Source: **BT***

Title: **Release Planning**

Document for: **Discussion**

Agenda Item: **8.9**

1 Introduction

This contribution provides a high-level analysis of the current Releases of 3GPP Specifications and proposes a framework for planning future releases.

2 General

The initial set of specifications produced by the 3GPP, known as Release 99, represented a major enhancement to the GSM system by specifying a new radio interface and associated network, terminal and system capabilities.

Release 99 was followed by Release 4 (March 2001) which focused upon evolving and consolidating the specifications to more fully exploit the system, as well as providing some additional service capabilities and architectural enhancements. Release 4 also includes some key enablers for the major developments planned for Release 5.

Release 5 represents the major focus of ongoing activity within the 3GPP. It is currently planned for completion in December 2001 and represents a major enhancement to the 3GPP specifications where the main focus will be the support of IP based Multi-media services. This represents a significant addition to the overall capabilities of the system and a radical change from the traditional telephony based service environment. The precise scope and timing for Release 5 is still subject to discussion and review within 3GPP.

Consideration now needs to be given to the high-level content and scope of specification releases beyond Release 5. In view of the complexity and the introduction of fundamentally new capabilities within Release 5, it is anticipated that the following releases will need to consolidate the new capabilities in addition to meeting requirements for major system enhancements.

3 Release Planning

The above analysis indicates that, for work planning purposes, 3GPP specification enhancements can be broadly categorised as:

⇒ **Major Enhancements**: significant enhancements to the system, new capabilities, new services, and architectural enhancements;

⇒ **Minor Enhancements**: which follow a major release and focus upon the consolidation of capabilities, correction of problems, and delivering key enablers for the next major release.

A key requirement is that all future releases be backward compatible and represent an evolution of existing capabilities.

3 Work Organisation

The categorisation of Work into Major and Minor categories will enable the associated Work Items to be grouped accordingly. Those associated with Minor Enhancements will primarily represent very focused development activities where as those for Major Enhancements will initially be more abstract (such as requirements capture, high-level architecture etc). This should facilitate planning and progressing the work.

*steve.mecrow@bt.com

One option might be to agree that Release 6 will only deliver Minor Enhancements (to Release 5), with future Major Enhancements being deferred to Release 7; this, however, should be discussed within TSG SA.

5 Conclusion

This contribution has provided a high-level analysis of the existing, planned and future Releases of 3GPP specifications. The identification of Major and Minor Enhancements for work planning purposes is expected to help focus the discussion within 3GPP and is proposed as a framework for planning the scope and timing of Releases beyond Release 5. A companion contribution makes some specific proposals for the scope and timing of Releases 6 and 7.

*steve.mecrow@bt.com