
Source: Siemens, T-Mobile, Vodafone

Title: 3GPP Rel 7 time frame

Document for: Discussion

Agenda Item: 9. Project Management

Summary

Purpose of this document is to promote that 3GPP Rel 7 confines the “*approximately annual Releases*” principle of TR21.900. One means to assure that is to get a consensus that the highly important work items paving the way to the mid-term future (UTRA evolution, All-IP, ...) shall not define the critical path of Rel 7 time frame.

Discussion

It seems industry consensus that the 2,5 years period of Rel 6 (counting the December 04 freezing) is a too long period to introduce innovations to the GSM/UMTS system. This resulted in several problems, one being that no urgency of progressing work was perceived or that at a late stage work should be still included in Rel 6. The reasons were manifold, including the telecom winter, insecurity about the role of UMTS in the market as well as the mid-term role of the 3GPP project for the wireless industry.

Luckily, the situation has been considerably improved over the last year and growth through innovation is again priority in the wireless industry. Participation to 3GPP is at a rise, and many commercially relevant work items were approved at recent TSG's.

Many of the work items are **enhancements** and respond to rather **short-term market needs**

- The mass market of UMTS and of GSM-EDGE (e.g. video telephony support enhancements)
- The industry trend of fixed mobile convergence and alternative access (IMS, WLAN IW, GAAI, ...)
- The market introduction of important 3GPP Rel 5 features (HSDPA, IMS,...)
- To prepare the market introduction of important 3GPP Rel 6 features (MBMS,...)
- The exploitation of new market opportunities for the GSM/UMTS system (trunk radio,...)
- Other enhancements in the system operation (security, QoS, charging, O&M,...)

In parallel 3GPP is undertaking a series of **feasibility studies (study items) to prepare for the future**. At present these are at the phase to exploit basics of potential mid-term evolutions :

- RAN Study item on Evolved UTRA and UTRAN
- All-IP Network Feasibility Study
- 3GPP System Architecture Evolution
- similar work in GERAN is expected to be started soon

We consider these work items/study items as extremely important for the mid-term future of 3GPP. However, based on experience from other important 3GPP work items (UTRAN, IMS (“All-IP R00”), MBMS,...) : with all good intention in the initial WID's the prediction of the completion of these features is very difficult. Work involving principle decisions (radio modulation, lower layer radio protocols, principle architectural decisions, codec selections) may take longer than expected.

With 3GPP Rel 7 just on its way discussion on priorities and content make little sense. What is useful, however, is a mindset within the 3GPP community that the important study items which prepare for the future should not define the critical time path. This would give a healthy sense of urgency for the other work items, which are motivated by more short-term market needs.

It should also be recalled that TR21.900v7.0.0 introduced the concept of staged freezing with a tentative date for stage 1 freezing for Release 7 set to June 2005¹.

¹ TSG#23 report : “ **It was agreed that Stage 1 of Release 7 is intended to be Functionally Frozen by June 2005. This decision will be reviewed at TSG SA #24 / TSG SA #25.**”

Conclusion

To foster completion of work items with short-term market windows 3GPP should :

- confirm the intention to have an *approximately annual* release for Rel 7 (18months maximum)
- the very important study items (see above) which prepare for the future should not define the *critical path* of Rel 7 timing
- SA1, RAN and GERAN are requested to suggest a suitable date for stage 1 freezing from their perspective in line with the above two points