Electric Reliability and Security for the West

1   Purpose of Technical Committees

WECC has created technical committees[1] because our mission—*to effectively and efficiently mitigate risks to the reliability and security of the Western Interconnection's Bulk Power System*—is best accomplished in partnership with our stakeholders. No single person or company has the necessary depth or breadth of knowledge, experience, or awareness to identify and mitigate all the reliability and security risks facing the West. To that end, WECC's technical committees bring together stakeholders and staff to share diverse perspectives and vast amounts of experience to effectively and efficiently identify, analyze, and address reliability and security risks.

2   Committee Structure Design Principles

The committee structure is designed by following guiding principles that are in line with WECC's long-term strategies of engagement and operational efficiency. The ultimate goal of the revised committee structure is to:

- Remain efficient and nimble, and effectively address reliability risks; and
- Ensure stakeholder engagement.

Below are some of the guiding principles of designing WECC's committee structure.

1. The committees and groups within the structure are designed and created to address the "Why?" stated above. The thinking behind the committees and committee structures starts with WECC's reliability mission and the reliability and security risks the committees are created to address.
2. Committee structure is designed to enable nimble organizational action as risks change or new risks are identified.
3. Committee structure is rigid only at the top level (e.g., JGC, RRC, and RAC). Beneath JGC, RRC, and RAC, there is flexibility for each committee's structure and organization.
4. Beneath the enduring structure provided by the JGC, RRC, and RAC, the committee structure is able to change in response to the ever-evolving reliability and security challenges WECC must address.

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[1] This includes all subgroup types listed on page 4 under and including the RAC, RRC, and JGC.

5. In the interest of organizational efficiency and the most effective use of stakeholder resources, committees should first create informal groups of subject matter experts or subgroups that are assigned an action item to complete a specific task. It is not always necessary to create formal groups (with charters and organizational structures) to accomplish the tasks at hand. If a task is better handled with the creation of a formal group, a temporary group should be considered, as described in #7.

6. Work-producing groups must demonstrate a direct link between the work produced and the reliability risk being addressed. Additionally, a work-producing group may be formed when work is directly related to WECC's delegated function. This work will be reviewed periodically by parent groups to ensure the relevance of work to reliability risks remains clear.

7. To ensure groups and their work remain active and relevant, temporary groups will take on a much larger part of all committee work. Creation of a temporary group will be the default approach to accomplishing new work. Permanent groups will only be formed following a thorough review of the ongoing nature of the proposed work in relation to a specific, continuing reliability or security risk need.

8. Typically, the committee structure will be two layers deep; three layers deep at most. Keeping the structure three or fewer layers deep will enable the parent group (e.g., JGC, RAC, RRC) to ensure the work is continually aligned with the overall objective. The RRC or RAC may create a temporary or permanent group (Layer 2). Permanent groups may create a permanent or temporary subgroup under themselves (Layer 3), but the subgroup (Layer 3) cannot create another subgroup (see Figure 1). Permanent subgroups (Layer 3) should be rare and only be created when their work product directly feeds into another group's work product (Layer 2).
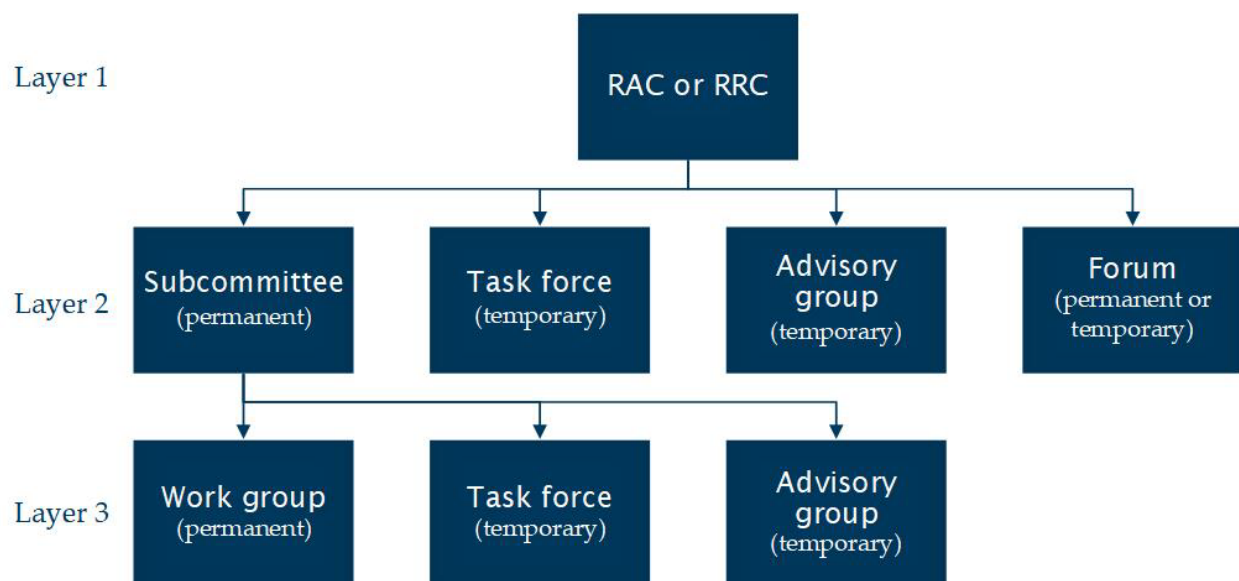

