IEEE SA Balloting and Comment Resolution Process Guidelines

If, during RevCom review, it is discovered that a significant error was made handling the balloting process, this may result in the approval being deferred until corrective actions specified by RevCom or the IEEE SA Standards Board are completed. This guidance is intended to provide assistance to the Standards Committee in preparing comment resolutions that increase the likelihood of quick project approval.

Providing correct instructions to members of the SA balloting group

• Standards Committees should provide balloters with guidance that reflects the policies and procedures published by IEEE SA. Improper guidance that materially affects the SA ballot process is a serious issue. The following are some examples of improper guidance that may lead to delayed project approval:

• The Standards Committee should not suggest that a Do Not Approve SA ballot vote not be entered because it would cause the project to be cancelled (e.g. PAR withdrawal).

• Telling a balloter that he or she could not change from Do Not Approve to Abstain is contrary to the rules.

• Any instruction that conflicts with the IEEE Code of Ethics, the IEEE SA Standards Board Bylaws, or the IEEE SA Standards Board Operations Manual is a violation of process.

• Any correspondence by the Standards Committee to a member of the SA balloting group shall not contain a confidentiality statement, because such communications cannot be considered by RevCom (see IEEE SA Standards Board Operations Manual, subclause 4.1.1.5"http://standards.ieee.org/develop/policies/opman/sect4.html#4.1.1.5"Confidentiality Statements”).

• The Standards Committee shall not coerce balloters.

Managing comment resolution

• In these guidelines, the term Comment Resolution Group (CRG) is used to refer to the subgroup of the Working Group (see IEEE SA Standards Board Operations Manual subclause 5.4.3) that reviewed the ballot comments and entered the comment resolutions (disposition status and disposition detail) in myProject. There is an obligation for the CRG to provide evidence of consideration of each comment via approved IEEE SA balloting tools,

regardless of whether the comment is associated with a Do Not Approve, Approve, or Abstain vote.

• There is a corresponding obligation on the part of the voter (balloter) to use the IEEE SA balloting tools for submitting comments. It is also the responsibility of the balloter to review the draft, comments and supporting documentation (e.g. PAR, ballot announcement, cover letter) throughout the balloting process. It is the responsibility of the balloter to determine if their comments have been responded to satisfactorily.

• Mandatory coordination (IEEE editors, Registration Authority Committee, etc.) does not accompany a vote. RevCom reviews the disposition detail and looks for evidence of consideration of the mandatory coordination.

• During the appropriate ballot period, IEEE public review and non-voter comments shall also be considered and presented to the CRG.

• Upon the close of a ballot, the CRG may immediately begin to hold discussions with any balloters and especially Do Not Approve balloters. The CRG is encouraged to engage directly with commenters to understand better what they are saying in a comment, and to seek feedback on its possible resolution. The CRG needs to be careful not to incorrectly represent IEEE SA rules, exert coercive pressure, or make a commitment to make a change in a future revision.

• A balloter who voted Do Not Approve with comments will typically designate some portion of them as Must Be Satisfied. A subsequent vote change to Approve or Abstain allows the Must Be Satisfied designation to be removed but does not cause the comment to be deleted or ignored.

• In a recirculation there can be new or continuing Do Not Approve votes with new, valid Must Be Satisfied comments and another recirculation ballot will be required.

• Occasionally a comment on a recirculation ballot will propose a technical change which the CRG feels has merit but is impractical to implement in this version of the standard (e.g., the comment is on a previously unchanged section and the standard has reached approval and would otherwise be sent for publication and the change would require extensive revision). The CRG can reject the comment and reply that "the comment will be retained for consideration if there is a subsequent revision of the standard." The comments response cannot make any promises that there will be a future revision or that the proposed change will be included in a future revision. However, if the CRG decides to make any substantive revisions to the text, either in response to comments or on its own

decision to further improve the standard, a recirculation ballot on the revised draft is required.

CRG Preparation of comment disposition and disposition detail

• The CRG should regard comments as an opportunity to clarify and correct the draft, so it is less likely to be misunderstood. The disposition detail for each comment should address every point in the comment. Address the issue, not the commenter personally.

• The balloter has to classify each comment as editorial, technical, or general. As guidance, editorial comments are those that could be made without specialized knowledge of the specialized content of the document, and relate to grammar, punctuation, IEEE format, handling of Bibliographic entries, numbering of sub- clauses and figures, and the like.

Designation of Comment Disposition

The disposition status field of a comment resolution shall be set to one of: Accepted, Revised or Rejected. This section gives guidance on how to determine which is the appropriate disposition status, and based on that, what may go in the disposition detail field.

Disposition status is “Accepted”

• Means: The CRG agreed exactly with the comment and change proposed by the commenter, or the comment is agreeable. The draft will be updated to include the proposed change.

• Example: a comment by the IEEE editor that "This draft meets all editorial requirements "or a comment that "This is the best approach for new nurgles." can be Accepted.

• The disposition detail field should be left blank when the disposition status is Accepted.

• Accepted should not be the disposition status when the commenter asks a question, proposes alternate resolutions, or does not offer specific changes that can be applied verbatim.

Disposition status is “Revised”

• Means: CRG agrees with the comment (at least in part) and implements a change that is not exactly what the balloter proposed.

• Revised also applies if the standard was changed in response to another comment or CRG decision, and the material has been replaced or removed. It is best practice to quote

exactly how the text has been revised, but a summary can suffice when the revisions are extensive.

• Example: "At page 1234 line 56, change ‘nurgle’ to ‘flange’. This change will be applied throughout clause 7."

• References to a publicly available document with a lengthy explanation should cite the file title or URL, page, line (if available) and subclause number.

