# Project Approval Committee (PAC) Procedures

**Version 1.0**
**1 February 2008**

## 1 Overview

The Project Approval Committee is the SDR Forum's formal mechanism for coordinating the activities of the committees and ensuring the organization's resources are used as effectively as possible to meet our collective goals. This document describes the makeup and procedures of the PAC, as well as the decision criteria established for evaluating project proposals.

## 2 Explanation of the PAC from the SDRF Strategic Plan

Executing on the SDR Forum's strategy will require close coordination between the Markets, Regulatory and Technical committees in initiating and advancing "projects" within the Forum, with a project defined as an activity within a committee that develops an SDR Forum Report, an SDR Forum Recommendation or an SDR Forum Specification. To support this requirement, the SDR Forum will establish a project governance process that is facilitated through a Project Approval Committee. As is implied by its name, the primary purpose of the project approval committee is to approve projects. Projects will be evaluated by this committee against established decision criteria to ensure that they have a clearly defined objective, clearly defined requirements, and they support a clearly defined set of customers.

Under the SDR Forum's strategy, it is anticipated that most projects within the SDR Forum will be initiated through the Markets Committee, although projects may also be initiated by member companies or partner organizations (see Figure 1). Projects will be prioritized against existing resources and strategic goals, and then assigned to committees as appropriate. A goal of the Project Approval Committee will be to encourage projects be decomposed into deliverables that can be achieved in a single calendar year, with development agendas that can be completed in a single meeting.
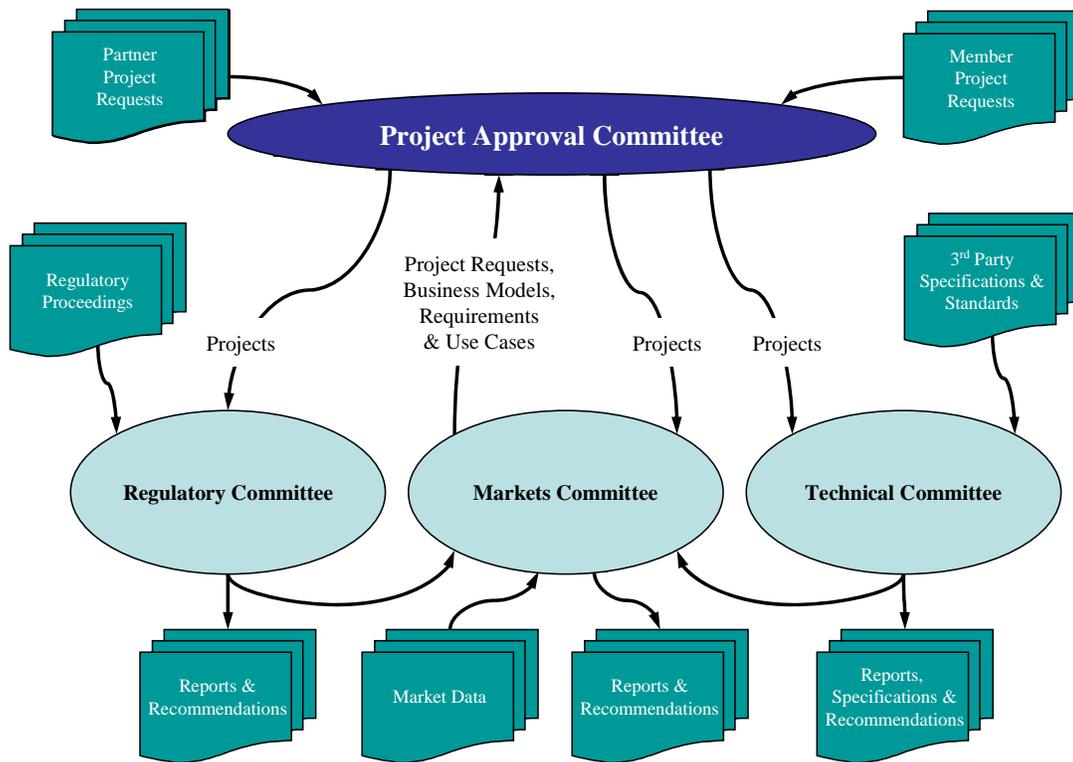
**Figure 1: The SDR Forum Project Approval Committee**

While under this strategy the Markets Committee Special Interest Groups will continue to exist as long term standing bodies within the SDR Forum, this new emphasis on projects is anticipated to have a long term impact on Technical Committee Work Groups. Moving forward, the SDR Forum anticipates that the majority of new projects will be done in the context of a project or task group that exists separately from a work group as illustrated in Figure 2. Once the project is completed, the task group will dissolve, making way for other task groups to form. New SDR Forum Work Groups will only be established when multiple related projects are required to address a specific problem. In supporting this strategy, the Project Approval Committee will evaluate the progress and activities of existing work groups on a periodic a basis, and work groups without an active project will be disbanded.

