



## **GOV-TA-0001**

Documentation for

# **SFF TA TWG Process Guide**

Rev 1.5a      January 17, 2019

This guide provides SFF TA TWG participants with the knowledge of the processes the SFF TA TWG follows to accomplish its work. Questions about the content of this document should be directed to the SNIA Technical Council Managing Director at [tcmd@snia.org](mailto:tcmd@snia.org).

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- Added revision history
- Updated formatting

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# 1 SFF TA TWG Documents

## 1.1 Document Types

There are 5 *Document Types*: *Specification*, *Information*, *Reference*, *Governing*, and *Support Material*. Disagreements on document types are to be resolved by *Majority Ballot* (see Section 3.4). For more information on public availability of documents, see Section 1.3.

### 1.1.1 Specification Documents

*Specification Documents* are technical specifications created by the SFF TA TWG, labeled as SFF-TA-XXXX (or SFF-XXXX for documents created prior to SFF's migration to SNIA), where XXXX is the specification number assigned when the project was created. All *Specification Documents* shall contain a version number (see Section 1.2). *Specification Documents* require a passing *New Project Ballot* (see Section 3.1) to initiate work and a passing *Approval Ballot* (see Section 3.3) to be published. *Review Ballots* are optional and may be used at the discretion of the editor. *Majority Ballots* may be used for a variety of reasons (refer to Section 3.4). Additionally, *Specification Documents* shall undergo a 60-day IP disclosure period (refer to Section 5).

### 1.1.2 Information Documents

*Information Documents* are documents created by an external group, with source provided to the SFF TA TWG, so that it can continue to be publicly available. The original document shall not be changed by the TWG, but may be the basis for a future revision as an SFF specification. *Information Documents* will be labeled as INF-TA-XXXX (or INF-XXXX for documents created prior to SFF's migration to SNIA), where XXXX is the document number assigned when the document was accepted by the TWG. All *Information Documents* shall also contain a version number (see Section 1.2). *Information Documents* require a passing *Majority Ballot* to be published (see Section 3.4). *New Project*, *Review* and *Approval Ballots* do not apply to *Information Documents*.

### 1.1.3 Reference Documents

*Reference Document* content is not normative; *Reference Documents* created by the SFF TA TWG contain useful content which provides additional information intended to assist the understanding or use of a *Specification*. *Reference Documents* will be labeled as REF-TA-XXXX (or SFF-9XXX with a "REFERENCE" watermark for documents created prior to SFF's migration to SNIA), where XXXX is the document number assigned when the project was created. All *Reference Documents* shall also contain a version number (see Section 1.2). *Reference Documents* require a passing *New Project Ballot* to initiate work and a passing *Approval Ballot* (see Section 3.2) to be published.

### 1.1.4 Governing Documents

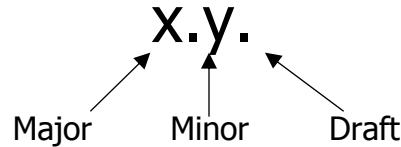
*Governing Documents* define SFF TA TWG policies and procedures (e.g. *SFF TA TWG Process Guide*). *Governing Documents* will be labeled as GOV-TA-00XX where 00XX is the document number assigned when the document was created. *Majority Ballots* (see Section 3.4) are used to approve *Governing Documents*. All *Governing Documents* shall contain version numbers as defined in Section 1.2.

### 1.1.5 Support Material

All other documents are considered *Support Material* and are not covered by the *SFF Process Guide*. This includes presentations, meeting minutes, etc. *Support Material* is not assigned document numbers but shall contain version numbers as defined in Section 1.2.

