

# Voting System Performance Rating Charter

**OVERVIEW:** The purpose of VSPR is to expeditiously develop useful, objective, and substantially comprehensive performance rating standards for US voting systems.

The underlying approach and structure of VSPR is modeled after the IETF [3]. Membership is open to anyone without fee and all documents and email logs are openly available online. In-person meetings and teleconferences are optional in that those who participate only by email are given time to react to meeting decisions before they become final. The performance rating standards are divided into several broad subject “Areas.” Each such standard, under the management of Directors elected for its Area, is written by a separate Working Group.

Certain specific provisions are aimed at allowing VSPR to obtain ANSI-Accredited Standards Developer status, which may be advantageous in obtaining adoption by the EAC [1]. In order for open membership to be combined with ANSI’s “balance” requirements, the voting membership is divided into four groups: advocates; security/technology experts; voting officials/experts; and vendors. Approval of VSPR standards requires a majority vote of a majority of the groups. Balloting rules and an appeals procedure are also included as required by ANSI [2].

**STRUCTURE:** The organization is comprised of the following bodies (see also chart):

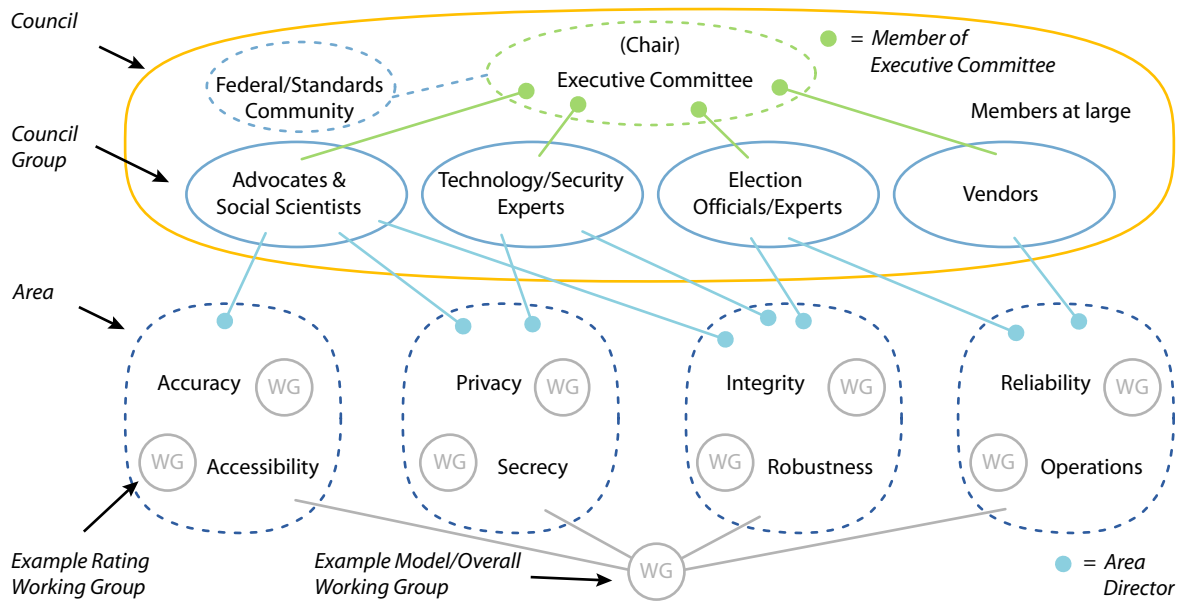
**Council**—Membership in Council is open to any natural person who completes the online registration process. Council membership is free of charge but requires agreement with this charter. Members are each initially “at large” and may be made a member of exactly one “Council Group” as described below.

**Council Groups**—The members of Council, apart from at-large members, are divided into four Council Groups: (1) Advocates & Social Scientists; (2) Technology/Security Experts; (3) Election Officials/Experts; and (4) Vendors. Each such group admits members by a majority vote of current members, though such membership should not be unreasonably withheld from qualified applicants. Each group also elects an Executive Committee member and an alternate. Similarly, each group elects one or more Area Directors as detailed below. All Council Group representatives are elected by and serve at the pleasure of a majority of posted votes. Additionally, a similarly constituted but non-voting group, Federal/Standards Community, can participate in all activities and interact with the Executive Committee.

