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ISO/IEC JTC 1 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Business Team on Electronic Commerce

Report to JTC 1:
Self-assessment of JTC 1
Business Team on Electronic Commerce

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1 Executive summary

This report on "Self-assessment of the JTC 1 Business Team on Electronic Commerce" is provided to JTC 1 at the end of the Business Team's lifetime. It accompanies the other deliverable of the Team, the report on "Work on Electronic Commerce standardization to be initiated" (ISO/IEC JTC 1 N 5296).

This self-assessment report analyzes the way of working of BT-EC, its constitution and, in particular, its achievements, and assesses them relative to its objectives laid down in its Terms of Reference. The report concludes with recommendations to JTC 1 as to the future usage of Business Teams, in general, and to their operation, in particular.

As a summary, BT-EC recommends to JTC 1 to continue making use of the Business Team concept. BT-EC also suggests that before setting up any such Team, clear declarations of interest from targeted key players, accompanied by appropriate resource commitments, are sought.

2 Charter of the Team

ISO/IEC JTC 1, in its effort to develop market-oriented standards, has created the concept of a Business Team as a means, in a cross-sectorial and cross-organizational manner:

- To review and analyze business needs;
- To translate these needs into standards requirements;
- To identify relevant existing or planned standards;
- To specify what new standards or changes are consequently required; and
- To encourage commitment of standards committees to create these standards.

The JTC 1 Business Team on Electronic Commerce (BT-EC) was established by JTC 1 in June 1997 with the Terms of Reference as in JTC 1 N 4626, amended by N 4773. (see 12)

3 History of events

3.1 Kick-off

BT-EC was kicked-off on 9-11 July, 1997, in Berlin/Germany, with the attendance of 17 persons, by kind invitation of DIN.

Invitations for this meeting had been broadly distributed to

- JTC 1 member bodies and SCs;
- Members of the JTC 1 ad hoc group on JTC 1 Re-engineering;
- ISO/TC 68;
- ISO/TC 154;
- Additional organizations considered relevant in the Electronic Commerce (EC) domain, including those identified in the Terms of Reference.

The electronic mailing list for the invitation had about hundred entries.

In this meeting, the Team took a number of basic decisions:

1. To start, in view of the unsatisfactory attendance in the first meeting, a membership recruitment initiative.
2. To hold, in addition to any regular meeting needed, an Open Meeting to which a broader participation should be sought.
3. To limit its scope to the EC category 'individual to business', with the understanding that the scope might be broadened if time permitted.
4. To adopt its principal approach for its work:
 - Establish a scenario methodology;
 - Identify initial scenarios to evaluate the methodology;
 - Expose such scenarios in an Open Meeting to a larger audience for scrutiny and further input;
 - Based on input from the Open Meeting:
 - synthesize user requirements;
 - create additional scenarios;
 - identify specification requirements on the basis of these scenarios.
 - Produce the final report of the Team.
5. To use an e-mail reflector and a document server provided by the BT-EC Secretariat at DIN for its electronic working.

(See JTC 1/BT-EC N 9 for a report of the meeting.)

3.2 Open meeting

The preparation of the Open meeting, as per decision 2 above, took place, by kind invitation of IBN/BIN, in a meeting in Brussels on 29/30 September, 1997, which was held in conjunction with the ISO/IEC/ITU Global Standards Conference. As the meeting was particularly announced as a preparatory meeting, the attendance was only 13 persons of which only 6, including chair and secretary, had attended the kick-off meeting. (See JTC 1/BT-EC N 21 for a report of the meeting.)