# 3  Authority of the PAC

A *project* is defined in the SDRF Strategic Plan (see Section 2) as "an activity within a committee that develops an SDR Forum Report, an SDR Forum Recommendation or an SDR Forum Specification."

A proposal must be submitted to the PAC and approved:

- when a new project is initiated, or
- when an existing project's scope or milestone dates change sufficiently that the approved project description becomes inaccurate.

A project that does not gain PAC approval, or that loses approval due to failure to meet conditions established by the PAC, will not be supported by SDRF resources (meeting rooms, email reflectors, publicity, staff time, etc.) and is not eligible for committee-level or forum-level ballot.
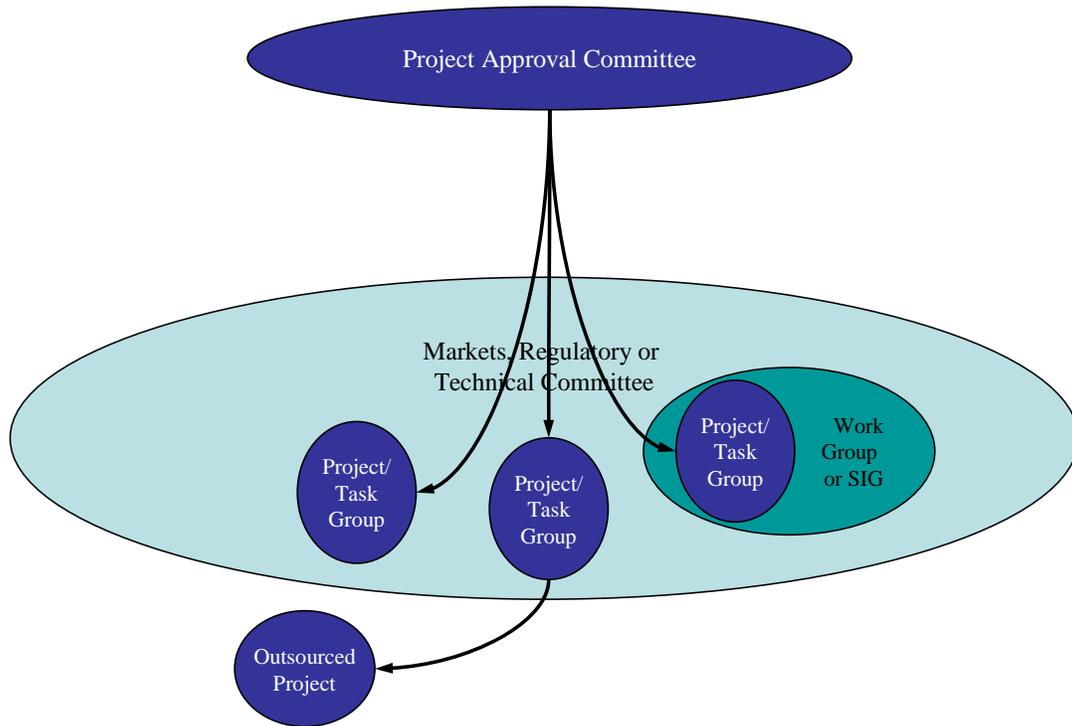
**Figure 2: Relationship of Task Groups to SDR Forum Work Groups and SIGs**

# 4  PAC structure and voting

The members of the PAC are the officers of the SDR Forum. These are:

- Chair, vice-chairs, secretary and treasurer of the Forum
- Chair and vice-chair of each of the committees (Technical, Markets, Regulatory)
- SDR Forum CEO and COO
- Chair of the SDRF Board

The Chair of the PAC is the Chair of the Forum.

All members of the committee are eligible to vote. Approval of projects requires unanimous consent of a quorum of members with a quorum consisting of at least 5 members. Any change to the voting procedures of the committee must be approved by 2/3 of the members of the committee.

# 5  Project approval procedure

The *champion* for a project is the person who authors the project proposal and interacts with the PAC on behalf of the project. The champion would normally be the intended project chair, but this is not required.

The *PAC representative* for a project is a member of the PAC assigned to work with the champion on preparing the project proposal.

The *disposition date* is the date the PAC meets and decides about the proposal. The meeting may be in person (e.g. at a SDRF general meeting) or by teleconference. Normally, a proposal's disposition date will be a regularly scheduled PAC meeting that has time available.

## 5.1  Proposal introduction

Champion contacts the PAC with project title and states intent to propose project.

PAC assigns a disposition date for the proposal.

PAC assigns a representative to the proposal.

## 5.2  Proposal preparation

Champion prepares the proposal with the help of the PAC representative.

All persons listed as committed contributors in the proposal must approve it before submission.

