1. **Definitions –** per <u>CH-01</u>.

2. **Overview –** This specification defines a contest-style method for the procurement of random map scripts used in competitive Age of Empires II game-play. Maps selected through this process are expected to provide a handsome and original theater for an AOE2 competition, with a variety of strategies and situations optimizing unpredictability and entertainment.

3. **No Campaigning –** Unless otherwise stated in subsequent sections of this document, campaigning is forbidden. Maps that violate this rule will be regarded as disruptive to the processes of this specification and disqualified.

4. **Map Submission –** Any approved source of supply may submit random map scripts for potential use in the competition, according to the following requirements:
   A. Submissions shall be sent privately as a direct message to the Map Contest Leader before the deadline. No other method will be accepted, and publication by any map supplier of submission or intent to submit will be regarded as campaigning. NOTE: Incidental exposure of the map due to collaboration/troubleshooting, to achieve desired features or play-test is encouraged, as long as the motivation behind the map's development is not stated publicly.
   B. Submission message shall contain a table whose rows correspond to the list of maps, and whose columns are important details for each. Table 1 provides an example with proper formatting:

| Sample Map Name [.rms] | Internet Access Link | Example Exceptions to General Map Specification & Justification For Why They are Acceptable | Additional Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cracked_Overlook | https:// … etc. | Filesize exceeds requirement by 1%, but this is small and expected to have little impact on load time. | Players may train goats at the mill in 25 seconds for 25 wood. |
| Serene_Vale | https:// … etc. | Town Center built in nomad-style takes 2 minutes longer to get underway than the requirement, but another section of the map contains some entertaining hero units, so casters/viewers will not become bored waiting for action. | Pond in center may be docked once blocking shore fish are removed. |

*Table 1: Example of Map Submission Message Format*

| Bill of Materials: | | Alchemy AOE | SPC-4 | Revision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CH-01 | Definitions | | | |
| SPC-5 | Random Map Requirements, General | | | - |
| SPC-6 | Competitivity, Random Map | Contest, Custom Random Maps | | |
| | | --------- Document Approvals ---------- | | Date: |
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The closer a map appears to the top of the table, the higher submission priority it has to that map-maker. For the example of Table 1, the creator is indicating that if the contest receives an excessive number of submissions, they would prefer Cracked_Overlook to be evaluated. The maximum number of non-header rows in this table shall not exceed the planned number of custom maps in the competition map pool.

C.  The number of maps evaluated per scripter shall be equal, unless a creator did not submit as many maps as the others, and larger volumes are required. For example, if a low number of suppliers participate in the map contest such that three or four maps are evaluated from each, but one of the scripters only submitted one or two maps, then that is the maximum evaluated for that creator.

D.  On the submission deadline, the Map Contest Leader shall collect scripts, starting with the top rows of the Table 1, and respond to the submission message confirming the number that are under consideration from each creator. Follow-up messages may be sent if that number increases as a result of the General Screening.

E.  Any number of theoretical questions with screenshots are permitted for discussion in the appropriate channel/supplier-portal, but no formal review shall occur prior to submission deadline.

5.  **Evaluation Process** – Random Map Scripts submitted for the contest shall be filtered according to the three phases outlined in the following sections:

A.  General Screening Phase – The Map Contest Leader shall appoint a team to review random map script submissions against the general requirements of SPC-5. Table 2 below outlines how they will be dispositioned:

| Moving on to *Competitivity Evaluation (satisfies at least 1)* | Declined for Further Processing |
|---|---|
| -Map submitted is complaint with all requirements.<br><br>-Map is expected to be complaint with all requirements, after receiving feedback from the evaluation team that can be implemented in the allowed time.<br><br>-Map is complaint with and/or expected to be compliant with most requirements in the allowed time. The map's creator made a compelling argument for accepting any non-conformities, and exception was granted by the evaluation team. | -Map (as submitted) fails to comply with all requirements, or is not expected to comply within the allowed time. Exception is either not requested or not granted. |

*Table 2: Conditions for Map Acceptance in General Phase*

The review team may determine, in their discretion, both of the following:
1.  Whether or not to grant exception, based on justification provided.
2.  How long it would take for any changes to be implemented.
Any number of exceptions may be requested to any requirements, but they must all be justified by the creator and the review team must accept each.

B.  Technical Screening Phase – The Map Contest Leader shall appoint one or more judges to determine competitivity of random map scripts per SPC-6. Typically such judges are highly experienced players who can recognize strategic options and potential exploits on a given map, and tend to be 1800+ on the 1v1 ranked ladder. The following conditions apply:

1.  Only random map scripts that satisfied the general requirements of the previous phase will be evaluated for competitivity. These maps shall be renamed generically (E. G. "Map 1", "Map 2", etc.) prior to judgment, and de-coupled from the identity of their creator to ensure the following:
    a.  Results are impersonal.
    b.  Creators who were willing to take risks and try new ideas are spared the potential humiliation of publicly receiving a low competitivity score.
2.  Judges shall not have access to any of the scripts during scoring. The Map Contest Leader shall meet with the judge(s) and facilitate a screen share to show each map, panning and re-generating as requested, allowing everyone to see and debate as necessary.
3.  Prior to screen-sharing maps, the Contest Leader shall download mods to make them appear as hideous as possible, thus mitigating any cosmetic bias. Such mods include:
    a.  Age of Cubes standard resolution
    b.  Simplistic Terrain Colors (Soft Edges) – With Grid
    c.  Useless Plants Remover
4.  Exception to competitivity requirements shall not be granted. Failure to procure a sufficient number of custom maps for the event may result in use of standard maps to fill the balance.
5.  A copy of the scored competitivity worksheet for each map, as completed by the judge(s), shall be shared privately with the map creator to provide feedback for future contests.

C.  Artistic Evaluation Phase – Whereas the technical phase of map judgment is typically performed by a small number of experts, the artistic evaluation performed by a large group where skill is less important.
1.  Only random maps meeting the technical requirements of the previous section shall be scored.
2.  The following subjective categories may be weighted differently depending on need:
    a.  Visual Appeal/Readability – How "good" the map looks. Tasteful application of terrain layering, blending, and eye-candy object placement makes this map look like it could be a place somewhere in the real world, or a similar fantasy world. The beautification choices do not come at the expense of map readability; there isn't *so* much stuff going on that players would have difficulty seeing resources or units/buildings. NOTE: Readability is *not* a philosophical question of which strategies are best for the map.
    b.  Originality – How much the map explores uncharted territory, introducing new configurations and concepts not seen in other random maps.
    c.  Thematic Appropriateness – If a theme is specified for the event, then this category is a reflection of how well the map represents its parent competition. If no theme is specified, then this category is a scoring for how well the map fits its own nomenclature.
3.  Positive campaigning shall be permitted to sway public opinion. The following are published for each map of in this phase:
    a.  Original name
    b.  Description written by creator
    c.  Screenshots of important locations
    d.  Identity of the scripter.
4.  If a voting system is implemented, then identification shall be collected from all voters to ensure no duplication/cheating. Individual scoring/preferences shall not be shared publicly by the Map Contest Leader.
5.  Maps with the total highest scores shall be included in the competition's map pool.

| Revision | Description | Change Document | Date |
|----------|-------------|-----------------|------|
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