



BRM Fact Sheet on DIS 29500/Office Open XML

Office Open XML (OOXML) is the office file format derived from Microsoft Corporation's Office 2007 program. It is currently being fast-tracked through ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee (JTC1) as DIS 29500, and will now be considered at the Ballot Resolution Meeting (BRM) on February 25-29, 2008 in Geneva¹. There, participating national standards bodies (NBs) will vote, if necessary, on individual *disposition of comments* that Ecma will circulate in response to the comments that accompanied the national bodies' votes during the ballot period that ended September 2. In light of these, NBs may opt to alter their original vote² within 30 days of the end of the BRM.

The rules governing the BRM are contained in the JTC Directives.³ The JTC1 Secretariat has published "Frequently Asked Questions"⁴ to the BRM (reproduced below in Appendix). While the FAQs should provide answers to commonly-asked questions, for members of national standards bodies, there are several important points to remember:

- **NBs may change their vote in any way whether or not they attend the BRM.** Voting is not one-directional. As the FAQ makes clear, "NBs that voted in the 2 September ballot may change their vote from any of 'approve', 'disapprove' or 'abstain' to any of 'approve', 'disapprove' or 'abstain'"; they can do this during the course of the BRM and up to 30 days afterwards. The FAQ also states, "All ISO/IEC JTC 1 NBs will receive the results of the BRM immediately after the meeting. Upon review of the BRM results, any NB that voted in the 2 September ballot may change their vote, whether or not their expert(s) attended the BRM."
- **NBs should concern themselves with all the comments submitted on OOXML, not just their own.** This is because the new document that will likely be produced after the BRM will be significantly different from what was reviewed before September 2. Changes can be made for other NBs that affect the comments of your own NB, as well as modify the document in serious ways in other areas that raise new concerns for your NB.

¹ <http://www.cicg.ch/en/index.php>

² The ballot results and comments submitted by National Bodies (NBs) are now also password-protected; see Document Number 904 at <http://www.jtc1sc34.org/repository/0950.htm>.

³ See JTC1 Directives, Section 13.6-13.13

(http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink/fetch/2000/2122/327993/327973/JTC_1_Directives_Ed_3_2007.pdf?nodeid=6182390&vernum=0).

⁴ <http://www.jtc1sc34.org/repository/0932.htm>

- **NBs have a right to view Ecma's proposed responses to ballot comments.** Ecma has so far delivered proposed resolutions to 662 of the 3,522 comments submitted by NBs, but has done so via a ponderous, non-public mechanism that has in practice delayed many JTC1 NBs from having access to them.⁵ If you are a JTC1 or SC34 member and need access to the consolidated responses from Ecma, you should contact JTC1.⁶
- **Technical concerns that cannot be fixed by editorial changes do constitute a valid reason for rejecting DIS 29500/OOXML.** There are technical issues that cannot be fixed by textual changes to DIS 29500 and will therefore not be discussed at the BRM (the BRM is a meeting which will address only those comments that can be fixed by editorial changes). Other technical issues in comments made by NBs in their 2 September ballot returns will not be considered, but do constitute entirely valid grounds for rejecting OOXML and should be considered by NBs in reconsidering their vote.
- **IPR concerns also constitute a valid reason for rejecting DIS 29500/OOXML.** While IPR issues are not amenable to textual changes to DIS 29500 and will therefore not be discussed at the BRM, IPR issues do constitute entirely valid grounds for rejecting OOXML, and should also be considered by NBs in reconsidering their vote.

ISO/IEC DIS 29500 Ballot Resolution Meeting (BRM)⁷

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The rules governing the Ballot Resolution Process for DIS 29500 are published in the ISO/IEC JTC 1 Directives. This document is an informative guide to the process, intended to clarify the procedures and supply additional supporting information. Any queries on this document in particular, or the ballot resolution process in general, should be addressed to the ISO/IEC JTC 1 SC 34 Secretariat, who administers the procedure.

1.1 Why is a BRM being held?

A ballot resolution process is an integral part of the Fast Track process as described by the JTC 1 Directives. In the usual course of events, standards submitted to the Fast Track will be subject to a BRM to resolve comments that have been submitted with the preceding letter ballot.

1.2 Why did ODF (ISO/IEC 26300:2006) not have a BRM?

All the National Standards Bodies (NBs) voting on this text voted to “approve” it, and the comments accompanying the ballots were of a nature that was not amenable to being addressed at a BRM; given these circumstances JTC 1 advised SC 34 that the BRM

⁵ <http://www.robweir.com/blog/2007/12/662-resolutions-but-only-if-you-can.html>

⁶ http://www.iso.org/iso/standards_development/technical_committees/list_of_iso_technical_committees/technical_committee_contact.htm?commid=45020

⁷ <http://www.jtc1sc34.org/repository/0932.htm>

should be cancelled — advice SC 34 voted to approve.

