

IEEE 802.3 Maintenance

The IEEE 802.3 maintenance process can be found at the URL [<http://www.ieee802.org/3/maint/process/process.pdf>]. There are really four stages that a request goes through:

[1] SCOPE - The maintenance committee determines if a request is within the scope of maintenance, that is it is not a request for a new feature. In these cases a IEEE 802.3 vote will be taken to confirm this maintenance committee decision. If the request is determined to be a request for a new feature, the submitter is told that they need to start a separate amendment project to add the feature.

[2] ERRATA - If the request is within scope of maintenance the maintenance committee then determine if the request has uncovered an Errata. An Errata in the context of a IEEE standards is something very specific - it is when the published standard differs from the draft that was approved by the IEEE-SA Standards Board - this could be caused by an error during publication. In this case, an Errata sheet will be issued for the standard without any ballot.

[3] COMPLETE - If the request is not an errata the maintenance committee will then make sure it is complete. This involves ensuring that the request describes the desired change, the rationale for the change and its impact on existing implementations. At that point the request will be marked as ready for ballot.

[4] BALLOT - Once a request is ready for ballot, it will be included within an official project. As with all projects, there are two stages of balloting, first Working Group ballot, then Sponsor ballot, with all the normal opportunities to comment, change, or outright reject the proposed change.

The delay between a request reaching the ready for ballot stage and it actually going to ballot will depend on its urgency as judged by the maintenance committee. A very urgent request can become a Corrigendum project, one that has a very limited scope related to fixing a particular technical problem. At the other extreme it can simply wait the next Revision project which has to occur at a maximum of every five years when the entire standard is open for change. (Note however that due to the number of amendments IEEE 802.3 produces, this period is likely to be less). The middle ground is balloting the request through an Amendment project for which there are two cases, the first is where we have some urgent request that we combine with all the other requests ready for Ballot and create a maintenance amendment. The second is to pass the request over to a technically related amendment project.

One other thing to consider is that anyone can submit a request. While the members of the maintenance committee will work with a submitter to make sure the request makes sense, and in particular if they believe a request is unnecessary or wrong they will suggest to the submitter they withdraw it, however if the submitter is determined to see the request balloted then it will reach the state of Ready for Ballot.