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| **Contact:** | | TSAFAK DJOUMESSI Pauline Ministère des Postes et Télécommunications Cameroon | | Tel.: +237 693 066 378 E-mail: [paulinetsafak@yahoo.fr](mailto:paulinetsafak@yahoo.fr)  [pauline.tsafak@minpostel.gov.cm](mailto:pauline.tsafak@minpostel.gov.cm) |
|  | | BASSONG BASSONG Louis Ministère des Postes et Télécommunications Cameroon | | Tel: +237 693 692 378  E-mail: [lbassong@ymail.com](mailto:lbassong@ymail.com) |

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| **Abstract:** | This contribution highlights the limitations of the proposal by RG-WM contained in TD394, whose intent is the deletion of Recommendations ITU-T A.4 and A.6. It draws the attention of WTSA in particular to the fact that the consequence of such deletion would be to render non-binding by means of a supplement certain procedures which are binding in nature in these recommendations adopted in 2012. The contribution proposes that the recommendations should be maintained and that the idea of modifying Supplement 5, which is a non-normative document, should be abandoned. In this regard, the contribution proposes, in the annexes, texts for the draft revision of Recommendations ITU-T A.4 and A.6, which take into account the comments made by RG-WM during its meetings of 5 September and 5 December 2023 and are in line with the updates to Recommendations ITU-T A.5 and A.25. |

Analysis

# 1 Background

It should be remembered that the proposal by RG-WM contained in TD394 is to delete Recommendations ITU-T A.4 and A.6, *inter alia*, because “all topics covered in Recommendations ITU-T A.4 and A.6 are covered by a more recent Recommendation (or Supplement)”.

The table below prepared by RG-WM shows how aspects dealt with in the recommendations proposed for deletion are taken into account in recent recommendations and/or supplements:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **Covered (2012) in** | **Now covered in** |
| Qualification of an external organization | A.4 (Annex A) A.6 (Annex A) | A.5 (Annex B) (2022) |
| Formal communication process (for information and document exchange) | A.4 (clause 2, 2nd para.) A.6 (clause 2, 2nd para.) | A Supp.5 (clauses 7.3 and I.2) (2024) |
| Incorporation of texts by ITU-T (including copyright arrangements) | A.4 (clause 2.4 on copyright arrangements) A.6 (clause 2.2.2) | A.25 (2022) |
| Incorporation of texts by the other organization (including copyright arrangements) | A.4 (clause 2.4 on copyright arrangements) A.6 (clause 2.2.1) | A.25 (2022) |

*Editor's note: The yellow-highlighting will be removed if the revision to Supplement 5 to the A‑series of Recommendations is agreed by TSAG at its meeting on 22-26 January 2024.*

Moreover, RG-WM is critical of Recommendations ITU-T A.4 and A.6 as they:

– draw a distinction between national and regional organizations on the one hand, and between forums and consortia on the other hand;

– imply an evaluation of the intellectual property rights (IPR) policy of the candidate organization for A.4 or A.6 qualification regardless of whether the organization issues standards.

RG-WM proposes measures to keep a record of the organizations already qualified in accordance with Recommendations ITU-T A.4 or ITU-T A.6, once those Recommendations are effectively deleted.

# 2 Main limitations of this proposal

This proposal has a certain number of limitations, as highlighted below:

The first is that it suggests the deletion of normative texts that have binding force, sometimes in favour of non-normative and therefore optional texts.

The second limitation is that some aspects dealt with in Recommendations ITU-T A.4 and A.6 have not been taken fully into account. Some important points addressed in these recommendations may have escaped the editor's attention.

