

Global Grid Forum Management Structure and Processes**Status of this Memo**

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1. Abstract

The initial set of GGF working groups were formed in June 1999, and since that time several working groups have been added. In the Fall of 1999, a general Chair was appointed by an ad-hoc steering group. During 2000, an external advisory group was formed to give long-term strategic input to the steering group. This memo gives some background on the process by which GGF structure came about, and proposes a set of governance processes for the future operation of GGF.

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2. Introduction

The Global Grid Forum (GGF) is a group formed by individuals from within the community of researchers and practitioners engaged in research, development, deployment, and support activities related to high-capability distributed software systems, or “grids.” The scope of the applications that motivate these activities is quite broad, including for example high performance processing applications, distributed collaborative environments, distributed data analysis, and remote instrument control. A defining characteristic is a perceived need for services beyond those provided by today’s commodity Internet.

GGF is managed by a general chair (GGF Chair) in conjunction with the Global Grid Forum Steering Group (GFSG). An external advisory committee, the Global Grid Forum Advisory Committee (GFAC) provides long-term strategic input to the GGF Chair and GFSG. The work of GGF is carried out in working groups and research groups, which are managed by group chairs under the direction of the GFSG.

3. GGF Groups: Definitions

The GGF intends to emulate, as appropriate, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF, www.ietf.org) and to support and complement the Internet Standards Process as outlined in [1]. It is therefore advantageous if GGF structure and process closely mirrors the IETF. At the same time, some GGF activities more closely resemble the work of the Internet Research Task Force (IRTF, www.irtf.org). Because GGF is composed of both IETF-like and IRTF-like activities, the overall GGF structure and process will be slightly different from IETF, however, GGF groups (i.e. research groups and working groups) should ideally function in similar fashion to groups of the same name within the Internet Standards Process.

A separate document is being developed to provide an overview of the functional structure of GGF. Briefly, GGF is composed of a combination of working groups (similar to IETF working groups) and research groups (similar to IRTF research groups). For management purposes, GGF working groups and research groups are organized into “areas” under the direction of one or more GGF Steering Group (GFSG) members, who are designated “Area Directors.”

4. GGF Organization and Management

GGF is managed by a general chair, a steering group, and working group and research group chairs. The GGF steering group (GFSG) is composed of a combination of area directors and general members. An external advisory group, the GGF Advisory Committee (GFAC), provides long-term strategic input to the GGF chair and the GFSG. All of these groups and individual roles are described below.

4.1 GGF Chair

The GGF Chair is responsible for ensuring that GGF as a whole, and in particular the research groups and working groups, produce coherent, coordinated, architecturally consistent and timely output as a contribution to the overall evolution of Grid architecture and technologies. In addition, the GGF Chair may also from time to time arrange for topical or regional workshops attended by the GGF and perhaps other experts in the field.

The GGF Chair oversees the content of the GGF activities, working with the GFSG to manage the creation of new working groups, research groups, or areas and in some cases encouraging

the formation of a group rather than waiting for proposals. The GGF chair works with the GFSG to ensure that working groups and research groups are receiving adequate assistance from Area Directors and other GFSG members. The GGF Chair serves as chair of the GFSG, and as such is responsible for guiding the group to consensus and making operational decisions based on this consensus, while taking into account input from other sources including WG/RG chairs, the GFAC, and individual GGF participants.

The GGF chair works with the GFAC in areas regarding long-term strategy for GGF.

The GGF chair also works with the GGF secretariat to oversee the planning and management of GGF meetings and to ensure that the GGF website is kept up to date. The GGF chair works with the GGF Document editor to ensure smooth operation of the document process.

4.2 GGF Steering Group (GFSG) and Area Directors

The GFSG is composed of Area Directors and other senior members of the GGF community. The GFSG, chaired by the GGF Chair, oversees and coordinates the activities of Working Groups and Research Groups. The GFSG will meet face-to-face at all GGF at-large meetings and will hold regular teleconference meetings.