The Open Meeting was held on 13/14 November, 1997, in Atlanta/GA, by kind invitation of Georgia Tech, sponsored by DISA. Invitations to this meeting were broadly circulated by the host and the Secretariat, via e-mail, through their respective Web pages and through flyers, distributed, among others, on the occasion of the CALS conference. The attendance to this meeting was 27 persons, with several new participants, in particular from the hosting organization. The meeting reviewed the achievements of the Team available so far and agreed on the following action plan together with a schedule:

1. To draft a strawman of the final report to JTC 1.
2. To collect market requirements for Electronic Commerce through the following parallel tasks:
 - To analyze existing market surveys and related R&D work;
 - To develop and evaluate Business Examples;
 - To identify consumer requirements;
 - To analyze existing solutions;
 - To further analyze horizontal aspects.
3. To analyze, in another meeting of the Team, such requirements; to prioritize them and, with the help of research results about existing specifications, to translate them into requirements for new or amended specifications.
4. To generate and consolidate the final report, via e-mail.
5. To generate and consolidate the Team's self-assessment report to JTC 1.

(See JTC 1/BT-EC N 34 for a report of the meeting.)

3.3 Concluding meeting

According to 3. of the above plan, another meeting of the Team was held on 26-29 January, 1998, in Brussels, by kind invitation of CEN/ISSS. This meeting identified the following key topic areas in which requirements for standardization exist:

- User interfaces,
- Identification of encodable data domains,
- Transactions and protocols,
- Security and auditing and record keeping.

A way forward was agreed how to generate and consolidate, based on contributions and discussions via e-mail, the reports to JTC 1, namely:

- Work on Electronic Commerce Standardization to be initiated.
- The Self-Assessment Report of the Business Team on Electronic Commerce.

(See JTC 1/BT-EC N 65 for a report of the meeting.)

Since then, no further meetings of the Team were held, and, instead, electronic communication via e-mail and document server was used as the only means of collaboration.

4 Membership

In the kick-off meeting, the Team recognized that its constitution did not cover most of the key players and other targets identified in its Terms of Reference (see 12.3). Therefore, it initiated a 'membership recruitment' campaign through individual letters and telephone calls with those organizations and individuals deemed relevant for participation. This campaign did, however, not lead to any substantial result up to the Brussels September 1997 meeting. Since then, apart from a few additional individual efforts, the Team did not undertake any further measures to improve the membership situation, as the remaining time to deliver a report to JTC 1 was considered too short to allow for any further delay. Also, the hope existed that the Open Meeting in November would bring in additional membership, which, unfortunately, despite a broad distribution of the calling notice, did not materialize.

Diagrams 1 to 4 (see 11) show the attendance to the above meetings under different perspectives. It can easily be concluded from them that the regional distribution of participation was not sufficiently balanced and that the degree of continuity within the Team was unsatisfactory.

The mailing list used in the Team's e-mail reflector contains, at the time of writing this report, another 28 entries, including the JTC 1 secretariat and some JTC 1 SC chairs.

5 The BT-EC way of working

Electronic Commerce can be broadly categorized into the following scenarios:

- Business to business,
- Business to public administration,
- Individual to business,
- Individual to public administration,
- Public administration to public administration,

with the understanding that each scenario holds in both directions.

Due to the time constraints, BT-EC chose, at its kick-off meeting, to focus its work on "Individual to business", at the same time recognizing that some of its findings are applicable more broadly.

BT-EC intended to utilize the following methodology in its work:

1. Collect business requirements from various relevant sources;
2. Analyze such requirements,
3. Prioritize them and,
4. With the help of research results about existing specifications or those under development, translate them into requirements for new specifications or for the amendment of existing ones.

Despite the broad knowledge represented in the Team, it is to be noted that the expertise available among the Team members was unfortunately not fully adequate to cover the many facets of the multi-disciplinary nature of Electronic Commerce. The scope of the topic coupled with the time which members were able to contribute meant that several substantial individual contributions did not get the in-depth review and comment which they really required. The interests and expertise of the Team members sometimes showed an overlap and sometimes were completely distinct. Therefore, the results presented in the report on "Work on EC standardization to be initiated" (ISO/IEC JTC 1 N 5296) are not in all instances consensus-based and fully supported findings.

Time and resource constraints did not permit complete execution of the methodology nor allowed it to identify and/or approach appropriate organizations inside or outside of JTC 1 to seek their commitment for the development of the required specifications.

