ACORD DOCUMENT REPOSITORY INTEROPERABILITY PILOT
WORKING GROUP
Project Plan - Draft 0.2

1. GOAL

To pilot standard technical solutions that allow different electronic document repositories to interoperate, in other words to exchange electronic documents between each other automatically, without manual intervention.

2. BUSINESS DRIVER

Within the reinsurance and large commercial insurance community business practitioners require access to free format documentation in order to make many business decisions (examples; for processing Claim advices and Risk Submissions). As computerized trading increases, solutions are being requested for providing this free format documentation in electronic format. Business practitioners need this electronic documentation to be easily available. Access to this should:
  - Be seamlessly integrated with the internal systems they use day to day,
  - involve no onerous extra steps in getting to the electronic documentation, and
  - ideally be better and quicker than is possible now in the paper world

3. BARRIER OF MULTIPLE REPOSITORY SOLUTIONS

Every organization has or will have a strategy for storing their internal electronic documents. Today many have implemented internal document management systems, and some have also invested in repository capability by which they offer business partners access to electronic documents. In addition there are third party organizations in some geographical areas starting to offer centralized document repository facilities to specific communities of business partners. To satisfy the business practitioners' needs, technical solutions are needed that allow these repositories to interoperate, in other words to exchange electronic documents between each other automatically, without manual intervention.

4. APPROACH FOR A STANDARD SOLUTION FOR INTEROPERABILITY

Internet technologies exist that can allow documents to be shared between repositories automatically. These have been reviewed by the ACORD Document Repository Interface working group during 2003, and standard processes and messages required to allow repository interoperation have been defined, as follows:-
  - messaging framework standards, that provide a standard mechanism for transporting XML messages and supporting electronic documents – *completed September 2003*

- process scenario descriptions required to allow documents to be shared between repositories – *draft completed 17th November*
- standard messages (and their data content) required to support the above scenarios – *first draft completed 17th November 2003*
- the XML schema for these standard messages – *first draft planned for 15th December 2003*
- a standard approach to security issues relating to communication between repositories – *basic security provisions, sufficient for piloting , are included in the messaging framework standards completed in September 2003) – additional security requirements will be addressed in parallel with repository pilots during the first half of 2004, in the ACORD Joint Architecture Group*

Sharing of documents will need to seamlessly link to systems that send/receive structured data messages, and that business practitioners use day to day – requirements to allow this will be built into the above deliverables.

See ANNEX 1 for descriptions of the different scenarios for document repository interoperation.

Messaging Framework standard highlights

The standard, named "ACORD Messaging Service and SOAP Implementation Guide", defines a complete set of service messages for transporting XML messages and supporting electronic documents over Internet, using Web Services standards. Basic security options are specified. XML messages can be any ACORD standard.

Repository Interface standard highlights

The standard, named "Document Repository Interface" defines processing rules and data requirements for the following set of Repository Interface operations:
- Create Folder: prepare a document placeholder in target repository
- Upload Document: push documents into target repository
- Download Folder: pull all documents from a designated repository folder
- Download Document: pull designated documents from a repository
- Change Attributes: change characteristics of documents or folders
- Notify: notify creation of documents or folders to designated parties
- Search: search for documents or folders following specified criteria

5. PILOT PHASE CAN NOW COMMENCE

Standards for the access to and transfer of documents for all parties have now reached the stage where practical implementations need to be piloted and reference sites created.

Two communities have now volunteered to move forward with pilot implementations of these standards;

- the London large commercial insurance and reinsurance community want to pilot the standards to support their existing electronic claims agreement system/s
- the USA reinsurance community want to pilot the standards to support their planned implementation of the submissions and claims core reinsurance transactions.

It is planned that these pilots will go forward during the first half of 2004, with the aim of having a total of 6 to 12 business trading partners involved. A working group will be formed to enable pilot implementers to share experiences and feed back any required changes to the standards during that period. All changes will be brought together at the end of this period, reviewed with the wider community, and incorporated as necessary into the standards for formal publication in June 2004.

