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GSM AND UMTS

The Creation of Global Mobile Communication

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Edited by **Friedhelm Hillebrand**



Includes CD-ROM

GSM and UMTS

The Creation of Global Mobile Communication

Edited by

Friedhelm Hillebrand

Consulting Engineer, Germany

With contributions from 37 key players involved in the work for GSM and UMTS



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Chapter 9: The Third Generation Partnership Project (3GPP)

Section 1: The Creation of 3GPP

Karl Heinz Rosenbrock¹

Having read the title, it should not surprise you that this section deals with the creation of the Partnership Project for the standardisation of a Third Generation Mobile Communications System (3GPP).

Why, you may ask, in a history book about the GSM and UMTS development, do I want to talk about the establishment of a partnership project? Isn't it the most natural thing to do? This is, of course, a stance an insider can take today – after nearly 30 months of 3GPP's creation and the smooth and successful running of this project.

As this section will eventually show, it took quite some time, filled with tough and even passionate discussions, before the goal was achieved. Approaching this idea from a rather philosophical point of view, one should not be too surprised about the big efforts needed, because already the old Greek ancestors knew that "prior to being successful the Gods will demand some sweat"...

This section starts with some general considerations leading the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) membership towards a global approach in standardisation and then deals with the establishment of an ad hoc group of the ETSI Board (UGG = UMTS Globalisation Group) to address the matter of global standardisation in this context and the related meetings and discussions. Afterwards, the 3GPP will be described in a rather general manner, highlighting how it works, who the stakeholders are and dealing with the results achieved so far. The section is rounded up with the relationship towards the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and other initiatives as well as a few concluding remarks.

9.1.1 First Approaches to Globalisation

The re-engineering process ETSI, the "Excellent" Telecommunications Standards Institute in Europe, undertook in the years 1995/1996 – only 7 years after its creation – resulted in among others a kind of mission statement for the Institute: "Making international standards happen first in Europe".

¹ The views expressed in this section are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of his affiliation.

² One of my cruel translations of a German idiom "Vor den Erfolg haben die Götter den Schweiß gesetzt"...

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⁸The 3GPP Agreement and the 3GPP Project Description can be found on the attached CD-ROM in *Annex 1*.

The 3GPP has no legal status. Ownership (including copyright) of the specifications and reports it produces is shared between the partners. The 3GPP process includes a conversion (transposition) of the project's output into official standards and reports by one or more of the OPs.

The specifications being prepared by 3GPP are evolved in part from the enormously successful GSM standard, which is currently (February 2001) serving over 400 million subscribers in more than 140 countries. Building on this massive installed base, the system being specified by 3GPP will be an attractive upgrade path for existing operators and users. It also has an assured compatibility with GSM – good news for both operators and users who are unable, or unwilling, to upgrade to 3G.

Paramount among the 3GPP specifications is the definition of UTRA, the innovative radio access technology that is the key to the new system's high data rates and dramatically improved performance. UTRA is spectrum-efficient and supports FDD and TDD modes. This interface has been accepted by ITU as a member of the IMT-2000 family – or more correctly, as *two* family members: IMT-DS, the FDD mode; and IMT-TC, the TDD mode. IMT-2000 family membership requires the ability for users to roam globally and seamlessly, which implies interoperability with other family members: 3GPP thus co-operates closely with the 3GPP2 project which is specifying another family member, a 3G CDMA system based on an evolution of the ANSI-41 architecture.

9.1.3.1 How Does 3GPP Work?

3GPP has been designed to minimise delays and inefficiencies. As a result, it has a "flat" organisational structure and a large degree of distributed autonomy. Overall project planning and co-ordination is the responsibility of the PCG, with input primarily from the OPs, guided by the MRPs. It is mainly at this level that regulatory requirements, provided by the telecommunications administrations and governments around the world, are taken into account.

The development of the specifications is performed by TSGs and their subordinate working groups. Here, the main participation is by technical experts from the individual members of the OPs. Individual members in their capacity as ITU members are also responsible for carrying the results of the 3GPP work to the ITU.