While the overall objective of BT-EC was to identify work items for standardization within or outside of JTC 1, it was not possible to progress to such a stage.

6 Products

The main product of the Team is a report to JTC 1 about "Work on EC standardization to be initiated" (ISO/IEC JTC 1 N 5296). It identifies several items of varying granularity where the Team sees a high priority need for standardization work; and other areas where work is also recommended to JTC 1 and other organizations. Unfortunately, the Team was unable to deliver complete new work item proposals for submission to JTC 1 or other organizations. Its recommendations to JTC 1, however, offer a way how such work item proposals can be generated.

Apart from this self-assessment report, no additional products of the Team are delivered.

7 Assessment against Terms of Reference; Conclusions

Category	Item	Result	Comment
Membership of Business Team	International participation.	insufficient	As shown in diagrams 1 and 2, the geographic distribution of participation was not fully balanced.
	Participation from outside the traditional JTC 1 community; key players.	failure	Of the organizations identified in the ToR, TC 68 and TC 154 (1 meeting each) and HLSG (all meetings) participated. OMG attended the open meeting part-time. Efforts to seek broader participation were without any success.
	Participation from JTC 1 SCs	very low	A representative of SC 27 attended the final meeting of the Team.
Work products	User's context and functionality to meet business	partly	See report "Work on EC standardization to be initiated"

Category	Item	Result	Comment
	expectations.		
	Identification of impediments to international implementation.	partly	See report "Work on EC standardization to be initiated"
	Identification of standards required.	✓	See report "Work on EC standardization to be initiated"
	Creation of new work items.	none	Time and resources available did not permit to finalize this task.
	Introduction of fast track and PAS submissions.	none	see before
	Impact on other organizations	unknown; probably low	see before
PR	Generation of positive press coverage.	unknown; probably none	In view of other high priority tasks of the Team, no particular effort was undertaken.
	Web page.	✓	Public web page established on DIN server.
Way of working	Usage of electronic means.	✓	1. Document distribution was via web server only. 2. Communication among Team members was via e-mail, using a reflector, which, unfortunately, did not support attachments.
	Consensus building.	insufficient	The interests and expertise of the Team members sometimes showed an overlap and sometimes were completely distinct. Hence, the results of the work are not in all instances consensus-based. Building consensus in the Team through (by nature asynchronous) electronic means requires great discipline of all Team members.
	Commitments of participants.	insufficient	Some Team members showed a high degree of commitment and discipline in meeting agreed-upon schedules; others did not deliver promised contributions.

In total and despite some outstanding contributions by some Team members, it would not be unfair to state that the Team only partially met its objectives.

It is judged that the main reason for this unsatisfactory result lies in the fact that the key players in the EC domain, though approached individually, chose not to participate in JTC 1 BT-EC. Nothing illustrates this better than the fact that during the ten months of existence of BT-EC, a number of new private and public sector initiatives in the EC domain were launched, and new consortia were founded or published their results. It is obvious that JTC 1 BT-EC had to compete with similar activities in the marketplace for resource commitments. The reasons for having failed in this regard may lie

- in the topic area addressed,
- in the insufficient focus of the topic,
- in the overall recognition of international standardization in the IT domain,

or any combination of the above, and others.

It is, however, not the objective of this report to analyze the reasons for the key players not to join the Team. This is left to JTC 1's judgment.

It is also argued that the time available for the Team was insufficient to accomplish its task, given the breadth of the area to be studied. This time contrasts with the time allocated to a similar activity in the standardization arena, namely the study conducted jointly by ISO/TC 68/SC 6 and CEN/TC 224 on "Standardization on Electronic Commerce". However, the issue of sufficient time needs again to be seen in the context of the lack of participation from key players.

With a Business Team's focus on working preferably by electronic means, the infrastructure to support this becomes a key factor for success. Different views are expressed in BT-EC as to the full adequacy of the infrastructure used. Also, a minority of the Team members states that the time spent in physical meetings was insufficient for achieving consensus. As a conclusion, it can be stated that electronic working requires

- a fully adequate infrastructure to which all Team members have convenient access,
- great discipline of the Team members,
- and a careful management of the discussion,

in order to establish consensus.