The GFSG is the group responsible for the GGF document series from the standpoint of architectural and technical quality and coherency, working with the GFD Editor to this end. The GFSG role in the document series process is described in [4]

Each Area Director is responsible to work with the chairs of the groups within his or her area to coordinate the work done by those groups and to oversee the document process as it relates to these groups.

4.3 GGF Advisory Committee (GFAC)

The GFAC works closely with the GGF Chair and GFSG to evaluate long-term strategies and directions for GGF, and is often asked by the GGF Chair or GFSG to comment on operational or near-term issues as well. The GFAC is run by a chair designated from within the GFAC membership. The GGF Chair serves as an ex-officio member of the GFAC. The GFAC will meet face-to-face at all GGF at-large meetings.

4.4 GGF Participants

Participants in GGF are responsible for advising the GGF Chair and/or GFSG on the chartering of new working groups and research groups and on other matters relating to the smooth operation of the GGF. Note that GGF membership is not defined formally but instead is established via participation in one or more working groups or research groups. GGF members are not required to participate in the regular GGF meetings, however it is difficult to contribute without some participation in these meetings. Individuals are thus highly encouraged to not only participate in electronic dialogs of GGF groups but also in the face-to-face meetings.

Participants are encouraged to contribute to the working groups not only by evaluating and discussing document drafts but also by participating as authors, suggesting topics for documents and/or volunteering to co-author.

4.5 Working Group or Research Group Chair

The working group or research group Chair is responsible for ensuring that the group makes progress toward the objectives outlined in the group charter, and that the group process is fair, open, and marked by consensus. An excellent overview of the responsibilities and role of a

working group chair can be found in [2], and a similar overview of the responsibilities and role of a research group chair can be found in [3].

Participants in GGF groups are volunteers and as such do not “report” to the group chairs. As a result, the group chair must foster a group culture that is productive in the sense that visible and deliberate progress is made, yet is informal and consensus-driven. A purely top-down, dictatorial management style is more likely to reduce participation than to produce good results, though a purely democratic management style is unlikely to produce either.

The group chair is responsible for ensuring that agendas are planned for GGF meeting sessions and is responsible for running those sessions. The chair will ensure that there is a group secretary who will ensure that minutes are taken at all group meetings. The chair is also responsible for ensuring that the group website (or, in some cases, a simple web page) is kept up to date so that new participants can use the website to rapidly come up to speed in order to contribute to the work of the group.

In addition, the chair monitors and guides the mailing list discussions to encourage open exchange while discouraging long discussions on issues that are not of relevance to the work of the group. The chair should periodically summarize the points of consensus and progress made in both meeting and mailing list discussions, and send regular updates to the list regarding overall GGF developments, meeting planning process, agendas, or new documents or websites of potential interest to the group.

The chair should coordinate with his or her Area Director(s) regularly, particularly relating to the document process and the progress of the group toward its objectives. The chair should work with the Area Director(s) to plan the document process, including selection and recruitment of authors and document topics and outlines.

4.6 GFD Editor

The GFD Editor works closely with the GFSG and the GGF Secretariat to oversee the logistics of the GGF document process. This involves management of the document “pipeline” with respect to the status of documents, actions taken by the GFSG in moving documents through the pipelines, and ensuring that documents conform to the requirements set forth in the [5]

4.7 GGF Secretariat and GGF Executive Director

The GGF Secretariat consists of volunteers and other support staff who perform support functions related to meeting planning and logistics, the document process, sponsorship programs, and other activities necessary to the work of GGF. The GGF Secretariat is managed by an Executive Director.

5. Internal Process: Filling GGF Management Roles

The roles of GGF Chair, GFAC member, and GFSG member involve three-year terms, with a limit of two consecutive terms. The role of working group or research group chair is for the duration of the operation of the group, providing that the chair remains effective in the role. The processes for appointments, nominations and elections, and evaluation will be developed and described in a future GGF document, however it is important to outline the way that the process is currently operating.

