



FIRST Standards Policy

1 Based on requests by the membership, FIRST may initiate development of a standard. A
2 standard is defined as a document that is intended to ensure interoperability of a technique or
3 tool, and is planned to see adoption and implementation by various parties. FIRST may also
4 develop other descriptive, rather than normative, documents such as best practices, which are
5 not required to follow the standards process.

6
7 Both FIRST members and non-members may propose the inception of a standard. A Special
8 Interest Group (SIG) will typically shepherd the standard.

9
10 The FIRST board will evaluate proposals for a new standard based on:

- 11 • presence (or lack thereof) of a, preferably open, existing standard that meets a need
12 addressed by the proposed standard. FIRST will avoid establishing groups that conflict
13 with existing standards work outside of the organization;
- 14 • their applicability and value to members of FIRST.

15

16 This document describes minimum governance requirements for FIRST SIGs that aim to develop
17 standards. SIGs may define more restrictive rules, but in any case where a SIG rule conflicts
18 with a FIRST governance requirements, that exception must be specifically approved by the
19 FIRST Board to be valid.

20

21

22 **1. Governance**

23

- 24 • Standards intended for publication and use outside of the membership must allow
25 participation both by members and non-members of FIRST. Standards for use within the
26 FIRST membership only may restrict membership to FIRST members only.

27

- 28 • Active contribution of ideas to a FIRST standard requires the signing of an Intellectual
29 Property Rights Agreement (IPR) between FIRST and the participant. The FIRST IPR is
30 linked in Appendix E, and must be executed by “participants” and “voting participants”
31 prior to participation. IPRs are executed by a Legal Entity defined as an individual or
32 organization which is legally permitted to enter into a contract, and be held accountable
33 if it fails to meet its contractual obligations.

34

- 35 • Where multiple SIGs define standards in a single greater work area (e.g. threat
36 intelligence or network security), chairs are encouraged to coordinate efforts. The FIRST
37 board will look to all relevant groups to coordinate across their respective standards to
38 avoid confusion and contradicting standards. FIRST will also look towards the SIGs to

39 have at least one chair participate as a Participant in the other SIG to ensure alignment.
40

- 41 • By default, FIRST grants permission for standards it develops to be implemented and/or
42 adopted by FIRST members and non-members at no cost in perpetuity. Any exception
43 requires an explicit approval by the FIRST board. The default license for any standard is
44 Creative Commons CC - BY-SA (Attribution+ShareAlike). Exceptions must be approved by
45 the FIRST Board.
46
- 47 • Standards SIGs are expected to use clear and uniform language. Technical (non-
48 dictionary) language must be defined and contributed to an overarching glossary
49 maintained by FIRST across SIGs and standards. The glossary will not be prescriptive but
50 intended to be used by FIRST members as a best practice. Important terms must be
51 defined internally to the standard, but the glossary should be used to limit the amount
52 of inconsistency across multiple standards.
53
- 54 • FIRST standards use terminology defined in RFC 2119 as indicated in that best practice.
55
- 56 • FIRST will publish a list of all voting participants (defined below) that contributed to each
57 standard, and may post a list of all Participants.
58
59

60 2. Participation and membership obligations

- 61 • FIRST SIGs developing a standard permit participation by three types of members:
62
 - 63 ○ **Observers:** Anyone can become a group Observer. This participation level allows
64 access to a moderated group mailing list - used to publish proposals, vote on
65 proposals, and more generally discuss issues pertinent to the group. Observers
66 do not have voting rights. Although Observers can send emails to the mailing list,
67 Chairs will reject emails with that is of such nature where it may require an IPR
68 agreement, e.g. specific suggestions on how to solve a technical problem.
69 Requests to become an observer should be sent to the FIRST Secretariat at [first-
71 sec@first.org](mailto:first-
70 sec@first.org). For open SIGs, the observer will simply be added. For closed
72 (members-only SIGs), the request will be submitted to the SIG chair.
73
 - 74 ○ **Participants:** Participants are individuals or organizations which have signed a
75 FIRST Intellectual Property Rights agreement. Participants have unmoderated
76 access to the group mailing list and can contribute ideas and concepts.
77
 - 78 ○ **Voting participants:** A Participant can request that they or their organization be
79 given the right to vote on proposals. A non-member can also immediately apply
80 to be a voting participant, or be admitted as a voting participant as part of the
81 original SIG proposal.