**Executive Committee**—The day-to-day decisions of VSPR are made by the Executive Committee. The committee operates by a quorum of at least three members, with at most one representative from each Council Group. It may elect a Chairman who can be an additional voting member of any quorum if not already a representative of a Council Group. This committee should, time permitting, obtain ratification by a majority of members of Council Groups on major decisions. The Executive Committee can propose substantive changes to this charter, which require a two-thirds majority of all Council Group members. The Executive Committee also nominates members to the Federal/Standards Community Council Group.

**Area Directors**—Each Council Group elects one or more Area Directors (with alternates) for some of the four subject areas: (a) Accuracy and Accessibility; (b) Privacy and Ballot-Secrecy; (c) Integrity and Robustness; and (d) Reliability and Operations. The following indicates which subject Areas have Directors from which Council Groups: “a” 1; “b” 1,2; “c” 1,2,3; and “d” 3,4. (For instance, Directors for the Privacy and Ballot-Secrecy Area are contributed by the Advocates and the Technology/Security Experts Council Groups; see also chart.) Area Directors approve the Charters of Working Groups, after Charters have been posted for a two-week comment period. Area Directors also review Working Group progress and the resulting deliverables before accepting them and bringing them to ballot by the Council Groups.

**Working Groups**—The “Charter” of each Working Group serves to define its: scope, deliverables, timing objectives, subject Area(s), and chairperson(s). The Directors of the Area(s) named should reach consensus on any Charter. (Performance-rating Working Groups will be in single Areas, models and overall documents will be across all Areas.) Working Groups should facilitate progress monitoring and review of their deliverables by their respective Area Directors. Only the Executive Committee can approve changes in a group’s Charter. Chairpersons(s) should run Working Groups by IETF “rough consensus,” post all drafts and agendas, and include all documents with two weeks notice of pending meetings/decisions.



### **ANSI Requirements:**

*Appeals*—Any Council-Group member(s), or those eligible for such membership, may file a written request for appeal, which is the exclusive grievance mechanism. An appeal must contain the decision being appealed, a proposed remedy, and the arguments for why the remedy is appropriate. If the Executive Committee is unable to resolve it informally within 30 days, the appellant has the right to supply impartial and uninvolved arbiters willing to arbitrate pro bono, three of whom are reasonably acceptable to the Executive Committee. The three accepted arbiters should reach a binding decision within two weeks.

*Balloting Rules*—Ballots on whether specific performance ratings, models or overall documents should be issued as VSPR standards are cast by members of Council Groups and can be accompanied by comments, which must if relevant be addressed in writing before a standard is approved. A majority of positive ballots within a majority of Council Groups is also required for approval (revision or retraction) of a standard.

### **Bootstrap:**

In order to get VSPR started, founding members of the Council are installed and these members are announced at launch. Each initial Council Group can then begin recruiting additional members and admit those who may request membership through the online registration process. Within two weeks of launch, each Council Group elects an interim Executive Committee member based on a roster of candidates put forward by a nominating committee of Council members. All nominations made are included in rosters. The Executive Committee, once installed, establishes the nominating committee(s) for Area Directors. In the absence of one or more Area Directors, Working Groups may post Provisional Charters, begin work, and negotiate any changes wished for by Area Directors once installed.

### **Future steps:**

Funding from foundations may be sought in order to pay for one or more meetings/workshops and/or to provide a permanent or task-based secretariat function. Incorporation as a non-profit scientific organization is contemplated. Formal application for ANSI-accredited standards developer status is also anticipated

### **References**

- [1] Office of Management and Budget “Regulation A-119” requires agencies such as the EAC to use “consensus” standards in lieu of government developed standards and defines consensus in ANSI terms.
- [2] “ANSI Essential Requirements: Due process requirements for American National Standards.”
- [3] “The Tao of IETF” RFC 3160; and “IETF Working Groups: BCP 25” RFC 2418.