The other limitation identified concerns the specific scope of each recommendation that it is proposed to delete. Recommendation ITU-T A.4 describes how to initiate a communication process between ITU-T and a forum/consortium. It lists the A.4 accreditation criteria for forums/consortia and describes the exchange of documents between A.4-accredited forums/consortia and ITU-T, while Recommendation ITU-T A.6 establishes the generic procedures, the basis for document exchange and the qualification criteria for regional and/or national standards organizations for the cooperation and communication process between ITU-T and these organizations. Deleting these recommendations is tantamount to subsuming under the generic procedures established in Recommendations ITU-T A.5 and A.25 for other organizations, procedures already established specifically for forums or consortia (see Rec. ITU-T A.4) and regional or national standardization organizations, which, moreover, pose no problem in practice.

It is still essential to facilitate access to information for ITU members, as well as external players. Dealing with topics in a specific way remains the best option for achieving this.

# 3 Conclusion of analysis

ITU-T approves recommendations to address issues that arise in the Sector. This was the case for the 2012 recommendations, which it is now proposed to delete; yet the scope of these recommendations is unequivocal.

In view of the importance of these normative documents, it would be advisable to update them to take account, where appropriate, of changes in current practices between ITU-T and its external contacts referred to in Recommendations ITU-T A.4 and ITU-T A.6.

Proposal

In view of the above, Cameroon proposes that Recommendations ITU-T A.4 and A.6 be maintained, and that TSAG abandon the idea of modifying Supplement 5, which is a non-normative document.

In support of this proposal, draft amendments to Recommendations ITU-T A.4 and A.6 are annexed to this contribution, with a view to clarifying them to take account of the comments made by RG-WM during its meetings on 5 September and 5 December 2023, and to align these recommendations with the updates to Recommendations ITU-T A.5 and A.25 with a view to clarifying Recommendations ITU-T A.4 and A.6 and avoiding repetition or conflict with Recommendations ITU-T A.5 and A.25.

***NOTE: Proposed additions to the current recommendations are highlighted in yellow.***

ANNEX 1

**Draft revision of Recommendation ITU-T A.4**

Communication process between the ITU   
Telecommunication Standardization Sector and forums and consortia

*(1996; 2000; 2002; 2006; 2007; 2012; 2024)*

# 1 Introduction

The purposes of the International Telecommunication Union are contained in Article 1 of the Constitution. These include the aim "to promote, at the international level, the adoption of a broader approach to the issues of telecommunications in the global information economy and society, by cooperating with other world and regional intergovernmental organizations, and those non-governmental organizations concerned with telecommunications".

Also noted are the challenges faced by the Union in achieving its purposes in the changing telecommunication environment, both in the period covered by the Strategic Plan for the Union for 1995-1999 and in the following period, as stated in Resolution 1 (Plenipotentiary Conference, Kyoto, 1994). The Annex to Resolution 1 elaborates the Strategic Plan. For the Standardization Sector, its strategy includes recognition of the growing influence of industry forums, and a specific goal to develop appropriate agreements and cooperative relationships with other organizations, including forums. Among the priorities identified for the Sector is the objective "to continue to cooperate with other global and regional standardization organizations and industry forums to harmonize the development and implementation of global telecommunication standards".

In order to facilitate the development of cooperative relationships with forums, and to encourage information exchange, it is deemed necessary to provide guidance on the means of communication. In particular, it is of benefit to establish procedures for use when structuring the communications process between ITU-T and forums and consortia.

WTSA decides that the ~~following~~ procedures highlighted below, be applied, preceded by the definitions and characteristics of the type of organization in question.

# 2 Scope

This Recommendation applies specifically to communications and information exchanges between ITU-T and industry forums and consortia as defined below.

# 3 Definition and characteristics of industry forums and consortia

A forum is a discussion group in which individuals or representatives of associations or companies in the telecommunication industry participate, to ask questions, share experiences and discuss topics of mutual interest. Forums are an excellent way of creating social links and a sense of belonging to a community. With the development of technology, forums can be organized using electronic processes for exchanges.

A consortium is an agreement between several people, associations or companies in the telecommunication industry, to cooperate in carrying out one or more economic, financial or scientific operations.

# 2 Procedures

Study group chairmen are encouraged to engage in two-way communication, where appropriate, with representatives of forums/consortia, and to invite presentation to their study groups of the work of the forums/consortia, as identified by the study group.