Figure 1: Typical Technical Committee Structure

3   Permanent Subgroup Creation

There are times when it is appropriate to form a permanent subgroup within WECC's committee structure and other times it may be more appropriate for that work to be done by a group housed under another entity like the Reliability Coordinators (RC) or NERC. WECC groups should focus on the things WECC is designated to complete, such as those that are specific to the reliability and security of the Western Interconnection. In cases in which work is moved to another entity, WECC staff and stakeholders can participate in those settings as desired and bring any issues that WECC should address to the RAC, RRC, or JGC for consideration.

Before forming a committee, consider the following questions:

1. Is there an existing group in the industry that is already addressing this risk? For example, under NERC or an RC.
    a. If so, should WECC staff and stakeholders participate in that group instead of forming a WECC group?
    b. Are there any unique issues in the West that are not being appropriately addressed under another group?
    c. Can WECC make the most meaningful impact on the issue being addressed?
2. Is it appropriate to form a committee under the RCs instead of WECC? All the following conditions should be met to consider moving a group to the RCs:
    a. The reliability risk is primarily operational in nature;
    b. The operational data required to address the reliability risk is with the RCs;
    c. The operational tools required to address reliability risks rests with the RCs; and
    d. The appropriate level of expertise required to address reliability risks is with the RCs.

For certain operational risks, WECC may decide to form a group to ensure the reliability risk is being addressed appropriately. WECC may participate in such activities facilitated by NERC or the RCs; however, the direction and engagement of activities to address reliability risks comes from NERC or the RCs. WECC may also decide to lead certain efforts under NERC, depending on the nature of the reliability risk.

Sometimes it may not be known what type of work is needed to address a reliability risk. In such cases, consider creating a small team through an action item whose job it will be to do the research and the initial work to define what tasks must be accomplished, for example, researching the threat of an electromagnetic pulse attack. In this situation, it might be useful to assign an action item to a small team to research this topic, then provide recommendations as to what further actions should be taken to address the reliability or security risk. Following the action item, the appropriate temporary or permanent group can be formed based on the initial research.

4   Criteria for Creating a Subgroup Under RRC and RAC

1. The RRC and the RAC will oversee all the work and assignments under each respective committee. By default, the RRC and the RAC will rely on temporary groups to complete the work. If a task is of limited scope and nature (one to two quarters), an action item should be created and assigned to a group of SMEs to complete the work. No formal group creation is necessary, but the scope and timeline of the action item should be clear to those participating. If a task will take roughly a year to complete, a formal temporary group should be used.
2. Most subgroups under the RRC and the RAC will be temporary with a defined scope and timeline to complete the work.
3. Permanent groups should only be formed when a work product needs to be created continually or on a recurring basis. Permanent groups may be created as necessary; however, a very strong justification for the ongoing nature of its work is required for any proposal to form a permanent group.
4. The creation of groups (formal, informal, temporary, or permanent) will be based on a specific reliability or security issue or need. Groups that produce work must be evaluated as to whether the work they produce is still addressing the reliability or security needs.

5   Types of Subgroups That May Be Created Under RRC and RAC

1. **Subcommittee**: A permanent, ongoing, work-producing group. The group will produce minutes of its meetings.
2. **Work group**: A permanent, ongoing, work-producing group that produces a sub-product that goes directly into a subcommittee's work product. The group will produce minutes of its meetings.
3. **Task force**: A temporary, work-producing group (for example, the current Path Task Force). The task force is responsible for completing the work. The group will produce minutes of its meetings.
4. **Advisory group**: A temporary group of stakeholders (or a consultant hired by WECC) that advises WECC staff on work products. An advisory group is not responsible for delivering the work products—WECC staff is responsible for the work. An example of this would be one of the study program advisory groups. WECC management may create an advisory group outside the committee structure, if needed. The group will not produce minutes of its meetings.
5. **Forum**: A permanent, non-work-producing group focused on information sharing by WECC staff and stakeholders. If a forum identifies a work product that may need to be done, it should be referred to the parent committee who has authority to decide whether and how it should be completed. The group will not produce minutes of its meetings.