8 Recommendations to JTC 1

As a conclusion of its experience, BT-EC wishes to submit the following recommendations to JTC 1. With the exception of R 8, such recommendations are not specific to Electronic Commerce.

R 1.The Team could not find any reason why, in principle, the concept of a Business Team cannot be regarded as a useful instrument for JTC 1 to bring together key players of a given business area in order to identify specification requirements.

Hence, it is recommended to JTC 1 that the instrument of Business Teams is further used and developed.

R 2.It is recommended to JTC 1 that a Business Team, in future, is set up only if clear declarations of interest of the targeted key players, both industry sectors and specific organizations, are available from the beginning. This should not prevent JTC 1 from taking a pro-active role in creating Business Teams; but the formal establishment of a Team should only take place after such declarations of interest have been given.

Such declarations should be accompanied by a priori commitments of resources made available to the Team. These should include the secretariat function.

R 3.The topic area for a Business Team should be chosen with great care: the probability to succeed is inversely proportional to the breadth of the scope. The more focused an activity is and the more precisely the deliverables are defined, the easier is it to attract key players and to establish consensus among the parties.

R 4.It is strongly recommended to give a Business Team a limited, realistic lifetime; but it should be backed by appropriate resource commitments of the Team members.

R 5.The way of working of BT-EC, namely strong emphasis on the usage of electronic means and only a minimum of physical meetings, is considered fully appropriate for future JTC 1 Business Teams, provided that the above commitments (see 2 above.) are present.

It is recommended that a set of minimum requirements on the infrastructure for electronic working is developed by JTC 1, as well as minimum guidelines for electronic working entities as to how to conduct electronic discussions. Such requirements and guidelines should be based on experience gained in BT-EC and other well-known activities inside and outside of JTC 1, such as IETF.

R 6. To ease recognition of a Business Team, it is suggested that JTC 1 considers the possibility to invite Member Bodies to appoint mentors for such a Business Team who would act as a focal point in the respective country to promote the activities of the Business Team.

R 7. To follow-up the findings and recommendations of a Business Team, it is recommended that JTC 1, in consultation with the key players concerned, appoints a rapporteur:

- To monitor the implementation of the recommendations inside and outside of JTC 1;
- To report to JTC 1 about progress made and issues encountered;
- To recommend further actions on the part of JTC 1;
- To serve as a focal point at international level for all actors involved.

R 8. Finally, it is recommended to JTC 1 that, despite the fact that it has not (yet) completely achieved its objectives, BT-EC is disbanded.

9 Appreciations

The leader of the JTC 1 Business Team on Electronic Commerce wishes to express his appreciations

- to all members of the Team, in particular those who have submitted contributions;
- to the Secretariat of the Team, in particular Dr. Ingo Wende and Ms. Natalia Skoric;
- to the hosts of the meetings.

Without their dedication and their contributions, it would not have been possible in such a difficult environment to bring about a report which is hoped to help JTC 1 to progress in its re-engineering efforts.