- 82 ▪ The request to vote is made to the secretariat and approved by the chair
- 83 of the standards SIG;
- 84 ▪ A prerequisite to be approved as a voting organization is to have
- 85 participated in 50% of meetings in the 30 days prior to the request;
- 86 ▪ No organization can have more than one vote, and the person voting has
- 87 to be pre-approved. Each organization can have 2 pre-approved voters.
- 88 ▪ The voting members have to be clearly marked on the attendance sheet
- 89 prior to a vote taking place.

90

- 91 • In order to apply for Observer or Participant membership, an individual reaches out to
- 92 the FIRST secretariat via e-mail at first-sec@first.org, noting the type of membership
- 93 requested. The secretariat will liaise with the SIG chair to evaluate:

- 94 ○ Whether an IPR is already on file for the individual's organization;
- 95 ○ Whether the individual is eligible for the level of membership, based on the
- 96 standards SIG charter.

97

- 98 • Each SIG developing a standard must have one chairperson, and at least one co-chair.
- 99 Chairs may be either Participants or Voting Participants. The initial Chair and co-chair
- 100 may be proposed by the standard initiators and is ratified by the FIRST Board. When a
- 101 Chair steps down, a new Chair must be selected through a simple majority election
- 102 process. Ties are addressed by re-voting. If a tie persists for more than two rounds, the
- 103 tie is broken by random selection between tied candidates.

104

- 105 • The SIG will generally aim to achieve its outcome by building consensus amongst
- 106 observers, participants and voting participants.

107

108 The minimum requirement for voting is prior to the publication of specific deliverables.

109 SIGs are encouraged to set regular milestones at which a deliverable is voted on. Each

110 group can set more restrictive requirements for voting on individual decisions (e.g.

111 conduct a vote for each change which materially changes the outcome of a technical

112 tool described by the standard). Voting proposals can be initiated by each participant

113 and must be submitted to the SIG mailing list, including at least the elements included in

114 Appendix C.

115

116 A proposal will pass when:

117

- 118 ○ the number of yes votes exceeds the number of no votes (i.e., a simple majority);
- 119 ○ at least 50% of eligible Voting Participants cast a vote (abstain votes are
- 120 considered as casted votes).

121

- 122 • Observers, Participants or Voting Participants may leave the SIG based on simple
- 123 request to first-sec@first.org. If this changes voting membership in such a way that a
- 124 constituency now becomes underrepresented, the Chairs may choose to make a call for

125 additional SIG participants through the FIRST web site, a mail to the FIRST membership
126 and its social media channels to identify a potential replacement.
127
128

129 **3. Announcement of new standard development**

130
131 FIRST will announce the intention to create a new standard publicly:
132

- 133 • Through FIRST's social media channels:
 - 134 ○ Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/firstdotorg>
 - 135 ○ Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/firstdotorg>
 - 136 ○ LinkedIn at https://www.linkedin.com/company/first_3
- 137 • Through a press release distributed by our PR partner and published on www.first.org
- 138 • Through an e-mail message to the FIRST membership
- 139 • A direct e-mail to all partners which have a Memorandum of Understanding signed with
140 FIRST that includes awareness of new initiatives
- 141 • A direct e-mail to partners known to FIRST that are likely to have an interest in the
142 matter

143
144 FIRST will also endeavor to identify and inform critical partners involved in the industry targeted
145 by the standard through a direct e-mail message. As FIRST will never be aware of all possible
146 constituents, any participant in the standard or FIRST member may request the FIRST
147 secretariat to notify a particular constituency or can forward the notification themselves.
148
149

150 **4. Public comment phase**

151
152 Once the group has iterated through working drafts (WD), and is ready to release a public draft
153 (PD):
154

- 155 • The SIG chair will submit the PD to the FIRST Board for approval, via the FIRST secretariat.
- 156 • The FIRST Board will gain an opinion from the FIRST attorney on the document prior to final
157 release. The FIRST Board will work with standard chairs to address any issues flagged by the
158 FIRST corporate attorney;
- 159 • The FIRST Board will review and vote on the release of the PD;
- 160 • FIRST will publish the PD for public comment on the FIRST web site, and announce the call
161 for comments on its web site and social media channels. Comments will be submitted to a
162 public mailing list submitted to all working group members. Comment submitters are not
163 expected to have a signed IPR, but where a concrete, detailed, solution is provided as part
164 of the comments, the SIG chair will invite the submitter to participate as a “participant”
165 prior to integrating this input.
- 166 • FIRST will explicitly ask all organizations informed of the proposed standard (as defined in
167 section 3) for comments

