

Source: TSG Leaders

Title: Recommendations and Considerations on 3GPP Cost Savings

Agenda item: 8.2

Document for:

Decision	X
Discussion	
Information	

1 Introduction

During PCG#9 the TSG leaders were tasked with considering cost savings ideas in light of the anticipated MCC budget reductions. As part of this, a conference call was held on April 16, 2003. The leaders considered the cost savings ideas that were presented as part of PCG#9 as well as some additional ideas generated during the conference call and offline discussions.

The list of ideas is broken down into cost savings ideas and ideas for increased funding. The majority of the discussion focused on the cost savings ideas, however there was some discussion of ideas for increased funding.

Cost savings ideas

1. Consider delaying Release 6
2. Undertake more work electronically
3. Reduce from 4 to 3 TSG meetings per year
4. Eliminate or consolidate releases that have already been completed
5. Reduce number of working groups through consolidation
6. Deep freeze Rel 99, 4, 5 and only implement CRs once or twice per year
7. Undertake a more radical review of the TSG and WG structure
8. Remove TSG secretarial support during TSG meetings
9. Ensure previous release is stable before freezing subsequent release

Ideas for increasing funding:

1. Seek voluntary funding from MRPs

2. Increase the membership base of 3GPP
3. Consider closing the 3GPP server (by password protection)
4. Have companies fund work items
5. Have companies pay for expedited releases
6. Have companies sponsor extra MCC travel costs and support
7. More companies willing to pay fully if funding formula is equitable
8. Sponsoring and advertisements on the web site
9. Per meeting fees for delegates

The discussions focused on ways to reduce MCC costs. Although the TSG leaders were aware that there was a larger issue of how to reduce the overall industry costs associated with 3GPP, these were not explicitly addressed.

The specific recommendations can be found in section 4.

2 Cost Savings Ideas

2.1 Consider delaying Release 6

Delaying Release 6 in itself does little to save costs. Some of the steps proposed below may lead to Release 6 being delayed.

2.2 Undertake more work electronically

Electronic forums are not an efficient mechanism for resolving controversial items. They can be used to process routine matters (such as approval of non-controversial CRs), but it is unclear if the savings are significant. Using electronic means to spread out the workload may introduce additional problems by causing the specification base to become inconsistent (asynchronous specification production). Any agreements reached by electronic consensus still needs a physical forum (such as SA) where decisions can be appealed.

Electronic working methods have promise but cannot simply be “bolted on” to the current 3GPP working methods. In order to really effectively use electronic means, it is probably necessary to make radical changes in the 3GPP working methods. Given that 3GPP works quite effectively now, it is unclear if such any radical changes are worth the benefits. This item should be for further study.

2.3 Reduce from 4 to 3 TSG meetings per year

Slowing the overall rate of standardization will save money. Simply reducing the number of TSG meetings by itself may simply introduce additional problems, as there will be more WG meetings between TSGs and greater chance of CR collisions.

A wiser course of action is to keep the current number of TSG meetings, but limit the number of

supported WG meetings to one/TSG cycle. Justification must be provided for why a WG needs more than 1 WG meeting/TSG cycle. Additional WG meetings are possible but MCC support will not be provided. This will save costs by reducing the overall rate of standardization and allowing MCC experts to be doubled up between WGs. Exceptions may be granted by the PCG in the case when urgency is required by the industry.

2.4 Eliminate or consolidate releases that have already been completed

This seems very difficult to do, as contractual obligations exist on these releases. Thus abandoning any given release is a problem. 3GPP may want to consider an explicit policy for the phasing out of future releases. This will allow those companies writing contracts on releases to be aware that the releases will not be maintained indefinitely.

2.5 Reduce number of working groups through consolidation

This gives a large strong benefit. The average cost of supporting a WG is approximately 200K Euros. TSG chairs are urged to take a strong position in the consolidating of WGs. However, consolidation of groups when both are still fully loaded and need MCC support gives no real advantage.

See item 2.7 for further recommendations on this subject.

2.6 Deep freeze Rel 99, 4, 5 and only implement CRs once or twice per year

There were few perceived benefits from this and the possibility for considerable logistical problems. This idea is not recommended.

2.7 Undertake a more radical review of the TSG and WG structure

The most effective consolidation requires taking a 3GPP wide view as many consolidatable groups span TSGs. It is recommended that the TSG leaders be tasked with reviewing the structure and making a recommendation to the next PCG meeting.

2.8 Remove TSG secretarial support during TSG meetings

WG secretarial support is needed in TSG meetings. Support of the TSG secretaries at the TSG meetings could be sacrificed, but there seems little benefit as the TSG secretaries are also WG secretaries and thus need to be at the meetings anyway.

2.9 Ensure previous release is stable before freezing subsequent release

Freezing a new release before the old releases are stable causes excess work on the MCC and delegates and gives little chance to learn from previous mistakes. It is desirable that before release N is frozen that:

- Release N-1 has achieved a reasonable level of CR stability.
- Release N-2 has commercially available products

It is recommended that a new principle be added to the 3GPP working methods providing gating criteria for subsequent releases (Rel 6 and onwards). The MCC currently maintains CR statistics that can be used as a metric for the level of CR stability (with some possible tweaks)

3 Ideas for Increasing Funding

3.1 Seek voluntary funding from MRPs

Not discussed, except to say that there is hope that this may produce some income.

3.2 Increase the membership base of 3GPP

Not discussed.

3.3 Consider closing the 3GPP server (by password protection)

It was felt that this was unlikely to increase funding and was a bad idea. Not recommended.

3.4 Have companies fund work items

This was viewed as a way to raise funds and also eliminate spurious work items. However it was realized that such a policy would change the overall perception of fairness in taking on work by the 3GPP. Specifically, it might block work initiated by small companies and would not have prevented previous never implemented functionality such as SOLSA or CTM.

3.5 Have companies pay for expedited releases

Not discussed.

3.6 Have companies sponsor extra MCC travel costs and support

This is a follow-on from item 2.3. If a company or group of companies wish to have additional WG meetings beyond the 1 meeting/TSG cycle provided, they may still desire to have a MCC expert available. Provided that the expert is available and willing, it may be possible for them to pay the MCC for the expert's time and travel expenses in supporting the meeting.

3.7 More companies willing to pay fully if funding formula is equitable

If the funding is perceived as "fair", more companies may be willing to contribute the full amount requested (for those SDOs with voluntary funding for 3GPP). This may also attract new members to the smaller SDOs (see item 3.2).

3.8 Sponsoring and advertisements on the web site

Banners, click ads, etc. on the web site. Perhaps also market 3GPP logo shirts, coffee mugs, etc. Hopefully no "Men of the 3GPP" calendars.

3.9 Per meeting fees for delegates

Not discussed.

4 Recommendations

Recommendation 1

TSGs should look at the remaining 2003 schedule and see if any planned WG meetings can be eliminated. If they cannot be eliminated, then the WGs should be made aware that some meetings may not have MCC support. For 2004 and onward, the principle that "only one WG meeting is supported by the MCC per TSG meeting" should be used in planning WG meetings. TSGs can ask the PCG for an exception due to circumstances where the normal schedule is not sufficient (e.g. urgent Rel.99 implementation related work). Such exceptions could be for either a given number of extra meetings for 2004 or for a duration sufficient to complete a particular item of work.

Recommendation 2

PCG tasks the TSG leaders with reviewing the current TSG/WG structure and providing a recommendation to the October PCG meeting.

Recommendation 3

PCG tasks the TSG leaders (in consultation with the MCC) to provide a concrete recommendation on a change to the 3GPP working procedures to the October PCG.