## 1.2 Version Numbering

Version numbering assigns unique version numbers to unique states of SFF TA TWG documents. Within a given version number category (major, minor, and draft revision), these numbers are assigned in increasing order and correspond to new developments in the deliverable. It applies to all SFF TA TWG documents as follows:



- *Major revision number*– Starts at 1 for new published documents. Should be increased by one only when major changes are made to the specification. For example, the *major revision number* shall be changed when the new specification will break backwards compatibility with prior versions of the specification.
- *Minor revision number* – Starts at 0 for new published documents and is set to 0 when the major revision number changes. If the update to the document is not a major revision, the minor revision number shall be increased by one when the final document is approved for publication.
- *Draft revision number* – Represents the nth draft revision of the document based on the x.y approved version of the document. Starts at 1 for the first draft of a specification. Shall be increased by 1 for each draft revision released by the editor.
- *Special Note* – Each number (x.y.n) may be a multi digit number; e.g. 1.2.18, 3.15.4, or 12.1.5.

The first draft of a new document shall be version 0.0.1. Subsequent drafts will increase by “0.0.1” (e.g., 0.0.1, 0.0.2, 0.0.3 ...). When the document is approved and published, the *draft revision number* is dropped, and it becomes 1.0.

Existing published documents undergoing modification will be version x.y.1 for the first draft revision based on the x.y approved version of the document; subsequent drafts will increase by 0.0.1. For example, if version 1.5 of a published document is being modified, each draft revision released by the editor for review will be numbered 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.3 and so forth. Once the final draft document is approved, the *draft revision number* is dropped, and the *major/minor revision numbers* are increased as appropriate. For minor revisions, the version number increases by 0.1 (e.g. 1.6); for major revisions, the version number increases such that x increases by 1.0 and y becomes zero (e.g. 2.0).

Editorial changes (see Section 4.1) made to published documents shall use a letter designation appended to the end of the published revision number (e.g., 1.3a). Editorial revision letters start at a and then progress alphabetically. Once a new draft is created, the editorial revision letter is dropped and the document is numbered according to the method described above.

## 1.3 Public Availability

*Draft Documents (Specification, Information, and Reference)* will be made publicly available unless the editor requests they be kept private. If an editor requests to keep a *Document* private, the SFF TA TWG Chair will notify the SFF TA TWG via reflector posting. If TWG Members disagree with keeping the *Document* private, they may request a *Majority Ballot* (see Section 3.4) to approve public release of the *Draft Document*. At least one *Draft Reference Document* shall be made available to the public before publishing.

All *Published (Specification, Information, and Reference) Documents* will be made publicly available.

*Support Material* used in meetings, such as PowerPoint presentations, may be shared with non-SFF TA TWG members if the owner of the material grants permission.

All *Governing Documents* (e.g. SFF TA TWG Process Guide, Policies and Procedures, etc.) will be made publicly available.

## 2 Document States

There are 3 Document States: *Draft*, *Published*, and *Expired*. All Documents shall follow the appropriate document version numbering convention described in Section 0. The document editor and SFF TA TWG Chair are responsible for reviewing and ensuring that all document requirements are met prior to posting.

### 2.1 Draft Documents

*Draft Documents* allow for early public review/comments of all document types (unless requested to be kept private by the editor; see Section 1.3). All *Draft Documents* shall have a "DRAFT" watermark and header on all pages of the document. The date on *Draft Documents* shall reflect the date that the document was submitted for posting.

### 2.2 Published Documents

*Published Documents* reflect the work that has been done by the SFF TA TWG and are made publicly available. All *Published Documents* shall have a "PUBLISHED" header on all pages of the Document; watermarks are not permitted except for *Reference Documents*. The date on *Published Documents* shall reflect the date that Document was approved for publishing (i.e. the date the appropriate ballot closed (*Approval* or *Majority*)). Once a document is approved for publishing, the editor shall provide both MS Word and PDF versions to the SFF TA TWG Chair. The Chair then publishes the document to the public website.

### 2.3 Expired Documents

*Expired Documents* are documents that are no longer maintained by the SFF TA TWG. *Specification*, *Information*, and *Reference Documents* may be expired. *Expired Documents* are to contain: an abstract; an "EXPIRED" header on all pages of the document; a reason for expiration (choose from the list in this section); and references to any superseding documents (if applicable). *Expired Documents*, if superseded by a *Published SFF Document*, may not contain any technical content. To expire an existing document, a *Majority Ballot* is required (see Section 3.4).

NOTE: In the case of *Expired Information Documents*, the cover page shall point to the revision that contains the original content approved by the MSA.