- 168 • A SIG chair will ensure external feedback is reviewed and addressed by the wider group, and
169 comments are evaluated, following the process in Appendix F.
170 • Based on the outcome of this process, the standard may go back to internal working drafts,
171 be released as an updated PD, or move towards publication, based on a vote by the SIG.
172

173

174 **5. Publication of the standard**

175

176 Once the SIG has addressed external comments, they will update the standard if necessary and
177 present it to the FIRST Board for final publication.
178

- 179 • The group will submit the final work product to the FIRST Board for approval.
 - 180 • The FIRST Board will gain an opinion from the FIRST attorney on the document prior to final
181 release. The FIRST Board will work with the standard chairs to address any issues flagged by
182 the FIRST corporate attorney;
 - 183 • The FIRST Board will review and vote on the final release of the standard;
 - 184 • FIRST will publish the standard on the FIRST web site, and announce the final release
185 through its web site, a press release by our PR partner and its social media channels;
 - 186 • FIRST will, where possible, create opportunities for standard chairs to engage with the
187 media to promote the standard;
 - 188 • The FIRST Board will evaluate opportunities for contributing the FIRST standard to external
189 standards bodies it collaborates with, such as ISO, ITU, OASIS and IETF.
 - 190 • Final standards must be marked with an @first.org e-mail address for comments. This
191 address will typically go to the standards group, but may be replaced with the FIRST
192 secretariat over time, if the maintaining group is no longer active.
- 193

194

195 **6. Development speed**

196

- 197 • Proposed standards pass through two major phases: working drafts, which are published at
198 least internally, and public drafts, published for public comment. During its development
199 multiple working drafts and public drafts could be produced.

200

201 Working drafts follow the following process:

202

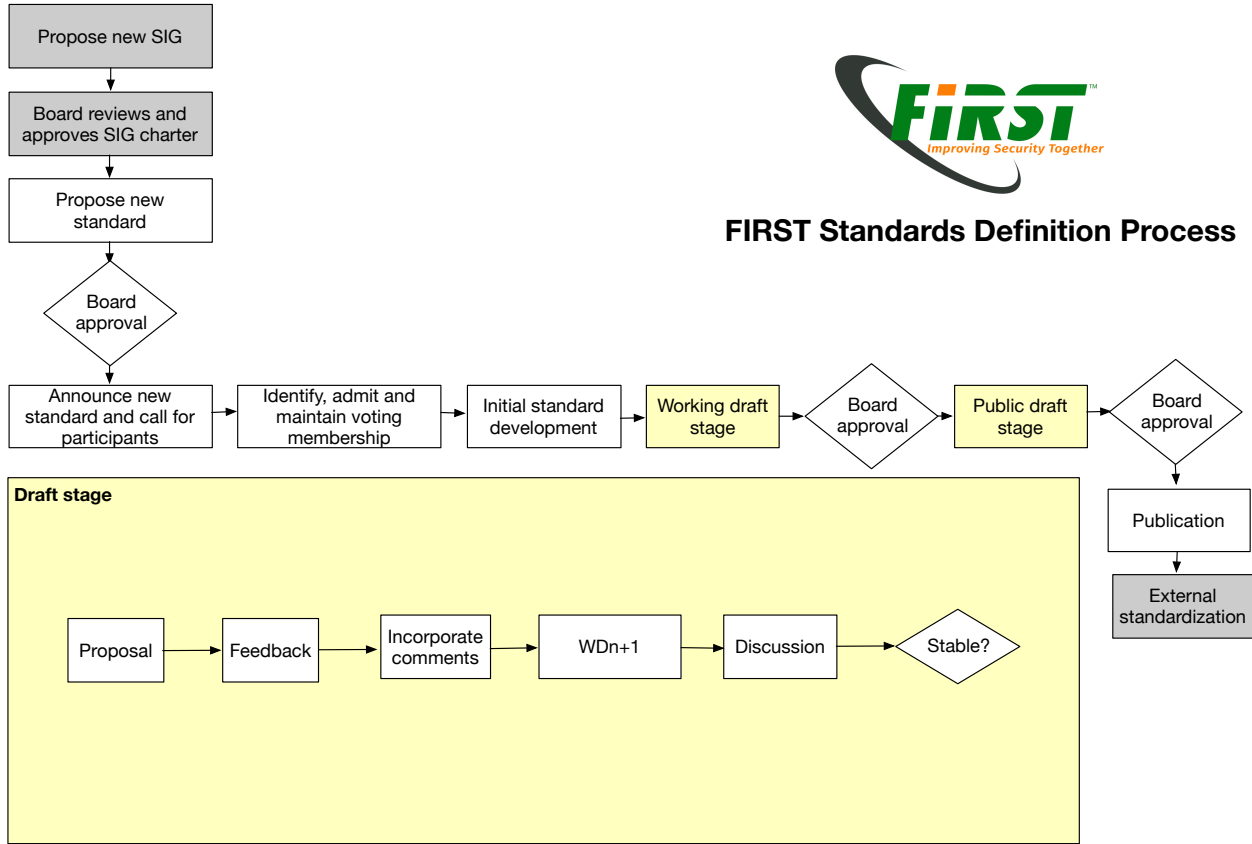
- 203 ○ T+0 a WD is produced and published for comments
 - 204 ○ T+1 is the deadline for comments,
 - 205 ○ T+2 a tentative WD+1 is produced and distributed for review
 - 206 ○ T+3 the tentative WD+1 is discussed within a group and changes are finalized
 - 207 ○ T+4 the final WD+1 is released as the first PD.
- 208
- 209