• The disposition details field should contain sufficient detail so that balloters can understand the changes determined by the CRG and the editor can make the change.

Disposition status is “Rejected”

•Means: the CRG does not agree to make the change, or cannot come to a consensus to make changes necessary to address the comment.

Rejected is used when one or more of these applies:

• The comment does not contain sufficient detail so that the CRG can understand the specific change being suggested by the commenter. The lack of a proposed change, by itself, is not sufficient reason to reject.

• The CRG cannot come to a consensus to make changes necessary to address the comment.

• The comment is in support of an unsatisfied previous comment associated with a Disapprove vote and does not provide substantive additional rationale.

• The comment includes an attachment that does not meet the criteria indicated by myProject; that the CRG cannot address as a single issue; or that does not relate to a specific line, paragraph, figure, or equation in the balloted draft.

• The commenter has indicated to the CRG chair that they wish to withdraw the comment.

The disposition detail field should explain why the comment is being rejected using one or more of these reasons:

• an explanation of why the CRG disagrees with the comment;

• a statement that the comment is out of scope, and the rationale;

• a statement that the proposed change in the comment does not contain sufficient detail so that the CRG can understand the specific changes that are being proposed;

• a statement that the proposed change is already included in another part of the document and not needed here;

• a statement that the proposed wording change does not improve the technical clarity or accuracy of the text in the consideration of the CRG, e.g., "change happy to glad";

• a statement that the CRG could not reach consensus on the changes necessary to address the comment;

• a statement that the CRG has previously considered the comment (or a substantively similar comment), along with identification (by reference or copy) of the original comment and its disposition detail and status;

• a statement of why the CRG considers the attachment does not meet the criteria indicated by myProject; or cannot be addressed as a single issue; or does not relate to a specific line, paragraph, figure, or equation in the balloted draft;

• a statement that the commenter has withdrawn the comment.

• The CRG disagrees with the comment.

• The comment is out of scope.

• There may be editorial comments that are Rejected. The comment response could be "The CRG refers this change to IEEE SA Editorial staff for consideration during preparation for publication."

Handling related comments

• Cross-reference using the full comment number (e.g. i-xxx, rx-xxx). Otherwise insert the disposition detail in the comment resolution. Disposition details of the form: "Disagree – see disposition detail of comment 1234" create a potential trap for violating process requirements, because the commenter and other balloters and reviewers may have trouble locating the actual comments disposition.

• The recommended practice is to insert the comment disposition detail from the cited comment and then add "(same comment disposition detail as comment i-1234)" in order to track the dependencies between the "original" comment disposition detail and its logical dependents. This practice also helps the document's technical editor determine that no additional action is needed beyond editing the disposition detail of comment i-1234.

• For example, the following could be cut and pasted from i-1234:

> "Reject. The working group does not agree that the nurgle needs to be flanged, and the comment hasn't indicated which flavor of flange would be required." (same comment disposition detail as comment i-1234)

• If the disposition detail contains something that cannot be easily and unambiguously represented in plain text, (e.g., graphics or extensive markup edits), it is acceptable to either reference the disposition detail as a separate document that is easily available to SA balloting group members via inclusion in myProject materials that are shared with balloters during a recirculation ballot, or identify where the change can be found in the Draft during the recirculation.

Referring to comment disposition details in external documents

• If external documents are required, document references should be to URLs housed on a valid public document server that does not require a fee for access.

Withdrawing comments

• After the ballot closes, commenters may indicate to the CRG chair that they wish to withdraw a comment. In that case, a disposition of "Rejected. Commenter has withdrawn the comment." may be used.

Assuring that accepted changes are incorporated into the Draft

• While it is the responsibility of the technical editor and the CRG (or the Standards Committee's designee) to confirm that the disposition detail is accurately implemented into the Draft, it is the responsibility of the balloting group to carefully examine the Draft to confirm that it is correct with respect to the disposition detail.

Identifying substantive Draft changes to balloters during recirculations

There are well-proven methods to provide balloters with an indication of the specific substantive changes to the Draft:

• Provide a listing of the clauses with substantive changes to the previous draft in the recirculation ballot cover letter. The list may contain explanations of what is added, revised, or deleted.

• Identify substantive changes in the next Draft offered for recirculation to the balloters.

• Deleted material in the Draft should be indicated using strikethrough. Any color may be used for the strikethrough.

• New material in the draft should be indicated using a consistent style such as text color, a highlight color, or an underscore. Any color is acceptable to indicate changes. Note: If you

are using color to identify substantive changes, you must also show insertions using an underscore.

• Location of deleted and new material should be indicated using a change bar in the margin.

Note: Change marking may be implemented using Track Changes in the preferred word processing program. When text has been extensively revised, it is helpful to provide the balloters with both a clean copy and a marked-up (redline) version. Line numbering for the recirculation should be in this clean copy.

Handling comment resolution on the final ballot

No commenter (either member of the balloting group or other) can force the balloting and comment resolution process to continue indefinitely. The final recirculation ballot has been held when

• There are no comments OR

• There are no new Must Be Satisfied comments that have not been resolved in previous ballots; AND

• The CRG decides to reject all the new technical comments, so that there are no new substantive changes to be made in the document.

• There may be editorial comments that are Rejected on the final ballot. The comment response could be "The CRG refers this change to IEEE SA Editorial staff for consideration during preparation for publication."

• The final comment resolution should be uploaded into myProject and all balloters with a Disapprove vote who commented should be notified by email of the response to their comment and that no further recirculations are planned.

• At this point, the balloting and comments resolution processes are complete, and the standard should be ready to submit to RevCom using myProject.