# New service provider initiative to speed delivery of virtualized services

*Broadband Forum invites non-member service providers to help define an industry-wide framework for automated introduction, integration and delivery of virtualized services*

**Fremont, California, December 1, 2016:** The Broadband Forum today announced the first steps have been taken to form a new industry connectivity and virtualization committee of global service providers which will resolve how connectivity and virtualization are bought and sold by service providers worldwide.

Founded by the Forum's Service Provider Action Council (SPAC) – an international autonomous committee of service providers – the new steering group has been created with the initial purpose of creating the committee rules and developing an international open trading business framework to seamlessly deliver virtualized servers across the globe. This will accelerate the deployment of interoperating connectivity and cloud services, as well as reconcile the vertical market and system integrator interests to avoid the endless inefficiency of n-by-n integrations.

As with the airline industry, this is a model which will enable both interworking and service differentiation. Target deliverables will include a common buying and selling framework for providers and a common language between proprietary systems, Standards Developing Organizations (SDOs) and open source groups, and vertical market providers, bridging siloed implementations.

"In the airline industry, organizations such as Sabre Airline Solutions and SITA allow travel classes to be automatically configured and purchased across airlines worldwide," said Robin Mersh, Broadband Forum CEO. "If a new airline launches, it simply plugs in to the system. Now imagine if every airline had to have a separate agreement with every other airline and there was no common agreement on service classes. Today, connecting flights and cooperative agreements are taken for granted, allowing customers choice and reliability, and that is where we need to get to in the telecoms industry."

The industry need for the new connectivity and virtualization committee, along with its goals, were identified by SPAC members as part of Forum discussions on a "top-down" Network Functions Virtualization model that should be common internationally.

This has been a common theme at recent industry events which have discussed the lack of an integrated approach to service delivery as a barrier to creating massive new markets. According to the Broadband Forum, this is due to a proliferation of bottom-up network infrastructures and delivery platforms, as well as the absence of a clear migration and coexistence strategy with legacy networks. The Forum has also highlighted a lack of interoperability as a key inhibitor, outside of a small number of bilateral agreements.

Mersh added: "The question which needs to be asked instead is: 'What are the user service, application and purchasing requirements, and what needs to be built to support that?'"

The new steering group will aim to do exactly that, focusing on a generic approach to service delivery across retail, wholesale, enterprise and mobile services. In doing this, it will leverage and contribute to the many industry initiatives from SDOs and open source communities.

"Equipment manufacturers, system integrators and software companies will all benefit from the realization of this vision, as it will simplify and reduce the cost of providing products and services to their customers," said Mersh. "A common approach to service enablement and delivery will create a much larger addressable market to these market players."

To ensure the approach is truly industry-wide and global in nature, the Broadband Forum is inviting non-Broadband Forum service providers to join them to investigate the basis for trading connectivity and virtualized services.

The first step has been to establish the steering group within the Broadband Forum. This group will determine the scope and nature of the effort, potential operating processes, and launch timelines. The goal is to complete these initial items by March 2017.

The Broadband Forum's role will be to act as an incubator for this independent industry effort and leverage its autonomous SPAC group and long established anti-trust policies and procedures. In the long term, the activity will most likely result in an independent association. Meetings will be held online and there is no participation fee.

Service providers which would like to participate should send a request to CEO Robin Mersh (rmersh@boardband-forum.org). Please contact Robin for further details.

Current SPAC members may find out further information on the Forum's collaboration site http://wiki.broadband-forum.org.

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**About the Broadband Forum**
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