- 210 • The external comment period for a public draft is always at least one month. When the
211 public draft comment period starts, the Chair sends a reminder of the disclosure obligations
212 under the Common Patent Policy and the Specifications for Implementation of the Common
213 Patent Policy along with a copy of the form set forth in Exhibit A.
- 214 • During a standard's lifetime, it may be in one of the following states: "Draft", "In force" and
215 "Obsolete". The status must be clearly marked on any document which contains the
216 complete standard text. Draft can be "Working Draft (WD)" or "Public Draft (PD)". When a
217 standard is made "Obsolete" it is no longer in force and it must not be used in new
218 products/processes/services. An obsolete standard can be superseded by a newer or
219 different standard. In that case it will be marked as "Obsolete, Replaced by:".
- 220 • Standards releases are versioned. Large versions, such as v1, v2, v3 indicate a thorough, all-
221 up review of the standard. Minor versions, v1.1, v1.2 indicate only portions of the standard
222 were revised.
- 223 • Standard groups can choose the format they prefer for editing language of the standard.
224 Tools that allow versioning controls are recommended, such as Word or LaTeX, or the use of
225 a versioning repository such as GitHub. A master, readable copy of the standard must be
226 created in ASCII which is stored on the FIRST web site.
- 227 • FIRST does not prescribe a standard format for standards, but recommends including an
228 About and Background section explaining the relevance of the standard, and including
229 sample code in appendixes or associated documents. The following mandatory metadata
230 should be included: (1) date of release, (2) status of the standard, (3) version number, (4)
231 contact e-mail address @first.org, (5) license.

232

233 Appendix A: Standards definition flow diagram

234



235

236

237 Appendix B: Required information to propose chartering a standard

238

239 The following minimum information is due to the FIRST secretariat to propose the development
 240 of a standard. The typical process would be for a group to be proposed on the topic, and this
 241 SIG to contain the standard as a work item.

242

243 When an existing group plans to develop a new standard, only the items marked with a (*)
 244 items are due. A Planning Checklist will be made available:

245

246

247

248

249

250

- Proposed **working group name**
- **Submitter** of the working group
- **Date** of proposal
- **Mission statement**
- Description of the **intended outcome standard**(*)

- 251 • Description of **who is expected to adopt the standard**^(*)
- 252 • **Proposal on the constituency of the SIG** (e.g. industry sectors)
- 253 • **Goals and deliverables for the first year**^(*)
- 254 • **Initial Chairpersons**
- 255 • **Interested observers and participants**
- 256 • **Budget** request (e.g. if contractors are required for statistical analysis or software
- 257 development, the expected cost should be noted);
- 258 • **Meeting confidentiality:** The SIG can decide whether information on the mailing list is
- 259 to be considered TLP RED, TLP AMBER, or whether the mailing list should be open (with
- 260 only active participants having write access). FIRST recommends transparency, but
- 261 recognizes some topics may require closed discussion.
- 262 • **Infrastructure** needs (mailing list, wiki page, phone bridge, video bridge)
- 263 • Other **comments**.
- 264

265 Appendix C: Minimum information required for a vote

266

267 This list contains all information that is expected to be provided by the standard chairs when a
 268 vote on a milestone is to be made. Depending on the group's proposed governance model, a
 269 milestone could be accepting a specific technical contribution, or the finalization of a document
 270 for publication.