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11 Additional information

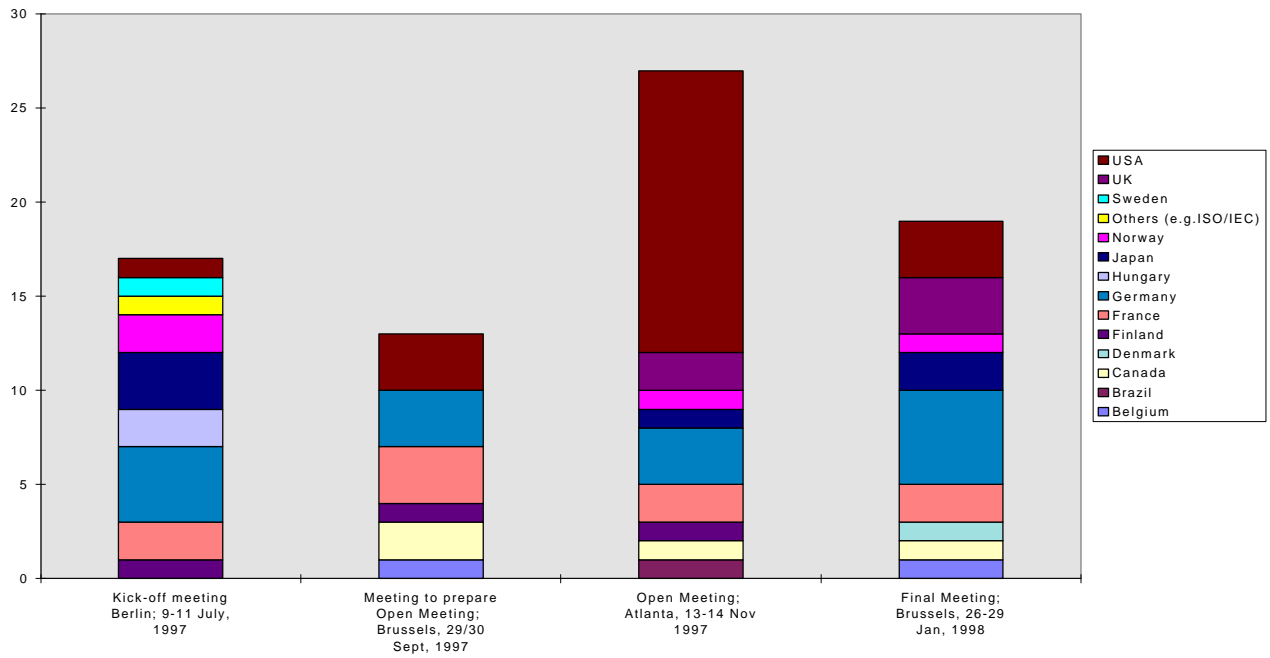


Diagram 1: Meeting attendance by country

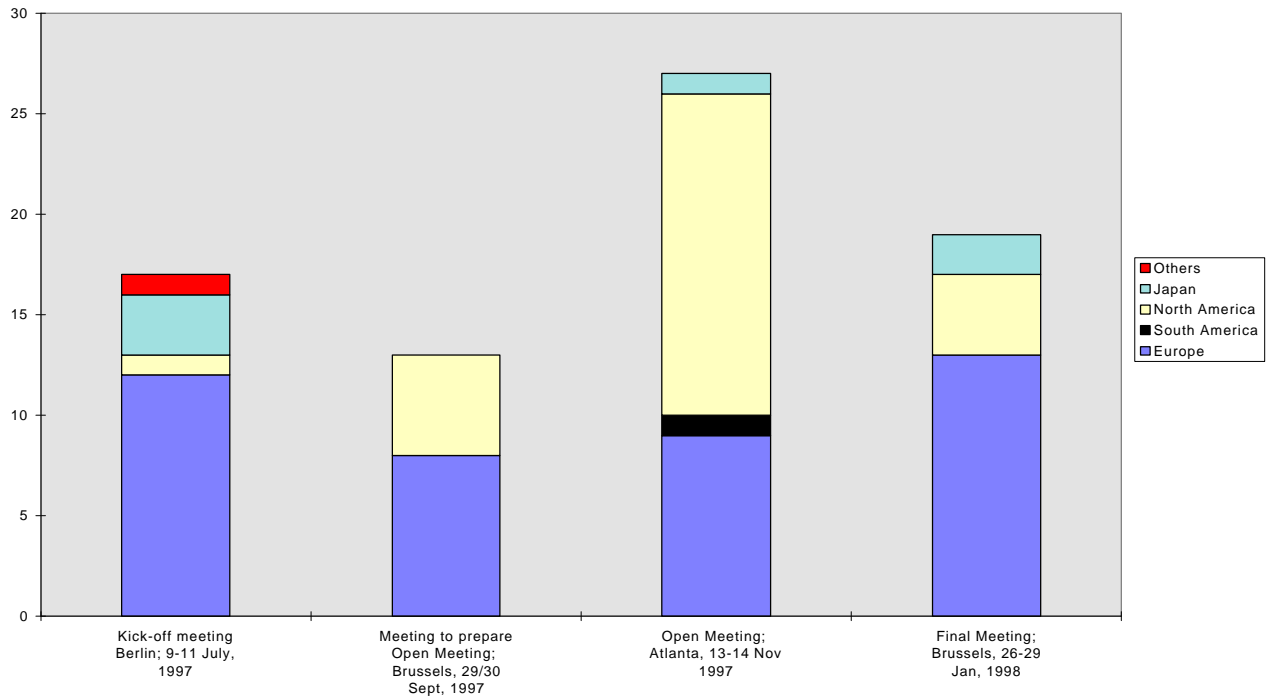
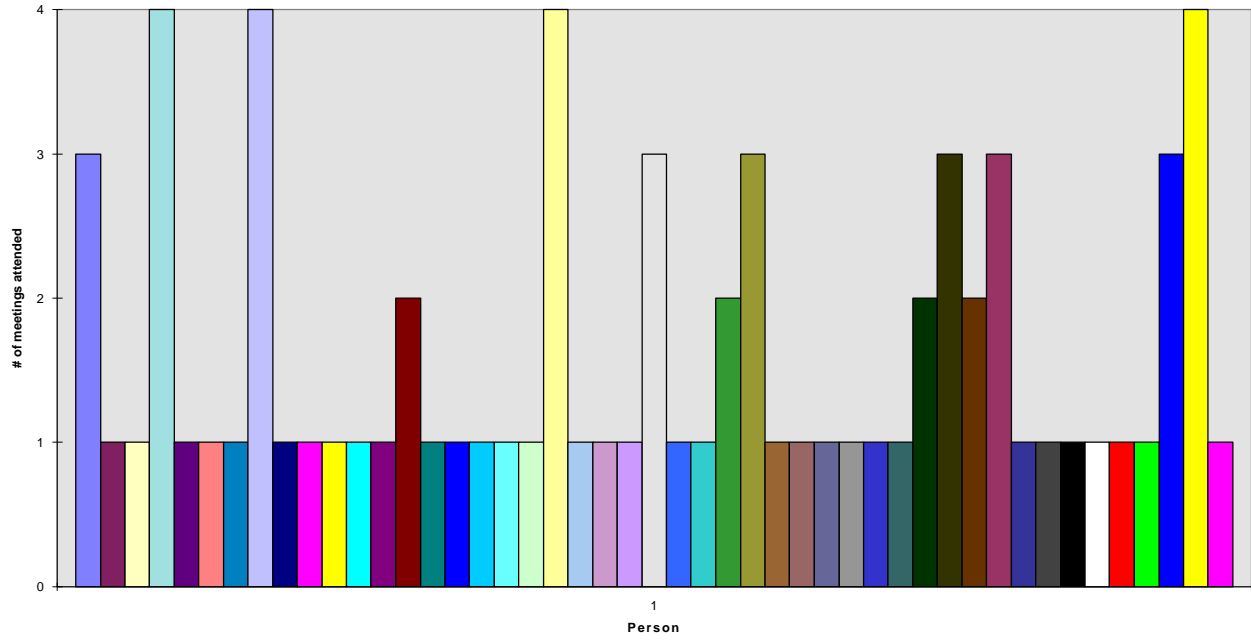


Diagram 2: Meeting attendance by region



12 Annex: Terms of Reference of BT-EC

12.1 General

In general, a business team assures:

- greater business relevance of JTC 1's standards;
- a mechanism for users' requirements to make their way into the JTC 1 process directly and quickly;
- a broad range of resources (including those outside of JTC 1) to bear on the needs of a critical business area, in particular, participation of key players;
- greater JTC 1 visibility.