At the time of the creation, 3GPP had structured around four principal aspects of the 3G system being defined as TSGs:

- TSG CN: core network
- TSG RAN: radio access network
- TSG SA: services and systems aspects
- TSG T: terminals

Each TSG is authorised to develop and approve specifications and reports within its scope, and TSG SA also has a role of co-ordinating the work of the TSGs at a more detailed level than the PCG. The result is a process that is able to rapidly produce and approve specifications and reports in response to the needs of the market, although it is important to note that the deliverables do not have a formal status until they have been transposed by one or more of the OPs.

The formal status is necessary for regulatory and other purposes in the various regions, and all the OPs have committed themselves to complete this process rapidly. Each OP will apply

its own procedures, appropriate to their respective regions. As the official European SDO within 3GPP, ETSI recognises the 3GPP output as ETSI Technical Specifications and ETSI Technical Reports without a need for any further endorsement within the Institute. This means that the 3GPP documents are published – within a matter of a few weeks – as identical text directly as ETSI deliverables. In addition, ETSI is transposing, i.e. adapting, a few of the initial 3GPP specifications into ENs for specific European regulatory requirements. This is happening in parallel with the publication of the initial Technical Specifications and will not impede the implementation of 3G in Europe.

9.1.3.1.1 Electronic Working

3GPP has taken a leading role in changing the traditional ways of standards making. A very heavy dependence is now placed on electronic working, both outside and within meetings, advancing a trend that started in ETSI a year or two ago. This means that paper copies of draft documents have been almost entirely eliminated, saving time and expense, and making a significant contribution to the environment.

Given that 3GPP has participants from all over the world, the use of the Internet, e-mail exploders and other such facilities have proved invaluable for distributing and sharing information, working drafts and so on. Delegates to meetings had already become used to downloading working documents from the Internet and having updates to the documents distributed in meetings on CD-ROM. But in recent months, in meetings around the world participants have experienced the benefits of a local area network (LAN) solution as the latest step in improving working methods. ETSI's headquarters premises already have LANs in all its meeting rooms, but most other venues currently rely on temporary LANs (wired or radio), using equipment and support kindly donated by individual members.

Such facilities permit delegates to access all the meeting documents electronically from their laptop computers. As a result, the huge burden of producing paper copies (as many as 10 000 pages per delegate for some meetings) can be eliminated. Delegates can access new documents as soon as they are available, rather than having to wait for paper copies to be made or for the documents to be distributed by other means, such as diskette or CD-ROM.

9.1.3.1.2 Project Support

For administrative and support purposes the 3GPP Partners have established a Mobile Competence Centre (MCC) which is hosted by ETSI at its premises in Sophia Antipolis, Southern France. The MCC was created in March 1999 to provide support not only to the 3GPP but also to ETSI's own studies in mobile technologies. A full description of MCC including the financing is given in Chapter 15, Section 3.

9.1.3.2 Who are the Stakeholders in 3GPP?

3GPP has attracted a very strong commitment from organisations and companies around the world, reflecting the truly global nature of the project. There are currently six OPs (in alphabetical order):

- The Association of Radio Industries and Businesses (ARIB), Japan

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being TD-SCDMA, proposed by CWTS. A similar group, 3GPP2, is preparing the cdma2000 specifications, UWC-136 TDMA specifications are being developed principally by UWCC, and DECT specifications are defined by a set of ETSI standards (Figure 9.1.1).

Since the UWCC and ETSI are both partners in 3GPP (as an MRP and OP respectively), there is direct liaison between the Project and these two sources of specifications for other IMT-2000 family members.

When 3GPP and 3GPP2 were created it was felt that the interests of each group were sufficiently different to require them to remain separate but here again many of the OPs and MRPs are common to both groups, so there are natural channels for information exchange. Particular instances of formal co-operation between the groups were the two joint 3GPP-3GPP2 workshops held in 1999 to address the "Hooks and Extensions" issue aimed at ensuring interworking between the respective technologies.

In addition to all this, the 3GPP TSGs and their working groups are encouraged to liaise directly with relevant technical bodies within the Project as well as among the Partners.

9.1.6 Conclusions

The attentive reader, and let's assume that you are one, may still be astonished to learn what big efforts have been necessary in order to establish 3GPP.

In the meantime, i.e. in the course of year 2000 nearly the whole work of the former ETSI TC SMG has been incorporated into 3GPP, to a large extent within the new TSG GERAN.