5.1 Working Group or Research Group Chair

Any individual may propose to form a working group or research group, and by virtue of the group’s formation that individual (may be multiple individuals) will be appointed as group chair. In

this sense, the composition of the set of working group and research group chairs is essentially a bottom-up process based on the initiative taken by individuals in forming groups.

The formation of a group requires (a) development of a charter with participation and consensus by a core of committed individuals, (b) successful recruitment of participation in the group through a BOF, and (c) approval of the charter by the GGF chair in consultation with the GFSG. A BOF is often effective as a mechanism to gauge interest and develop a draft charter, and thus the charter is not a prerequisite to holding a BOF. The process of approving the working group or research group charter involves both an evaluation of the charter and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the individuals leading the effort. In most cases, those who are leading the effort become the chair(s) of the group.

Working group and Research group chairs are expected to plan and run meetings of the group at each GGF meeting. Area Directors will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of chairs, providing feedback as needed. Chairs who fail to participate in two consecutive GGF meetings are considered to be in default of their responsibilities, and will be contacted by the Area Director(s) to discuss their status. Chairs will be replaced if they fail to participate in 3 consecutive meetings or if they are in default on multiple occasions.

5.2 GGF Chair

The initial GGF chair was nominated by the organizers of "Grid Forum" in October 1999, one year prior to the formation of GGF. The initial GGF chair was approved by plenary vote at GF2, held in Chicago, Illinois. The GGF Chair is appointed to a 3-year term by the GFAC based on nominations from the GFSG. The GFAC will work with the GFSG to evaluate the performance of the GGF Chair (including the definition and job description of the role of chair) on an annual basis.

Six months prior to the end of a 3 year term the GFAC will consult with the GFSG and with the GGF Chair to determine whether to reappoint the GGF Chair or request that the GFSG nominate a new GGF chair. If the GFAC and GFSG cannot reach consensus on a nomination for GGF chair, the GGF chair will be filled by election (see §5.5).

5.3 GGF Steering Group (GFSG)

The initial GFSG was composed of individuals who were initial organizers of "Grid Forum." In late 2000, upon formation of GGF, several "eGrid" organizers were added to the GFSG as well as several organizers of Asia-Pacific grid activities. These individuals were added by consensus of the existing members of the GFSG.

Members of the GFSG are appointed for 3-year terms by the GFAC, based on nominations from the GGF chair, the GFSG, and working group and research group chairs. The terms will be staggered to ensure continuity in the GFSG. Six months prior to the end of a 3 year term, the GGF Chair will seek input from the GFSG and working group and research group chairs to determine whether the GFSG member should be reappointed. Recommendations for reappointment or non-reappointment will be made by the GGF Chair to the GFAC. If the GFAC and GFSG cannot reach consensus on one or more GFSG nominations, the position(s) will be filled by election (see §5.5).

Steering Group members are expected to participate at each GGF meeting, and Area Directors are expected to participate in a reasonable sampling of the group sessions for their area. Area Directors will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of chairs, providing feedback as needed but at minimum on an annual basis. Area Directors are encouraged to hold regular meetings with their group chairs, e.g. at each GGF meeting. Steering Group members who fail to participate in two consecutive GGF meetings are considered to be in default of their responsibilities, and will be

contacted by the GGF Chair to discuss their status. Steering Group members will be replaced if they fail to participate in 3 consecutive meetings or if they are in default on multiple occasions.

5.4 GGF Advisory Committee (GFAC)

The initial GFAC was composed of individuals from Asia-Pacific, North America, and Europe who were nominated by the organizers of "Grid Forum" in October 1999, one year prior to the formation of GGF. The initial GFAC was approved by plenary vote at GF2, held in Chicago, Illinois, USA. In October 2000, upon formation of GGF, several additional members were added to the GFAC by approval of the GFSG. The initial GFAC composition was established with 4 North American, 2 European, and 1 Asia-Pacific representative as a reflection of participation levels by region as of October 2000.