The Electronic Commerce Business Team will assess the electronic commerce sector standardization needs and propose necessary steps to satisfy them through the facilitated communication and interactions between interested parties. It will focus on electronic transactions among individuals, businesses, and governments. The Team will choose, if necessary, to limit its scope in order to meet the pilot timelines.

12.2 Tasks of BT-EC

For Electronic Commerce, the Business Team will:

- gather the appropriate international resources to populate the Team
- define the users' context and determine the functionality required to meet their business expectations
- consider the impediments to international implementation with a focus on standards needs
- identify the standards required to progress the business implementation of electronic commerce
- create new work items to be forwarded to JTC 1 for approval, for transmission to an ISO/IEC TC or, if appropriate, advance requirements directly to the appropriate standards creation organization. For the purposes of this experimental activity, the Team Leader will report to JTC 1 on all recommendations emanating from the Team.

12.3 Proposed participants

JTC 1 requests the Business Team on Electronic Commerce to actively seek participation from key players of all regions, from users and from National Body representatives;

Possible key players could be:

- other ISO TCs
 - ⇒ ISO TC 68
 - ⇒ ISO TC 154
- banking and other financial institutions
- credit card providers
- mail order and similar businesses
- web-based retailers
- appropriate government agencies
- consortia/fora involved in electronic commerce such as (but not limited to)
 - ⇒ W3C
 - ⇒ E-money Council
 - ⇒ Cyberpayments Colloquium
 - ⇒ HLSG

⇒ CommerceNet

12.4 Method of Operation

The Business Team will operate with a "Leader" appointed by JTC 1. The Leader's National Body is expected to provide the necessary administrative support. Participation on the team is open to any and all interested persons and organizations, and is explicitly not restricted to NB delegations. The Team Leader shall be totally responsible for the conduct of the pilot operation, including determining how consensus will be developed within the Team, subject to direction, if any, from JTC 1 following his preliminary report to the JTC 1 Plenary of September 1997. The Team is encouraged to conduct its work via electronic means, including e-mail, web or network based discussion groups, and teleconferences, instead of formally scheduled meetings. Electronic distribution of information shall also be available to JTC 1 NBs upon request.

12.5 Measurable Work Products

- Publication of the description of the users' context and the required functionality;
- Approved New Work Item Proposals;
- Introduction of fast-track and PAS submissions, in response to identified requirements;
- Evidence of expanded participation and contributions from outside the traditional JTC 1 community;
- Generation of positive press coverage, published in both industry and popular media;
- Self assessment report of the Business Team, including working methods, perceived value to the participants, and the ability to meet the above stated work products. This report should also submit recommendations to JTC 1 on how to monitor and co-ordinate ongoing work.

12.6 Timeframe

JTC 1 must meet very aggressive timeframes if it wishes to play a relevant role in the creation of electronic commerce standards. National, regional, and international trials are occurring. Banks currently move money through payment clearing networks but will require special standards for public networks which will allow electronic payments across national borders.

The Business Team itself will have to determine the business constraints, and hence, will need to reasonably limit its scope, to set itself pragmatic and achievable goals, which allow it to meet the timeline suggested by JTC 1:

- April 97 - 60 day JTC 1 letter ballot to establish the Business Team and identify the leadership,
- July 97 - Pilot approved, resources identified and work program specified.
- September 97 - JTC 1 Plenary report out by the Business Team leader on the scope and progress of the work.
- Not later than Feb. 98 - work on the pilot is essentially complete - in particular, NPs are submitted for JTC 1 approval with aggressive milestones for standards completion; applications for Recognition as PAS Submitters are received by JTC 1; existing standards are submitted for fast-track processing; analysis by the Business Team of its perceived value.
- March 98 - end of Electronic Commerce Business Team.
- June 98 - closing report to the JTC 1 Plenary on the successes and problems of the pilot. The report should include the degree of impact made on all organizations in implementing the requirements, status of the ongoing standards work, and recommendations for operating a future successful Business Team.