271

- 272 • **Subject** - starts with the text "[Voting]" (including the brackets), a short title of the
- 273 proposal, and a version number (to differentiate future modified versions of the
- 274 proposal).
- 275 • Paragraph **summarizing the proposal**.
- 276 • The **date and time (with time zone), when the last vote will be accepted**.
- 277 • A statement that votes No must be accompanied by an **explanation of why the voter is**
- 278 **against**.
- 279 • The **full proposal**, either in the body of the email or as an attachment.
- 280 • Optionally, any **supporting documentation**.

281

282

283 Appendix D: Example definition of constituency

284

285 While not a requirement, SIGs may choose to define their constituency up front, and maintain a
 286 balanced constituency throughout the development of the standard. An example is the below
 287 constituency used by the CVSS Standards SIG. This is an example only, and standards groups
 288 may be more open, or more flexible:

289

290

291

- *Banking*
- *Health Care*

- 292 ○ *Government*
- 293 ○ *Academic*
- 294 ○ *Manufacturing and Retail*
- 295 ○ *Technology / Hardware*
- 296 ○ *Technology / Software*
- 297 ○ *Technology / Networking*
- 298 ○ *Telecommunications*
- 299 ○ *CIRTs*
- 300 ○ *Energy*
- 301 ○ *Transportation*

302

303 *Each organization requesting voting rights is categorized as being in one of the following*
304 *constituencies, based on its primary business or purpose. Requests are only accepted if the*
305 *organization’s constituency will represent 25% or less of the total organizations with voting*
306 *rights if the organization is added. When a constituency is full, new Participants wishing to*
307 *become Voting Participants must wait until other constituencies grow, allowing for additional*
308 *room, or an existing constituency member loses or relinquishes their voting rights.*

309

310 Appendix E: Intellectual Property Rights agreement

311 In order for FIRST to be successful in developing content which can be used by our community
312 in an unfettered way, we must protect the intellectual property rights on our deliverables. This
313 means that our output must not contain information over which third parties may hold a
314 license, and deliverables we develop should be owned by FIRST. The FIRST Uniform IPR
315 policy ensures an organization does not have the ability to introduce patented content without
316 notification by ensuring organizations are asked to declare any patented content they are
317 introducing.

318 The FIRST Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) agreement can be found at
319 <https://www.first.org/about/policies/uniform-ipr>. A single IPR must be signed per SIG that an
320 organization participates in.

321

322

323

324 Appendix F: Providing comments

325

326 Comments must be as precise as possible. A comment must contain the following elements:

- 327 1. To what document comments pertain to – this must include the name and the exact
328 version of a document, e.g. “CVSS WD2”, “TLP v1.1, WD3”.
- 329 2. Comment ID – the ID consists of submitter’s initials or a designator (a person or an
330 organization) and the comment number.

- 331 3. Reference – to what portion of the document the comment refers to. The reference
332 must be unambiguous and given in a hierarchical manner. Examples of a good referee is
333 “Section 2, bullet 1, second paragraph”. Using page number (e.g. “page 3, fourth
334 paragraph, line 3”) is permitted but discouraged as page numbers will change as the text
335 is added or removed.
- 336 4. Comment type – the comment can be technical or editorial. Technical comments
337 pertain to the matter while editorial to the writing style, syntax, grammar and anything
338 else (e.g. moving paragraph).
- 339 5. Current text – reference to the content on which the comment refers. For example “a
340 software must use” or “second sentence”.
- 341 6. Comment – proposed action. This must be as precise as possible. For example: “delete
342 sentence”, “replace the text with ‘the new exact wording’”, “move paragraph to section
343 4, bullet 3”

344

345 All comments from a single person or an organization must be submitted in a single file. The file
346 with comments can be submitted only once. Comments must have consecutive numbers.

347

348 The editor must resolve all comments that are submitted on time. The editor can use discretion
349 to address late comments and/or accept new comments during the discussion. Possible
350 resolutions are: “Accepted”, “Accepted in principle”, “Not accepted”. Their meanings are as
351 follows:

352

- Accepted – the comment is accepted as is
- Accepted in principle – the comment is accepted but with some modifications
- Not accepted – the comment is not accepted

355

356 Once a comment is resolved participants do have right to raise it again (e.g. re-submit a
357 comment that was not accepted) but it is up to editor’s discretion to choose not to address it.

358

359 A file with all comments and their resolution must be distributed to the whole SIG as a
360 reference as soon as the process is finished.