6. **Roundtable**: A temporary, non-work-producing group focused on information sharing by WECC staff and stakeholders. A current example of this would be the Wildfire Risk Roundtable. The group will not produce minutes of its meetings.

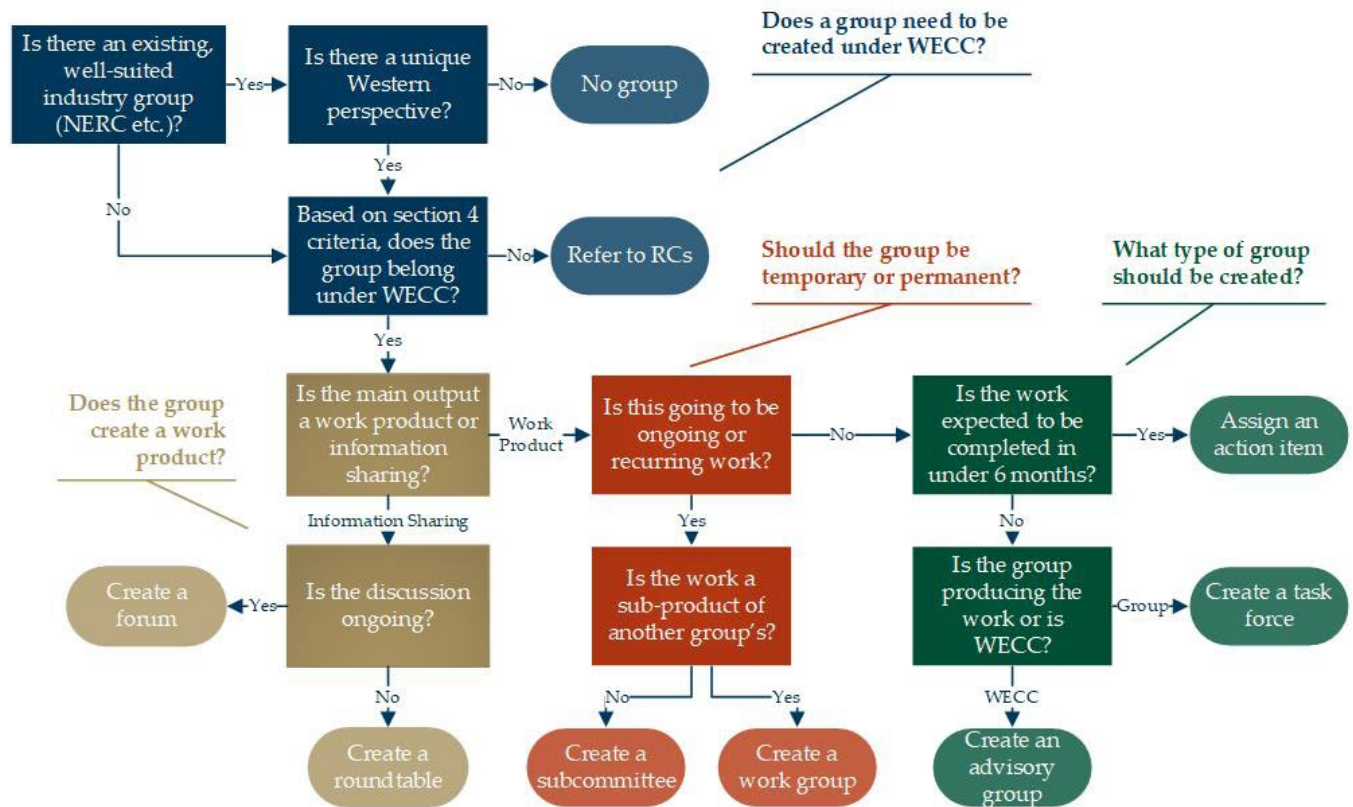|		Ad hoc		Permanent
		Stakeholder-led	WECC-led	
Work Producing	Independent Work	Task Force	Advisory Group	Subcommittee
	Supporting Work			Work Group
Information sharing		Roundtable		Forum

Figure 2: Types of Subgroups

6   Subgroup Creation Process

Figure 3: Group Creation Workflow