Well, our Japanese friends were not happy about this shift because they feared that it could result in delays in the 3G introduction in their country. They accepted this because a separate TSG for the GSM work was created.

Trying to recall the heated discussions within ETSI about the scope of 3GPP from 1998, one has to admit that such a move would have been violently rejected by a lot of ETSI members, maybe even by the majority. Using a philosophic approach, one can, of course, state that time helps healing (even wounds).

Today, i.e. February 2001, we can conclude from ETSI's point of view that all standardisation work related to further evolution of the second generation mobile system, i.e. GSM, and to UMTS is being done well within 3GPP. Thus, the objective to avoid parallel work within ETSI TBs and 3GPP has been fully achieved.

The ability of organisations and individuals around the world to co-operate and make available a full set of stable, agreed 3GPP specifications in 1 year is a remarkable achievement, one that is unprecedented in the world of standardisation. 3GPP meetings have taken place in many parts of the world, emphasising the strong commitment of the SDOs from China, Europe, Japan, Korea and the US. The MRPs have also lent very strong support to the work. Thanks to this widespread and determined commitment it has been possible to meet the very aggressive targets for 3G.

But Release 99 was only the first step – the workload has continued to intensify this year, as the initial specifications are refined and many new ones added, opening the path to full, seamless, global 3G services, changing forever the way that people communicate.

In the meantime, 3GPP has changed the designation of the releases and dropped to mention the year in order to avoid irritations and wrong expectations. Release 99 was first established in December 1999 and got its maturity in the course of year 2000. In 2000, more than 5700 change requests were implemented. The next big event will be Release #4 as a result of the

series of TSG meetings scheduled for March 2001 in Palm Springs, US. This will obviously result in a further stabilisation and extension of the UMTS specifications.

3GPP is running very well. The individual members from the six OPs seem to be very satisfied with this arrangement – and the production line is in full swing.

Without exaggeration, one can give 3GPP the attribute of a success story. One may quote again here Mr Ed Roney who even addressed the 3GPP concept – prior to its realisation – as a “paradigm shift”.

As the results of the GSM and UMTS related standardisation work represent a great part of ETSI's deliverables, it might be justified to note here that during the year 2000, ETSI published more than seven new deliverables each working day (Monday through Friday), i.e. one deliverable per hour!

Further information may be found on the 3GPP website at <http://www.3gpp.org>.

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Chapter 9: The Third Generation Partnership Project (3GPP)

Section 2: UMTS in 3GPP (December 1998–May 2001)

Niels Peter Skov Andersen¹

9.2.1 A Change of Environment

In the period 1982 until end of 1998 the work on the GSM standard, and in the later part of the period on UMTS, had been performed in the same environment, starting under CEPT and later transferred into ETSI. The Technical Committee GSM, during this period renamed to SMG, and its working groups (Sub Technical Committees) had continuously existed and evolved. The same was the case for the working methods and procedures used within the work. Over time with the success of the GSM system more and more interested parties became involved in the work including parties from outside the original CEPT area. However, this was all a relatively slow evolution and no major revolutions in the organisation or the working methods occurred in this period.

After all these years of continuity in the work the discussions around the creation of 3GPP and the decision to establish 3GPP for the initial phase of UMTS² naturally created some uncertainty amongst the members of SMG. Especially the resulting split of the GSM standardisation, with the responsibility for the GSM core network transferred to 3GPP, but the responsibility for the GSM radio access Network maintenance remained in ETSI in SMG. This caused some concern amongst many delegates. Also the internal structure for the technical work within 3GPP was different from the well-known structure in SMG. SMG was based on a technical plenary with a number of working groups (SMG1, SMG2, ..., SMG12) performing the detailed technical work. The SMG plenary was the approving authority for the results of the work performed by the working groups. Also the plenary was the group responsible for approval of all new work items and the content of the releases. The structure for the work in 3GPP, as agreed by the partners, was quite different. The project

¹The views expressed in this section are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of his affiliation.