The proposal is due to the PAC chair 2 weeks before the disposition date.

## 5.3  Proposal consideration

Chair distributes proposal to entire PAC for review at least 1 week before the disposition date.

Chair asks 3 PAC members other than the PAC representative to score the proposal against the project approval criteria. Additional PAC members including the PAC representative may choose to submit scores if they wish. All submitted scores are averaged to produce the final score.

Champion presents the project for Q&A on the disposition date. [Expectation: 10 minutes of presentation (roughly 4 slides), followed by 20 minutes of Q&A.]

PAC discusses and votes for one of the following options.

- Approval
- Approval contingent on specified conditions
- Request for modification and resubmission
- Disapproval

Two types of conditions may be attached to a contingent approval:

1. Initiation conditions – conditions that must be met before the project can be initiated.
2. Execution conditions – conditions that must be met during execution of the project.

PAC agrees on feedback to the champion that explains its decision.

## 5.4  Proposal disposition

### 5.4.1  Approval

PAC chair informs champion of PAC decision.

PAC representative discusses decision and feedback with champion.

SDRF chair forwards project to appropriate committee chair.

Committee chair decides whether and when to initiate the project.

### 5.4.2  Approval contingent on specified conditions

PAC chair informs champion of PAC decision.

PAC representative discusses decision, feedback, and conditions with champion.

If there are initiation conditions:

- Champion updates proposal.
- PAC representative verifies that conditions have been satisfied.
- Other PAC members who wish to review the updated proposal also verify that the conditions have been satisfied. A PAC member who wants to be consulted at this stage must notify the PAC chair prior to or on the disposition date.
- PAC chair verifies that conditions have been satisfied.

SDRF chair forwards project to appropriate committee chair.

Committee chair decides whether and when to initiate the project.

If there are execution conditions:

- Committee chair monitors execution conditions over time.
- Committee chair notifies SDRF Chair if execution conditions are not satisfied. Subsequent actions if this occurs are the responsibility of SDRF leadership, not the PAC.

### 5.4.3  Request for modification and resubmission

PAC chair informs champion of PAC decision.

PAC representative discusses decision and feedback with champion.

Champion has the option to return to step 1 (proposal introduction) or to terminate the proposal.

Normally, the same PAC representative will continue to support the proposal.

### 5.4.4  Disapproval

PAC chair informs champion of PAC decision.

PAC representative discusses decision and feedback with champion.

Champion may choose to modify proposal to address feedback and resubmit.

# 6 Proposal template

Proposals should follow the format given in the appendix. The template is also available at

http://www.sdrforum.org/pages/aboutTheForum/Project_Proposal_Template.doc

# 7 Example proposal

An example of an approved project proposal is available at

http://www.sdrforum.org/admin/pub/documents/Pub_Safety_700_MHZ.pdf

# 8 Approval criteria

The PAC evaluates project proposals against the following criteria. Scores in these categories inform but do not determine the judgements of the PAC.

## 8.1 Well defined proposal

| High | The proposal is complete and the content is crisp. |
|---|---|
| Medium | Some aspects of the proposal are incomplete or vague. |
| Low | The proposal lacks information needed for the PAC to judge the other criteria. |

*Discussion:* Many project proposals should earn a High definition rating since the champion has the opportunity to work with the PAC representative to resolve any issues before the proposal is formally submitted.

## 8.2 Expected impact

| High | Successful completion of this project will measurably and significantly contribute to the business or mission goals of SDRF member organizations. |
|---|---|
| Medium | Successful completion of this project promises concrete and valuable benefits to member organizations, the SDR Forum, the field, or society as a whole. |
| Low | The benefits of successful completion of this project are modest or speculative. |

*Discussion:* Relatively few project proposals are expected to earn a High impact rating. Some projects may explain their impact in terms of the costs or problems expected if the project is not performed, rather than the savings or benefits expected if it is performed.

## 8.3 Probability of success

| High | Expected impact is likely to occur if the project is performed. |
|---|---|
| Medium | There is a moderate risk that the project will not lead to the expected impact. |
| Low | There is a high risk that the project will not lead to the expected impact |

*Discussion:* This criterion judges the probability that the project will result in the expected impact. Two factors enter into this: (a) whether the project team is likely to produce the deliverables as planned, and (b) what events or developments outside the control of the SDRF must happen for the expected impact to occur. Thus, a project may receive a Medium or Low

probability of success even if it is well planned with sufficient committed participants and a reasonable timetable.

### 8.4 Resource availability

| High | There is little or no opportunity cost associated with performing this project. |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Medium | Performing this project will prevent the SDRF from performing other identified projects of similar or lesser value. |
| Low | Performing this project will prevent the SDRF from performing other identified projects of greater potential value, or the resources required are great enough to significantly limit the SDRF's future options. |

*Discussion:* This rating is the inverse of opportunity cost. The emphasis is on comparisons to identified projects, rather than on speculation about what projects might potentially be coming in the future. However, projects with a very high resource usage may get a Low rating based on limiting future flexibility even if the specific other projects that might need those resources have not been identified.