Reasons why a document would be expired:

- Superseded: content moved to another SFF TA TWG document or to another standard (e.g. EIA, IEEE, etc.); a pointer shall be provided to the new specification
- Cancelled: Member requests development of an unpublished document be discontinued
- Voided: Member requests a published document be retracted
- Obsolete: content is no longer relevant to the industry
- Other: (description shall be specified)

### 3 Ballot Types and Voting

There are four different ballot types: *New Project*, *Review*, *Approval*, and *Majority*. Only SFF TA TWG Member companies may vote in *New Project*, *Approval*, and *Majority Ballots*; one vote from each Member company will be counted per ballot. Since there is no concept of pass or fail for *Review Ballots*, anyone may vote and provide comments. Note there is no requirement of quorum in the SFF TA TWG.

NOTE: Member companies are companies that have agreed to the SNIA IP Policy, the current SNIA Policies and Procedures, and the SNIA Bylaws and have agreed to pay the annual SFF TA TWG membership fee. Failure to pay the SFF TA TWG membership fee within a reasonable time can result in loss of membership.

#### 3.1 New Project Ballot

*New Project Ballots* are required for all *Specification* and *Reference Documents*. *New Project Ballots* are required to begin work on new *Documents* or to make changes to existing ones; they shall include a brief description of the proposed project and the name of the person/company that will be editor.

*New Project Ballots* pass after at least 3 Member companies have expressed their support. This may either occur via 7-day online ballot, during a face-to-face meeting, or on a conference call. If a *Ballot* passes online, the outcome is recorded in the SNIA website's ballot history. If a *Ballot* passes during a face-to-face meeting or conference call, the SFF TA TWG Subgroup Chair will record the project's initiation in the meeting minutes. Once a *New Project Ballot* passes, the SFF TA TWG Chair will assign an SFF document number and send an email notification to the SFF TA TWG reflector ([sff ta twg@ta.snia.org](mailto:sff_ta_twg@ta.snia.org)). The editor may then request subsequent ballots as appropriate. If a *New Project Ballot* does not pass, the editor may submit another *New Project Ballot* at any time.

#### 3.2 Review Ballot

*Review Ballots* apply to *Specification* and *Reference Documents*; they do not apply to *Information Documents*. With a *Review Ballot*, there is no concept of pass or fail. They are intended to provide the SFF TA TWG an opportunity to provide feedback to the editor during the earliest stages of development. It is recommended, but not required, that the editor provide additional support documentation, such as a redline copy, when requesting a *Review Ballot*.

*Review Ballots* are optional and last 30 calendar days. When a *Review Ballot* is requested, the SFF TA TWG Subgroup Chair shall make a PDF version of the draft document publicly available (see Section 1.3). When the ballot closes, all comments received are to be addressed by means of the comment resolution process (see Section 4) before the editor requests an *Approval Ballot* or another *Review Ballot*.

#### 3.3 Approval Ballot

*Approval Ballots* apply to *Reference* and *Specification Documents*; they do not apply to *Information Documents*. *Approval Ballots* authorize the status change of documents from development to published. The editor shall provide a *Draft Reference Document* or a *Draft Specification Document* to the Chair when requesting an *Approval Ballot*.

When an editor requests a 30-calendar day *Approval Ballot*, the SFF TA TWG Chair shall make a PDF version of the draft document publicly available (see Section 1.3). If at least 3 "yes" votes and zero technical "no" votes are received, the *Ballot* passes. Once the *Ballot* passes and all comments received are addressed (see Section 4) the document is published (see Section 2.2 for *Published Document* requirements). (NOTE: in the case of *Specification Documents*, a 60-day IP disclosure period shall also be initiated for each major revision of the document; see Section 5 for more information.) If the *Ballot* doesn't pass, the editor may request a *Review Ballot* or another *Approval Ballot* after any comments received during the initial *Approval Ballot* are addressed (see Section 4).