²The term UMTS is throughout this section used to keep consistency of terminology with the other chapters and partners. The term UMTS do not appear in the 3GPP agreement, which defines the system as a third generation mobile system based on an evolved GSM core network and UTRAN (including UTRAN (FDD and TDD modes)).

was organised with four equal Technical Specification Groups (TSGs), who had complete autonomy for their area of responsibility, i.e. they were responsible for approval of new work items and final approval of deliverables. The four technical groups originally defined were:

TSG-CN	Responsible for the core network development
TSG-RAN	Responsible for the radio access network based on UTRAN (FDD and TDD modes)
TSG-SA	Responsible for services and system aspects
TSG-T	Responsible for Terminal and UIM

In addition to the technical groups the 3GPP organisation has a Project Coordination Group (PCG). However, the role of this PCG cannot be compared to the role the SMG plenary played. The SMG plenary was an open technical group with the approving authority in all technical questions including approval of new work items. The 3GPP PCG is a closed group with a defined membership consisting of a limited number representative of each of the partners (SDOs, MRPs) and the leadership (chairman and two vice-chairmen) of each TSG. Thus as a closed group the role of the PCG becomes more like a board overlooking the overall well being of the project.

This structure made many long-term SMG delegates concerned about how the overall coordination of the project could be ensured. This new structure was not introduced to overcome known deficits of the SMG organisation, but in my opinion, by political considerations to ensure that no single individual, individual member, organisational partner could obtain a controlling position in the project.

9.2.2 The First Two TSG Meetings

The inauguration meeting of the 3GPP TSGs was held in December 1998 in Sophia Antipolis, France. In the process of creation of 3GPP this was the first time that the 3GPPs real work force – the technical experts – met. The main objectives for this first meeting was to get the work started. One of the elements of the meeting was a presentation from the different partners on the status of their work on the third generation mobile system, the work, which they now were in the process of handing over to 3GPP.

Listening to the presentations and the discussions during the breaks it was very obvious that the background for standardization amongst the delegates was quite different. As an example, I remember that during the coffee break just after I, as chairman of ETSI SMG2, had presented the status of the UMTS radio work in ETSI, and had ended my presentation by stating that the UMTS radio work would only be on the agenda of one more meeting of ETSI SMG2. This was in order to complete the documentation to be handed over to 3GPP and then the work on UMTS radio in ETSI would cease, a small group of non-ETSI delegates came to me and asked "if all work on UMTS radio in ETSI ceases, how do the Europeans then coordinate their views on 3GPP?" Coming from the ETSI SMG background this was a completely unexpected question, as the working procedures for 3GPP were very similar to those of ETSI, it was clear to me that the contributions to 3GPP in general should come from the individual members – the companies, regulators etc. – in their own name and not as regional contributions. I explained this, but I also understood that for delegates with a background in international standardization from, e.g. ITU this was the normal way of thinking. During the

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Annex 2: Organisation Evolution of the Technical Groups

Section 3: 3GPP

Adrian Scrase¹

A2.3.1 December 1998 to Mid-1999

During the preparatory talks that led to the creation of 3GPP, many discussions took place to find the optimum organizational structure. The ETSI TC SMG model had worked well for many years and it was very tempting to adopt a similar structure and just widen the sphere of participation. However, some voices called for a more radical approach in order to streamline the structure and to reduce the time taken for specifications production. As a result of these discussions, the following key principles were established on which 3GPP was structured:

- Minimum number of hierarchical levels;
- Large degree of distributed autonomy;
- Clear separation of technical activities from political and administrative activities.

When 3GPP was created, four Technical Specification Groups (TSGs) were formed to undertake the preparation of technical specifications. The four TSGs were as follows:

- TSG CN – core network
- TSG RAN – radio access network
- TSG SA – services and system aspects
- TSG T – terminals

Each of the TSGs was authorized to develop and approve specifications and reports within its terms of reference. This represented a departure from the more traditional approach where a single entity (i.e. a plenary) within a project has the authority to approve a project's output. It was believed that by distributing the approval authority, the time taken to produce specifications would be reduced since this effectively removes one level of hierarchy from the approval procedure. However, it was apparent from the outset that distributing the approval of specifications would lead to a greater requirement for technical co-ordination and thus TSG SA was tasked to perform a co-ordination role across all TSGs. This co-ordination role

¹ The views expressed in this section are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of his affiliation entity.