



# **NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide**

Operational Guidelines for NCIRP Participants

Version 1.0.02

2016-02-15

[NCIRP]

NFC Forum™

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# 1 Introduction

This document describes the purposes, role, and composition of the NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP), as well as the responsibilities and activities of the individual participants.

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the NCIRP Guide is to provide detailed information about the tasks for the group, the process for handling the tasks, the way that the group operates, as well as the expectations of individual participants in terms of roles, conduct, confidentiality, and service levels. The document is not only intended as an aid to individual NCIRP participants, but also to provide transparency and consistency to the way in which the NCIRP operates.

## 1.2 References

### 1.2.1 Normative References

[CERTPOL]	NFC Forum Certification Policy, Latest version as identified on the Certification Program website, NFC Forum
[DEVREQS]	NFC Forum Device Requirements, