# Technical Guidelines Development Committee

Project Charter

VVSG Version 2.0

**DRAFT**

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## Introduction

The proposed project will have the objective of providing election officials, voting system manufacturers and the voting public with a revised, updated and improved set of voting system guidelines providing specifications and requirements against which voting systems can be tested to determine if they provide all the basic functionality, accessibility, usability and security capabilities required of modern voting technology.

The final work product of this project will represent the fourth iteration of national-level voting system standards/guidelines. The Federal Election Commission published the *Performance and Test Standards for Punchcard, Marksense and Direct Recording Electronic Voting Systems* in 1990. This was followed by a revised document titled the *Voting Systems Standards* in 2002.

Version 1.0 of the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG) was adopted by a vote of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) on December 13, 2005. Version 1.1 of the VVSG was created and adopted by the EAC on March 31, 2015 as an effort to improve Version 1.0 of the VVSG by providing updates to requirements in the areas of security, reliability, usability, and accessibility as well as to enhance the testability and clarity of several of the requirements contained in Version 1.0 of the VVSG.

## Objectives

In order to align with the goals articulated by both the National Association of State Election Directors (NASED) and the EAC Future VVSG Working Group, this Committee agrees that the primary objectives of Version 2.0 of the VVSG shall be:

* To assess the ability of the election systems to correctly execute secure, usable and accessible elections in order to provide assurance to voters that the election is an accurate reflection of the voters’ will.
* To enable, not obstruct or impede, innovation and needed response to changing statutes, rules, jurisdictional and voters’ needs.
* To create a set of implementable guidelines that allows deployment of systems by jurisdictions constrained by election calendars, schedules and budgetary restrictions.
* To facilitate the interoperability of election systems.
* To facilitate an open and transparent process that allows voters and election jurisdictions to assess the performance and capability of the election systems.
* To provide a set of testable requirements that jurisdictions can understand and use to evaluate the performance of election systems and to procure new systems.

## Scope

The overall scope of VVSG 2.0 remains similar to versions 1.0 and 1.1 of the VVSG. The document is intended to provide a set of specifications and requirements against which voting systems can be tested to determine if they provide all the basic functionality, accessibility, usability and security capabilities required. The requirements are intended to apply to all systems and/or system components used to:

* Prepare the voting system for use in an election
* Produce the appropriate ballot formats
* Test that the voting system and ballot materials have been properly prepared and are ready for use
* Record and count votes
* Consolidate and report election results
* Display results on-site or remotely
* Produce and maintain comprehensive audit trail data

The proposed structure of VVSG 2.0 would differ significantly from previous VVSG versions in that it will be divided into higher level principles and guidelines and be accompanied by detailed requirements and test assertions documents. The complete new structure would be:

* **Principles:** High level system design goals;
* **Guidelines:** Broad system design details focused primarily on election official use;
* **Requirements:** Contain the technical details necessary for manufacturers to design their voting system;
* **Test Assertions:** Contain the technical specifications required for laboratories to test voting systems to the guidelines and requirements of the document.

The EAC, NIST and the TGDC believe that the revised structure of the VVSG would better serve the objectives of this project and, ultimately, better serve the needs of election officials.

## Project Timeline

The following is a prospective timeline for this project:

* March 2016 - January 2017 TGDC Meeting = Detail final scope & Format of VVSG 2.0 and begin to draft High Level Goals document & some level of requirements.
* January 2017 - December 2017 = Final development of High Level Goals and Requirements. (Includes 2 TGDC Meetings and at least 1 Standards Board and Board of Advisors Meeting.)
* January 2018 - March 2018 = 90 Day Public Comment period.
* March 2018 - May 2018 = EAC-NIST staff response & changes from Public Comment.
* June 2018 = Final formatting.
* July 2018 - August 2018 = EAC vote on VVSG 2.0.

## Participation

The current VVSG development work is incorporating a public working group process to ensure participation and early input from the broadest possible election community. Participation in a public working group is open to all interested parties. All work produced by the public working groups are considered within the public domain and may be published and/or released at the discretion of the United States Government - the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the EAC. All members will be requested to actively participate in working group sessions, and on occasions be assigned actionable tasks that may involve research and/or formal recommendations.

## Resource Roles and Responsibilities

Section 202 of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) notes the EAC duties to adopt voluntary voting system guidelines under the process noted in Section 221whereby the Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC) assists the EAC Executive Director and NIST in the development of voting system guidelines.

EAC and NIST staff resources are currently engaged as an integral part of the VVSG development effort supporting both the working group process and the constituency group process by acting as agency leads for the Pre-election, Election and Post-election working groups and as liaisons to the 4 primary constituency groups. As the VVSG development process continues, NIST staff will work to engage in research required to develop the new document as well as preparing drafts of the document for review and discussion by the TGDC. After draft Guidelines have been produced and forwarded by NIST and the TGDC to EAC, the Certification Division staff has the primary responsibility of preparing the draft for public comment and once completed, vetting the comments for consideration by NIST and EAC.

Budgetary resources for this project will depend upon the Congressional budget allocation for both NIST and the EAC, but both agencies currently hope to have sufficient funding to enable this project to be completed according to the approximate timeline noted above.