to TSG WGs (including provision of Secretary function).
 - iii) Provide support to the TSG SWGs/WPs (including provision of Secretary function).

5 Resources

Figure 1 shows clearly that there is still a lack of human resources within MCC and that certain groups receive no dedicated

support at present. A call for experts has been made by ETSI and the shortlisted candidates will be interviewed on 5 July with the likelihood that those successful will commence work by the end of August. However, the candidates show a clear emphasis towards the CN area and there are not many candidates demonstrating RAN experience. There may still be a shortfall in expertise available to support TSG RAN and this matter will need to be addressed during the next meeting of the PCG. It is still not clear what human resources will be provided by the other 3GPP Organizational Partners although some firm commitments have been received. One expert will arrive to work in MCC in the near future from ARIB, to be joined by one expert from TTA.

ETSI has underwritten the MCC running costs for 1999 to enable 3GPP to make rapid progress, although it is hoped that other Organizational Partners will provide contributions. Whilst financial matters are the responsibility of the PCG it may be of interest to TSG SA to know that the labour costs alone for providing MCC support to 3GPP/SMG are in the order of 200 kEuros (approx 200 kUSD) per month.

6 Outlook for 1999

The outlook for the remainder of 1999 is promising. A concerted effort will be made during the Summer months to train the new personnel in order that they may rapidly become efficient in their work. The predictions derived from the 3GPP work programme indicate that there will be a large increase in work towards the end of 1999 and measures are being taken to prepare for this.

7 Forecast for 2000

The PCG will need to address the resource requirements for the year 2000 during the Autumn months based on a budget forecast prepared by MCC. It is important that the TSGs provide a clear indication of their support requirements for the year 2000 so that an accurate assessment of the resource requirements can be made. It is expected that the TSG support requirements will change with time, especially as more 3GPP specifications come under change control and a contingency will be built into the 2000 budget to cater for these fluctuations.

8 Meeting expectations

MCC must meet the expectations of the TSGs and in the first instance this is achieved by regular dialogue with the Chairmen. However, an open invitation is extended to all 3GPP Individual Members to communicate directly with MCC should they wish to comment (both good or bad) on any of the support services provided. Contact details are provided below for your convenience.

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