### 3.4 Majority Ballot

A *Majority Ballot* is a 7-calendar day ballot that passes if greater than 50% of the votes cast by eligible Member companies, not counting abstentions, were affirmative. *Majority Ballots* are used:

- To resolve disputes on how documents are classified (i.e. *Specification, Information, or Reference*)
- To approve *Information* and *Governing Documents*
- To decide if previously published documents are to be *Expired*
- To determine if *Draft Documents* may be kept private after requested by the editor
- To determine if comments received during *Review* or *Approval Ballots* may be deferred to future revisions of a document
- To determine if comments are editorial or technical in nature if there is not unanimous consent
- To determine if comments were properly addressed by the editor if there is not unanimous consent
- To approve editorial change documents

## 4 Comment Resolution

All comments received during *Review* or *Approval Ballots* are to be addressed before the editor can request a subsequent *Approval Ballot* or before a document is published. Comments may be addressed in four ways:

- 1) Accepted
- 2) Accepted in principle
- 3) Deferred to future document revision
- 4) Rejected

Additional *Review Ballots* may be requested and/or additional editors may volunteer or may be assigned by the Chair to assist in the comment resolution process.

For *Approval Ballots*, if technical changes are required as the result of a comment received, another *Approval Ballot* is required after the changes have been implemented. Editorial changes may be implemented by means of the Editorial Change Process (see Section 4.1). Disputes on how comments are categorized (technical or editorial) shall be settled by *Majority Ballot* (see Section 3.4). If the author of a technical comment does not agree with how their comment was addressed, they may request a *Majority Ballot* to force the issue back to comment resolution.

### 4.1 Editorial Change Process

This process only applies to editorial changes that were discovered during the *Approval Ballot* phase of *Specification Documents*; technical comments shall not be addressed using this process.

If editorial comments are received during the *Approval Ballot* phase, the editor shall create an editorial change document describing the proposed changes and submit it to the SFF TA TWG Chair. The Chair will set up a *Majority Ballot* (see Section 3.4) to approve the editorial change document. If the *Majority Ballot* passes, the changes documented in the editorial document shall be incorporated into the *Published Document*; the date on the published specification shall reflect the date the *Majority Ballot* approving the editorial changes closed. If the *Majority Ballot* does not pass, the editorial change document may be reworked and resubmitted for *Majority Ballot* such that the ballot may pass.

The *Published Document* may include additional editorial changes that may or may not have been identified during the *Majority Ballot* process. Such changes are limited to obvious cross reference mistakes, punctuations, spaces, capitalization, and grammatical errors. The front matter material may also be updated to reflect the latest *Specification Document* template. Such changes shall be reviewed by the *Specification Document* editor, the SFF TA TWG Chair, and a third SFF TA TWG Member company participant to ensure

no substantive changes were made. The names of those that have reviewed the post-ballot changes shall be recorded in the minutes of an SFF TA TWG call or face-to-face meeting.

## 5 IP Disclosure

All *Specification Documents* are to undergo a 60-day IP disclosure period. This disclosure period does not apply to *Reference* or *Information Documents*.

If no previous version of a specification has been through a SNIA request for disclosure, the request for disclosure shall be required. If any version of a specification has been through a previous SNIA request for disclosure, the request for disclosure shall be required only if any one (SFF member) asks for it. The SFF TA TWG Chair shall ask for a request for disclosure if major technical changes have been made to a specification.

If required, the 60-day request for disclosure shall be issued at the same time that the 30-day *Approval Ballot* is issued. The SNIA Technical Council Managing Director will issue the request for disclosure via email to all primary contacts of all SFF Member Companies.

If the *Approval Ballot* passes, the specification is published and the SFF TA TWG Disclosure page (<http://www.snia.org/sff/disclosures>) is updated to reflect that the request for disclosure is still in process for the specification. Once the request for disclosure is completed the SFF TA TWG Disclosure page is updated to reflect results. The cover page of the approved published specification shall point to the disclosure page.

If the *Approval Ballot* fails, the active request for disclosure continues to completion. The results will be made available on the SFF TA TWG Disclosure page once specification is approved and published. The specification may be updated and another *Approval Ballot* issued. Another request for disclosure will be issued only if requested.