### 8.5 Committed participation by members

| High | Many SDRF member organizations have committed to participate in the project. |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Medium | The project has attracted a critical mass of committed participation. |
| Low | Only a few member organizations have committed to participate. |

*Discussion:* Relatively few projects are expected to earn a High participation rating. This criterion judges the level of expressed SDRF member interest in the project. This is independent from whether the number of committed participants is sufficient to carry out the planned work, which is judged in the Probability of Success criterion.

### 8.6 Relevance to SDRF strategic plan

| High | The project will measurably and significantly contribute to two or more pillars of the SDRF strategic plan. |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Medium | The project is aligned with the SDRF strategic plan and offers tangible benefits to one or more pillars. |
| Low | The project is peripheral to the SDRF strategic plan or offers only modest benefits. |

# 9 Public/private information

The current list of project proposal titles along with the planned disposition date, champion and PAC representative for each will be visible to all SDRF members on an ongoing basis.

Project proposals submitted to the PAC and the corresponding decision by the PAC (approved, contingent approval, etc.) will be visible to all SDRF members after the proposal champion has been informed of the PAC decision and has had the opportunity to discuss PAC feedback with the PAC representative.

Feedback from the PAC to the champion, including scores given under the various decision criteria, will not be posted for wide review or sent to wide email distribution lists. However, the PAC or the champion may disclose this information on a one-on-one basis to other SDRF members as appropriate.

Proceedings of the PAC related to specific project proposals, including discussions and voting records, are privileged information that will not be reflected in PAC meeting minutes or disclosed outside the PAC. Other proceedings of the PAC, for example on procedural matters, will be described in meeting minutes in the normal fashion.

# 10 Appendix: Proposal template

*Project proposals should follow the format given here. A Microsoft Word version of this template is available at*

http://www.sdrforum.org/pages/aboutTheForum/Project_Proposal_Template.doc

This form is used to describe a project for submissions to the SDR Forum's Project Approval Committee. Please fill in and submit to PAC@sdrforum.org.

| | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | |
| Champion | |
| Committee (Markets, Technical, or Regulatory) | |
| Group within committee (if applicable) | |
| PAC Representative | |
| Proposed Disposition Date | |
| Proposal Number | |

*The information required for the last three rows of this table will be given to you by the PAC Chair.*

### 10.1.1 Positioning

*Please provide a positioning statement for the project's output.*
*Please answer each of the questions starting with the word provided in boldface.*

**For**          *Who is the customer/market?*

**Who**          *What is their problem?*

**The**          *What is the output from this project? (report, recommendation, specification)*

**That**          *What does it do to address the problem?*

**Unlike**          *What other similar products (reports, standards, etc.) are out there?*

**This product**  *How is the output of this project different?*

*10.1.2  Scope*

*Please describe what is included and not included in the scope of this project.*

*10.1.3  Project Plan*

*Committed contributors are Forum members who plan to make significant contributions to the creation of the work product. All persons listed here should have reviewed and approved this project proposal before it is submitted.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Committed contributors and the organization each represents | **(Leader)**<br>**(Other contributors)** |
| Interim milestones (Date and description) | |
| Group ballot date | |
| Committee ballot date | |
| Plenary ballot date | |
| Forum resources required | ___ teleconference services<br>___ meeting space at general meetings<br>___ email reflector<br>___ wiki page<br>___ document repository<br>___ editor<br>___ graphics designer<br>___ other (please specify) |

*10.1.4  Interactions with other groups inside or outside the Forum*

*Please provide group names and a brief explanation for any interactions listed in the table..*

| | |
|---|---|
| This project overlaps with another group's scope. | |
| Success depends on output from another group. | |
| Results of this project are a critical input to another group. | |

*For the interactions listed in the table, please provide an interaction plan (if one is appropriate) and state whether this plan has been approved by the leaders of the other groups.*

### 10.1.5  Benefits

*Please describe the benefits of this project for its audience/users/society and for the Forum and Forum members. Please organize the description in terms of the four pillars in the SDRF strategic plan.*

Advocacy

Opportunity Development

Commercialization

Education

Other

### 10.1.6  Risks and Costs

*What could prevent you from completing this project successfully and on schedule? Please list both technical and program risks.*

*What is the time window when the project must be completed to provide the expected benefits?*

*Will performing this project require delaying or eliminating other Forum activities, particularly those approved in the Forum's Operations Plan?*

### 10.1.7  Other information

*Please provide any other information you feel will assist the PAC in evaluating this proposal.*