1.3 What is the purpose of the BRM?

The meeting is for *resolving* comments that NBs have submitted (with their votes) on the text being Fast Tracked. This is done, essentially, by the meeting agreeing a set of revisions to the originally submitted DIS 29500 text.

1.4 Will the BRM vote to approve or disapprove DIS 29500?

Not directly, no. The BRM will vote (if voting is necessary) to approve individual *disposition of comments* (essentially, instructions for textual revision) that will be decided during the course of the meeting. In the light of these, NBs may opt to alter their original vote as submitted for the September 2 letter ballot. It is these altered (or unaltered) votes which will decide whether DIS 29500 becomes an IS.

Logistics

2.1 When and where will the BRM be held?

The BRM will take place between Monday 25 February and Friday 29 February 2008 (inclusive), at the [International Conference Centre, Geneva](#).

2.2 Who *may* attend?

The **only** people permitted to attend the meeting are

1. representatives of the 87 NBs that are recorded as voting (either “approve” “disapprove” or “abstain”) in the 2 September letter ballot, and who remain members of ISO/IEC;
2. a delegation from the submitter (Ecma)
3. ISO/IEC (ITTF) officials and administrators.

2.3 Who *should* attend?

NBs that voted “disapprove” in the 2 September ballot have a duty to send a delegation to the BRM.

2.4 Can press or observers attend?

No, press and observers may not attend, and the meeting may not be recorded or broadcast in any way.

2.5 Is it possible the meeting will extend beyond the 5 allotted days?

No.

2.6 Is it possible to attend the meeting virtually using teleconferencing, etc?

No.

2.7 How many delegates can each National Standards Body (NB) send?

The venue is limited to seating approx. 120 delegates so it is likely, given the interest in this process, that delegation sizes may need to be limited. NBs are advised to register early with their preferred delegation, but be prepared to reduce the head count if the meeting is oversubscribed. If it is necessary for some NBs to reduce the size of their delegation, they will be notified before the end of 2007.

2.8 How does a NB that is eligible to attend register for the BRM?

Submit an accredited delegate list to the SC 34 Secretariat Manager before December 11, 2007, indicating the one head of delegation responsible for any voting that may take place.

2.9 Can an NB change the composition of its delegation, once registered?

Yes, adjustments may be made up to 1 February 2008, by which point each NB shall have submitted a final list which clearly identifies their delegates.

2.10 What happens if a NB does not submit a delegation list by 11 December?

It is likely that NB will not be able to attend and participate in the BRM.

2.11 May a NB send more than their allotted number of delegates to Geneva and vary the makeup of their delegation present at the meeting depending on the topic under discussion at the BRM?

No.

Meeting preparation

3.1 Will a revised version of DIS 29500 be distributed before the meeting?

Ecma will circulate a draft disposition of comments document to NBs by 14 January 2008. This will blend proposed revisions with examples of how edits will look in place in the DIS 29500 text. Ecma has been requested to produce a revised version of the DIS and will make a best effort to do so.

3.2 How will Ecma arrive at their disposition of comments?

Ecma will informally share their preliminary thoughts and proposed dispositions for NB review and comment in advance of the formal distribution on 14 January. Information on this process has been sent to all NBs who voted on the DIS 29500 ballot.

At the meeting

4.1 Will IPR issues be discussed at the BRM?

No. IPR issues in this process are the exclusive preserve of the ITTF. IPR decisions have previously been delegated by all the ISO and IEC members (NBs) to the CEOs of IEC and ISO, and they in turn have examined them and found no outstanding problems. NBs seeking reassurance in such matters must pursue them through other avenues than the BRM.

4.2 Will questions of policy and “contradiction” be discussed at the BRM?

No.

4.3 What *will* be discussed at the BRM?

The BRM is a technical meeting which will address the comments made by NBs in their 2 September ballot returns, and Ecma’s responses to them. Since the meeting will emit a sequence of editorial instructions to the DIS 29500 project editor, any deliberations which cannot result in such instructions are out of order.

4.4 Will certain NBs’ comments be given priority?

The JTC 1 Directives do not allow for prioritisation of comments. However, the Convener of the BRM may organise the review of comments so as to maximise the chances of producing an improved quality text.

4.5 What if there is not time in the meeting to satisfy NBs’ concerns?

If NBs find the outcome of the BRM inadequate then their recourse is to disapprove the DIS.

After the meeting

5.1 Is there a further ballot on the DIS 29500 text after the BRM?

No. The BRM is the end of the formal scrutiny process and there is no further balloting, formal deliberation or revision.

