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**Project
Management**

**Technical
Bodies**

**Delegates
Corner**

**Project
Support**

**Contact
3GPP**

Quick Access

About 3GPP

Specifications

Membership

Meetings

Email Lists

FAQ

3GPP Specifications - Releases (and phases and stages)

[Spec download](#) | [Titles and spec numbers](#) | [Current version](#) | [Releases](#) | [Numbering scheme](#) | [Change Requests](#)
[Published specifications](#) | [Historical information](#) | [Work plan](#) | [TSG Working methods](#) | [Drafting rules](#) | [Delegates corner](#) | [ASN.1](#)

To meet new market requirements, 3GPP specifications are continually being enhanced with new features. In order to provide developers with a stable platform for implementation while at the same time allowing the addition of new features, the 3GPP uses a system of parallel "releases", all of which are listed in the table below.

Features and contents of each Release. The list of specifications needed for each 3G and GSM release is listed in the TR mentioned in the table below. An overview of the features/functionality/contents of each release can be found [here](#). A simple list of Features per Release can be found [here](#). A resumé of the evolution of the several phases of CAMEL can be found [here](#).

GSM/EDGE Release	3G Release	Abbreviated name	Spec version number <i>see note 4</i>	Functional freeze date (indicative only) <i>see note 3</i>
Phase 2+ Release 8 (will be TR 41.101)	Release 8 (will be TR 21.101)	Rel-8	8.x.y	Stage 1 freeze December 2007 ?
Phase 2+ Release 7 (TR 41.101)	Release 7 (TR 21.101)	Rel-7	7.x.y	Stage 1 freeze September 2005 Stage 2 freeze September 2006 Stage 3 freeze March-September 2007
Phase 2+ Release 6 (TR 41.101)	Release 6 (TR 21.101)	Rel-6	6.x.y	December 2004 - March 2005
Phase 2+ Release 5 (TR 41.101)	Release 5 (TR 21.101)	Rel-5	5.x.y	March - June 2002
Phase 2+ Release 4 (TR 41.101)	Release 4 (TR 21.101)	Rel-4	4.x.y	March 2001
-	Release 2000	R00	4.x.y	<i>see note 1 below</i>
Phase 2+ Release 2000	-		9.x.y	
-	Release 1999 (TR 21.101)	R99	3.x.y	March 2000
Phase 2+ Release 1999 (TR 01.01)	-		8.x.y	
Phase 2+ Release 1998 (TR 01.01)	-	R98	7.x.y	early 1999
Phase 2+ Release 1997 (TR 01.01)	-	R97	6.x.y	early 1998
Phase 2+ Release 1996 (TR 01.01)	-	R96	5.x.y	early 1997
Phase 2 (TR 01.01)	-	Ph2	4.x.y	1995
Phase 1 (TR 01.01)	-	Ph1	3.x.y	1992

Note 1: The term "Release 2000" was used only temporarily and was eventually replaced by "Release 4" and "Release 5" (most elements originally in Release 2000 were renamed Release 4, but some were deferred until Release 5)..

Note 2: Specifications with a version number of 0.x.y, 1.x.y or 2.x.y indicates that it is a new, draft, specification which has not yet been approved. The anticipated release is normally shown on the cover of the document.

Note 3: After "freezing", a Release can have no further additional functions added. However, detailed protocol specifications (stage 3) may not yet be complete. In addition, OA&M specs and test specs may lag by some considerable time. A "frozen" Technical Specification is one which can have no further category B or C (new or modified functionality) Change Requests; thus all TSs pertaining to a Release may not necessarily be frozen at the time the Release itself is functionally frozen.

Note 4: In the [version](#) number, the field "x" is incremented at each change in the spec resulting from one or more Change Requests approved by the responsible TSG. Field "y" is incremented whenever an editorial change is made to a specification; editorial changes are those which cannot in any way change the technical interpretation of the spec, and are introduced at the discretion of the Support Team. Exceptionally, field "y" is incremented when a newly-provided version of a spec is found to be flawed due to, for example, misimplementation of a newly-approved CR; however, this circumstance is only permitted during the three-week period following the end of an SA (or GERAN) plenary, during which new versions of specs are produced. Every change of version is documented in the "change history" annex of the spec. When "x" is incremented, field "y" is reset to zero. When the Release field (the first digit) is incremented, fields "x" and "y" are reset to zero.

Other associated terms

Stages. The term "stage" derives from the CCITT (now ITU-T) method for categorizing specifications. "Stage 1" refers to the service description from a service-user's point of view. "Stage 2" is a logical analysis, breaking the problem down into functional elements and the information flows amongst them. "Stage 3" is the concrete implementation of the protocols between physical elements onto which the functional elements have been mapped.

Phases. This term has two distinct usages within the 3GPP:

- in reference to GSM specifications, Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 2+ referred to releases of specifications (see table above);
- some features within GSM/3G specifications have been enhanced over the years. For example, enhancements to the CAMEL functionality are referred to as CAMEL phase 2, CAMEL phase 3 CAMEL phase 4 etc. CAMEL is one of only a few examples within the 3GPP using the term in this sense.

Further information.

- The mechanisms for creating and maintaining specifications are described in [TR 21.900](#). A presentation outlining the release and change request process can be found [here](#).

last updated:

2007-10-23: Release freeze dates brought up to date

2006-04-21: link to list of Features per Release added

2005-08-16: table entries for Rel-7 and Rel-8 added

2005-07-21: links to version numbering page added

2005-07-07: Note 4 to table added.

2005-01-06: Rel-6 freeze date corrected; Note 3 to table added.

2003-11-14: Link to description of CAMEL phases added.

2003-06-26: 01.01 / 41.101 and 21.101 spec numbers inserted in the table in place of their predecessors; hyperlinks to specific spec directories replaced with links to their info pages

2002-07-18