6. DEPENDENCIES FOR MOVING FORWARD INTO THE PILOT PHASE:-

There are a number of dependencies that need to be satisfied for this pilot project to move forward as planned:-

- Confirmation of support of all key enablers to London and USA pilots (companies and solution providers)
- Agreement of a practical approach for each pilot implementer to manage their secure communication between repositories (in advance of a standard for this being available)
  Note: A basic approach to security is already included within the SOAP framework that was completed in September 2003. Pilot participants will be encouraged to use this – although it does not cover "authentication" issues, and ACORD will work with each pilot participant to determine the best approach for this within the pilot.
- Identification of how each pilot participant will manage the "notification process" (i.e. how providers of documents notify their business partners that a document is available – options are:-
  o By sending an email
  o By workflow mechanisms within their own repositories (this will also likely generate an email to their business partner)
  o By indicating the document exists within a structured data message
- Confirmation that timeframes for each of the pilots are in line with the overall project plan

7. PILOT PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A single monitoring group will be set up that meets once per week, and addresses general progress, as well as monitoring how the following detailed elements are being addressed by pilot participants:
- Is the business requirement being satisfied?
- Any technical issues relating to the usage of the Soap XML wrapper
- Authentication of messages / other security issues*
- How different notification approaches are working (via email, via repository workflow/email, via structured message)

This will run in parallel with further work on security issues that will be taken forward by the ACORD Joint Architecture Group (JAG). Experience of pilot participants and input from JAG will be shared on an ongoing basis, so both can learn from each other

Every two weeks a summary report will be provided to the RLC Steering Committee working group "sponsor". ACORD will liaise with the sponsor to determine issues that need to be raised with the steering committee as a whole.

At the end of the project, a webex session will be organized to share conclusions and any proposals for change with the rest of the ACORD community.

8. PROJECT TIMELINE

| Task	Responsibility	Target	Status (As at December 1st)
Complete Framework deliverable (Messaging Service and SOAP implementation guide v1.0.1)	ACORD Framework working group	September 2003	Complete
Complete definition of the business transactions, business scenarios, and data content for "Repository Interface" messages. This will be in the form of an implementation guide.	ACORD Repository Interface working group	9th November 2003	Complete
Kickoff meeting for real members (audience is business/strategic people to educate and get commitment) worldwide – as part of this key enablers to be identified, and ACORD to advise on requirements of these enablers (e.g. middleware providers not immediately involved in repositories may still have requirements)		To be held in individual communities during December to take account of local holidays, workloads and commercial negotiations. Combined Webex session to confirm commitment to be held by mid January.	In Progress
Create and circulate technical XML "schema" for the "Repository interoperability" messages	ACORD	15th December	On target
Contact key enablers identified in kickoff meeting to promote their involvement	ACORD	Complete by end of December	
Hold virtual training session to promote awareness of the "Repository Interface" messages within the repository vendor community	ACORD	Third week of December	Planning underway
Obtain confirmation of all pilot participants – including key "enablers" – with their individual timeframes	ACORD	Commence 10th December Complete by 16th January	
Consolidate individual pilot plans to confirm overall project plans/timeframes (see below)	ACORD	By end of January	

Task	Responsibility	Target	Status
Monitor progress of pilot implementations; - ongoing direct contact with implementers - weekly meetings of the main working group to monitor progress - ad hoc meetings to address support specific issues that may arise - twice-monthly reports to steering committee sponsor (Mike Wright, Willis)	ACORD	Ongoing throughout project	
Commence phase 1: Implementers run pilots	Pilot implementers	19th January	
Start demonstrations of early pilot organizations (to be made to the whole working group).	Pilot Implementers	1st March	
Complete phase 1: Implementers run pilots. NB participants may wish to continue to use and expand the interoperability services piloted.	Pilot Implementers	30th April	
Commence phase 2: Review feedback from pilot implementations	ACORD / Pilot Implementers	1st April	
Complete phase 2: Review feedback from pilot implementations. NB participants may wish to continue to use and expand the interoperability services piloted.	ACORD / Pilot Implementers	30th April	
Webex session open to the whole community to share findings of pilot implementers, to present any proposals to change, and to prepare community for voting on the standard for formal publication	ACORD / Pilot Implementers	15th May	
Incorporate agreed enhancements to standard based on feedback from pilot implementers	ACORD	30th May	
Put forward "Repository Interface" standard messages for ACORD vote / approval	ACORD	30th May	
Publicity promoting the success of the pilot/s – London presentation, articles in press (USA and UK)	ACORD	June 2004	