In addition, procedures have been introduced for a formal communication process between ITU-T (or one or more of the study groups) and forums/consortia that qualify according to the criteria in Annex A. The communication process permits document exchange between ITU-T and qualified forums/consortia. Establishing a communication process provides a framework for ongoing communications, in order to:

– prevent inadvertent duplication of effort, while allowing each organization to pursue its own mandate;

– provide authoritative information regarding one organization's dependencies on the other's work;

– exchange information on topics of mutual interest.

# 2.1 Establishment of the communication process

Establishment of a communication process with a forum/consortium should be considered on a case-by-case basis, and should be evaluated with due care and diligence using the set of criteria in Annex A. Normally, the process is established at the study group level. In the case of groups associated with one or more study groups, the evaluation and decision to proceed should be carried out by the lead study group. To avoid multiple requests to a forum/consortium for information pertaining to the criteria in Annex A, and to facilitate evaluation by study groups, the Director of TSB should make the request to the forum/consortium and subsequently make a preliminary analysis of the response. A schematic diagram of the communication process is provided in Appendix I.

### 2.1.1 Communication process initiated by an ITU-T study group

If a study group considers that it is beneficial to establish a communication process with a forum/consortium, the study group should first check the ITU-T A.4-qualified organizations list (see 2.3) and obtain the Director's analysis. The study group shall review the analysis and make a decision whether or not to communicate with the forum/consortium. If the forum/consortium in question is not on the list, the study group chairman asks the Director to request the forum/consortium to provide the information and fill in the questionnaire relating to the qualifying criteria set forth in Annex A. The Director performs a preliminary analysis of the forum/consortium and transmits it to the affected study group(s), which shall review the analysis and make a decision whether or not to communicate. Any areas of concern should be immediately shared with other interested study group chairmen and the Director. If the study group decides to approve, the study group chairman shall establish the communication process. The study group chairman should facilitate the process as described in 2.2.

### 2.1.2 Communication process initiated by a forum/consortium

If a forum/consortium wishes to establish a communication process with a study group, that study group should first check the ITU-T A.4-qualified organizations list (see 2.3) and obtain the Director's analysis. The study group shall review the analysis and make a decision whether or not to communicate with the forum/consortium. If the forum/consortium is not on the list, the procedure described for this case in 2.1.1 is applied. Any areas of concern should immediately be shared with other interested study group chairmen and the Director. If the study group decides to approve, the communication process can be established. The study group chairman should facilitate the process as described in 2.2.

If a forum/consortium contacts the Director of TSB to establish a communication process with ITU‑T, the Director should first determine whether it is appropriate for:

*a)* ITU-T (for related policy issues); or

*b)* one or more study groups (for topics relating to their work).

In case *a)*, the Director evaluates the forum/consortium according to the criteria in Annex A. If the Director decides to approve, he shall establish the communication process and inform TSAG and all study groups.

In case *b)*, the Director performs a preliminary analysis and transmits it to the affected study group(s), which shall proceed as outlined in the first paragraph of 2.1.2. If multiple study groups are involved, the decision of each study group should be communicated to the others, to TSAG and to the Director of TSB.

## 2.2 Communication process once established

### 2.2.1 Documents sent to ITU-T A.4-qualified forums/consortia

A proposal to send a liaison statement to an ITU-T A.4-qualified forum/consortium can arise from work by a rapporteur group, working party or study group. The decision to send such information is made by the study group chairman in consultation with the relevant working party chairman, and, if arising from a study group meeting, with the agreement of the study group. The documentation is sent to the forum/consortium by TSB on behalf of the study group.

When necessary, between scheduled meetings, the liaison statement may be prepared by an appropriate correspondence process and approved by the study group chairman in consultation with the study group management.