Beginning in 2002, members of the GFAC will be elected via an annual election (see §5.5) for 3-year terms. The terms will be staggered to ensure that each election displaces no more than one third of the GFAC members

5.5 Elections Process

Elections will be held annually during the summer GGF meeting. At least 4 months prior to the election, the GGF Secretariat will facilitate the formation of a nominating committee consisting of 2 members of the GFAC, 2 members of the GFSG, and 3 WG/RG chairs. This group will poll the GFAC, GFSG, and WG/RG chairs for nominations. The nominating committee will select a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 candidates for each open position to be filled in the election. Elections will be held in a special, closed GFAC/GFSG/Chairs meeting by ballot, with all active RG and WG chairs, members of the GFAC, and members of the GFSG eligible to vote. No absentee or proxy voting will be allowed.

6. Formation and Management of Working Groups and Research Groups

Working Groups (WG) and Research Groups (RG) are the activity centers in the GGF. A WG is typically created to address a particular implementation, or operational area related to infrastructure necessary for building "grids," and a RG is typically created to address topics where there may not yet be sufficient experience to develop detailed technical specifications or recommendations track documents. WGs may or may not have long-term membership, however RGs are expected to have stable, long-term membership in order to promote collaboration and teamwork. Participation in both types of group is by individual contributors, rather than by representatives of organizations.

A WG or RG may be established at the initiative of an individual or group of individuals. Anyone interested in creating a GGF WG or RG must submit a charter for the proposed group to the GGF Chair along with a list of proposed founding members. At least one BOF session must be held at a general GGF meeting. The draft charter is not a prerequisite for holding the BOF, as indeed the BOF may be used to gauge interest or to develop a draft charter. The GGF Chair in consultation with the GGF Steering Group (GFSG) will review the charter for approval. In some cases a group will be encouraged to continue to meet as a BOF until critical mass or focus can be achieved.

If approved, a link to the group website (may be a site or a single, simple web page) is placed on the main GGF Web site, the Area website (if one exists), and announced via the GGF electronic newsletter.

More information on group formation, including an overview of charter requirements and evaluation criteria, can be found in [4].

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This document attempts to capture the recommendations of many members of the GGF steering group, GGF advisory committee, and working group and research group chairs as well as the foundational work that is documented in the references.

9. Glossary

Area	A set of loosely related working groups and/or research groups, managed by one or more Area Directors.
Area Director	Member of the GGF Steering Group with management responsibility for a set of working groups and/or research groups, known as an "area."
GGF	Global Grid Forum, see www.globalgridforum.org
GGF Chair	Chair of the GFSG and general chair of GGF.
GFAC	Global Grid Forum Advisory Committee, an external advisory group.
GFSG	Global Grid Forum Steering Group, consisting of selected senior GGF participants and Area Directors, chaired by the GGF Chair.
IETF	Internet Engineering Task Force, see www.ietf.org
IRTF	Internet Research Task Force, see www.irtf.org
RG	Research Group, see §3.
WG	Working Group, see §3.

10. References

The following references were used extensively in the preparation of some sections of this document.

- [1] Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process – Revision 3", RFC 2026, October 1996.
- [2] Bradner, S., "IETF Working Group Guidelines and Procedures", RFC 2418, September 1998.
- [3] Weinrib, A. and Postel, J., "IRTF Research Group Guidelines and Procedures", RFC 2014, October 1996.
- [4] Catlett, C., Foster, I. and Johnston, W., "Global Grid Forum Structure," October 2001.
- [5] Catlett, C., "Global Grid Forum Documents and Recommendations: Process and Requirements." October 2001.

11. Intellectual Property Statement

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