5.2 How long will NBs have after the meeting to inform ITTF of a changed vote?

If a NB wishes to modify its vote from that of the 2 September ballot, it must inform ITTF

within 30 days of the end of the BRM. At this time, ITTF will re-tally the votes and the fate of DIS 29500 will be decided.

Voting

6.1 In what circumstances may NBs change their vote from that of 2 September?

NBs may change their vote if the BRM agrees to amend the text of the DIS in any way.

6.2 In what ways may an NB change its vote?

NBs that voted in the 2 September ballot may change their vote **from** any of “approve”, “disapprove” or “abstain” **to** any of “approve”, “disapprove” or “abstain”.

6.3 What is the mechanism for changing a vote?

Any NB wishing to change its vote must inform ITTF of this intention and confirm the intention in writing.

6.4 Why must countries inform ITTF and not JTC 1?

Because ITTF is responsible for administering the voting of NBs on FDISs and DISs.

6.5 What voting status will NBs have?

For voting at the BRM, and in the ongoing DIS 29500 ballot the voting status (either “P” member or “O” member) is fixed as per the result of the 2 September letter ballot.

6.6 Who are “P” members for the purposes of voting?

In all voting on the DIS 29500 fast track, “P-members” means P-members of JTC 1 (who voted as such in the 2 September ballot), **not** P-members of SC 34 or any other ISO/IEC committees.

6.7 What criteria may NBs use in deciding whether (or not) to switch their votes?

No constraints are placed upon the criteria NBs may use for deciding their voting position.

6.8 If votes are taken during the BRM, who votes?

Those present.

6.9 May NBs vote by proxy?

No formal NB proxies are possible at the BRM.

6.10 If a NB expert did not participate in the BRM, may this NB subsequently change their vote?

All ISO/IEC JTC 1 NBs will receive the results of the BRM immediately after the meeting. Upon review of the BRM results, any NB that voted in the 2 September ballot may change their vote, whether or not their expert(s) attended the BRM.

Appendix 1 - Extract from JTC1 Directives

9.6 ... DIS ... Approval Criteria

For a FDIS/DIS/FDAM/DAM/FDISP to be approved, the count taken by ITTF shall meet the following criteria:

- At least two-thirds of the P-members voting shall have approved;
- Not more than one-quarter of the total number of votes cast are negative.

A P-member which has given appropriate notification that it will abstain from participation in specific work items (see 3.1.2) shall not be counted as a P-member when counting votes for drafts relating to such items.

Abstentions are excluded from the count.

...

13.6 Upon receipt of the ballot results, and any comments, the SC Secretariat shall distribute this material to the SC NBs, to any NBs having voted that are not members of the SC and to the proposer. The NBs shall be requested to consider the comments and to form opinions on their acceptability. The NBs shall be requested to consider the comments and to form opinions on their acceptability. The SC Secretariat shall also send notification of the ballot resolution group meeting to SC NBs, to any NBs having voted that are not members of the SC and to the proposer. Comments received after the normal voting period will not be taken into account, except that they will be submitted to the appropriate SC Secretariat for consideration at the time of the next review of the IS in question.

13.7 NBs of the relevant SC shall appoint to the ballot resolution group one or more representatives who are well aware of the NB's position. NBs having voted negatively, whether or not a NB of the relevant SC, have a duty to delegate a representative to the ballot resolution meeting.

13.8 At the ballot resolution group meeting, decisions should be reached preferably by consensus. If a vote is unavoidable the vote of the NBs will be taken according to normal JTC 1 procedures.

13.9 If, after the deliberations of this ballot resolution group, the requirements of 9.6 are met, the Project Editor shall prepare the amended DIS (or DAM) and send it to the SC Secretariat who shall forward it to the ITTF for publication as an IS ...

13.10 If it is impossible to agree to a text meeting the above requirements, the proposal has failed and the procedure is terminated.

....

13.12 The time period for post ballot activities by the respective responsible parties shall be as follows:

- Immediately after the vote, ITTF shall send the results of the vote to the JTC 1 Secretariat and to the SC Secretariat, and for the latter to distribute the results without delay to its NBs, to any NBs having voted that are not members of the SC and to the proposer;
- As soon as possible after the distribution of the results of the vote to its NBs but in not less than two and one-half months the SC Secretariat shall convene a ballot resolution group

meeting, if required;

- In not more than one month after the ballot resolution group meeting the SC Secretariat shall distribute the final report of the meeting and final DIS text in case of acceptance.

13.13 If the proposed standard is accepted and published, its maintenance will be handled by JTC 1 and/or a JTC 1 designated maintenance group in accordance with the JTC 1 rules.