### 2.2.2 Documents received from ITU-T A.4-qualified forums/consortia

Documents submitted to ITU-T by qualified forums/consortia should conform to criterion 8 in Annex A. These documents are not issued as Contributions. As soon as they arrive they are made available, with the agreement of the study group chairman for advance consideration by the relevant group. Moreover, they are issued as a document to the relevant group with a reference to the originating forum/consortium, i.e. as a Temporary Document at a study group or working party meeting, or as a document at a rapporteur meeting. In the latter case, the receipt and disposition of the document received should be recorded in the report of the rapporteur meeting.

## 2.3 ITU-T A.4-qualified organizations list

The Director of TSB is requested to maintain an up-to-date ITU-T A.4-qualified list of the forums/consortia that are under evaluation and/or have been approved for the communication process, including identification of the study groups concerned, and make it available online.

## 2.4 Copyright arrangements

The subject of modifications to texts and arrangements for royalty-free copyright licenses, including the right to sub-license, for texts accepted by either ITU-T or by forums/consortia and their publishers and others, is a matter to be agreed upon between TSB and the particular forums/consortia. However, the originating organization retains the copyright for its texts.

ANNEX 2

Draft revision of Recommendation ITU-T A.6

Cooperation and exchange of information between the  
ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector and   
national and regional standards development organizations

*(1998; 2000; 2002; 2006; 2007; 2012; 2024)*

# 1 Scope

In order to facilitate the development of cooperative relationships with national and regional standards development organizations, and to encourage cooperation and information exchange, procedures are provided, founded on the basis of reciprocity, for use when structuring the cooperation and information exchange process.

This Recommendation applies specifically to regional or national standards development organizations.

# 2 Definition and characteristics

"National and regional standards development organizations", referred to as "standards development organizations" (SDOs) in the text that follows, are those organizations that develop standards recognized and implemented at the national and/or regional level. In this Recommendation, the term "approved document" refers to an official output of a standards development organization that has been formally approved. The term "draft document" refers to an output, which is still in draft form.

# 2 Procedures

Study groups are encouraged to make use of documents, both approved and in draft form, provided by standards development organizations, as appropriate. Similarly, standards development organizations are encouraged to make use of draft or approved ITU-T Recommendations. This Recommendation contains procedures for formal cooperation and exchange of information between ITU-T study groups and standards development organizations that qualify, according to the criteria in Annex A. In particular, this Recommendation addresses the case of an organization accepting texts, in part or in whole, from another organization. The case of normative referencing is addressed in Recommendation ITU-T A.5. Establishing a communication process provides a framework for ongoing communications to:

– prevent inadvertent duplication of effort, while allowing each organization to pursue its own mandate;

– provide authoritative information regarding one organization's dependencies on the other's work;

– exchange information on topics of mutual interest.

## 2.1 Establishment of the process for cooperation and exchange of information

Establishment of a process for cooperation and exchange of information between ITU-T study groups and regional or national standards development organizations should be considered on a case-by-case basis, and should be evaluated with due care and diligence using the set of criteria in Annex A. For ITU-T, the process is established at the study group level; for standards development organizations, the process is established at the appropriate level. To avoid multiple requests to a standards development organization for information pertaining to the criteria in Annex A, and to facilitate evaluation by study groups, the Director of TSB makes such requests, and subsequently makes an analysis of the responses to verify that the organizations meet the relevant criteria. A schematic diagram of the process is provided in Appendix I.

### 2.1.1 Exchange of information initiated by an ITU-T study group

If a study group considers that it is beneficial to establish an exchange of information or documents with a regional or national standards development organization, the study group should first consult the ITU-T A.6-qualified organizations list (see 2.3) and obtain an analysis of that standards development organization from the Director. The study group reviews the analysis and decides whether or not to communicate with the standards development organization. If the standards development organization in question is not on the list, the study group chairman asks the Director to request the standards development organization to provide the information and fill in the questionnaire relating to the qualifying criteria set forth in Annex A. The Director performs a preliminary analysis of the standards development organization and transmits it to the affected study group(s), which shall review the analysis and make a decision whether or not to communicate. Any areas of concern should be immediately shared with other interested study group chairmen and the Director. If the study group decides to approve, the study group chairman establishes the cooperation document acceptance and exchange processes in accordance with 2.2.