Task	Responsibility	Target	Status
Create a plan and structure to monitor and encourage uptake of the standards	ACORD	June 2004	
Pilot implementers move forward with fully live systems	Implementers	From June 2004	

ANNEX 1 – DIAGRAM OF PROCESS (expected use of push and pull messages)
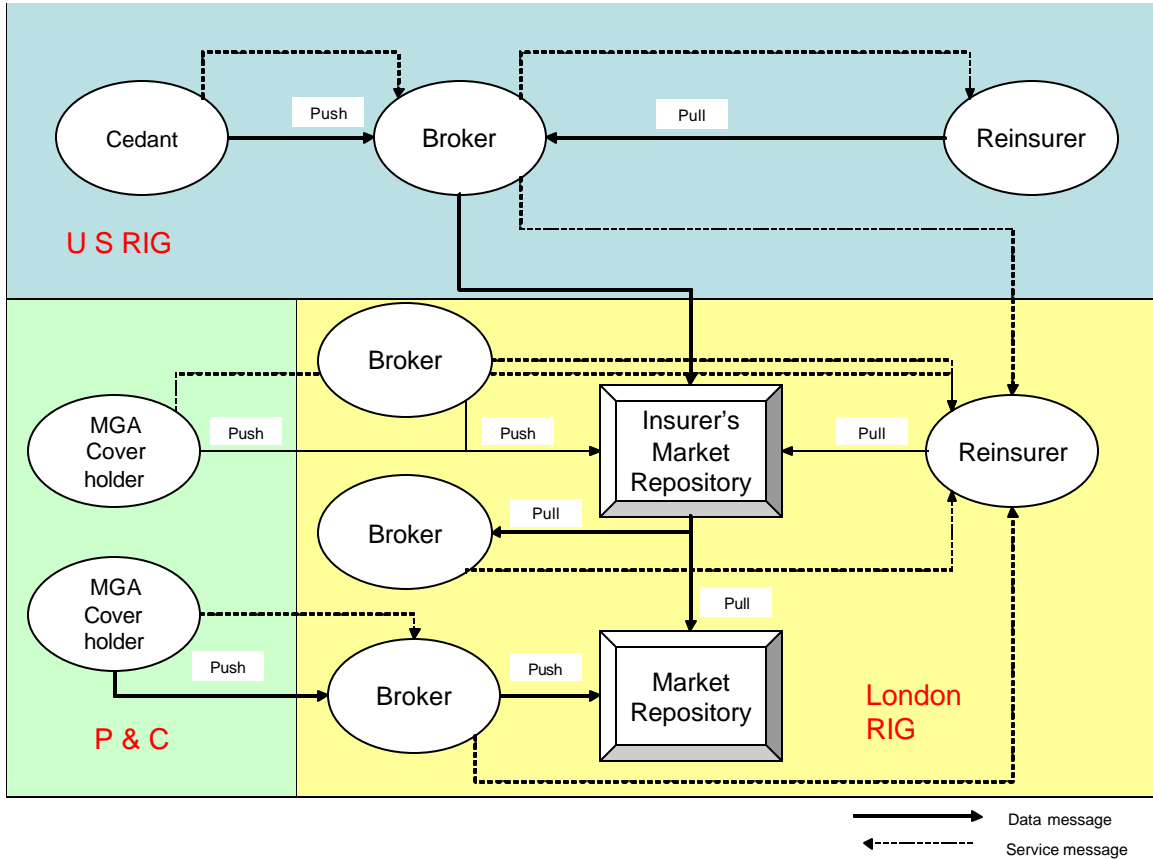
ANNEX 2 – EXPECTED PILOT PARTICIPANTS – to be confirmed