### 2.1.2 Exchange of information initiated by a national or regional standards development organization

If a regional or national standards development organization contacts the Director of TSB to establish an exchange of information or documents with ITU-T, the Director should first determine whether the exchange of information or documents is relevant to:

*a)* the ITU-T Sector (for related policy issues); or

*b)* one or more study groups (for topics relating to their work).

In case *a)*, the Director evaluates the standards development organization according to the criteria in Annex A. If the Director decides to approve, he establishes the exchange and informs TSAG and all ITU-T study groups.

In case *b)*, the Director performs an analysis and transmits it to the affected study group(s), which shall review the analysis and make a decision whether or not to communicate. If multiple study groups are involved, the decision of each study group should be communicated to the others, to the TSAG and to the Director of TSB.

## 2.2 Process for cooperation and exchange of information once the process is established

### 2.2.1 Documents sent to ITU-T A.6-qualified national and regional standards development organizations

A standards development organization may accept, in whole or in part, the text of a draft or approved ITU-T Recommendation, as all or part of the text of its draft document, with or without modification to the ITU-T text.

When a standards development organization decides to accept ITU-T texts, it notifies TSB about the actions taken concerning those texts. The use, acceptance or reproduction of such texts by the standards development organization is subject to the copyright arrangements set out in 2.4.

A proposal to send a liaison statement to an ITU-T A.6-qualified standards development organization can arise from work by a rapporteur group, working party or study group. The decision to send such information is made by the study group chairman in consultation with the relevant working party chairman, and, if arising from a study group meeting, with the agreement of the study group. The text is sent to the standards development organization by TSB on behalf of the study group.

When necessary, between scheduled meetings, the liaison statement may be prepared by an appropriate correspondence process and approved by the study group chairman in consultation with the study group management.

### 2.2.2 Documents received from ITU-T A.6-qualified national and regional standards development organizations

An ITU-T study group may accept from an ITU-T A.6-qualified standards development organization, in whole or in part, the text of a draft document, or an approved document, as all or part of the text of a draft ITU-T Recommendation, with or without modification to the text.

When an ITU-T study group decides to accept texts from an ITU-T A.6-qualified standards development organization, it notifies the organization about the actions taken concerning those texts. The use, acceptance or reproduction of such texts by the ITU-T study group is subject to the copyright arrangements set out in 2.4.

Documents submitted to the ITU-T study groups by ITU-T A.6-qualified standards development organizations should conform to criterion 8) in Annex A.

These documents are not issued as Contributions. As soon as they arrive they are made available, with the agreement of the study group chairman, for advance consideration by the relevant group. Moreover, they are issued as a document to the relevant group with a reference to the originating standards development organization, i.e. as a Temporary Document at a study group or working party meeting, or as a document at a rapporteur meeting. In the latter case, the receipt and disposition of the document received should be recorded in the report of the rapporteur meeting.

## 2.3 ITU-T A.6-qualified regional or national organizations list

The Director of TSB is requested to maintain an up-to-date list of ITU-T A.6-qualified regional and national organizations list and associated analyses of the national and regional standards development organizations that are under evaluation and/or have been approved for cooperation and exchange of information, including identification of the study groups concerned, and make it available online.

## 2.4 Copyright arrangements

The subject of modifications to texts and arrangements for royalty-free copyright licenses, including the right to sub-license, for texts accepted by either ITU-T or by ITU-T A.6-qualified regional or national standards development organizations and their publishers and others, is a matter to be agreed upon between TSB and the particular regional or national standards development organization. However, the originating organization retains the copyright for its texts.

## 2.5 Electronic document exchange

Where possible, the exchange of documents will be in electronic format. Questions of electronic links to enable document exchange is to be agreed upon by the Secretariats of the organizations concerned.

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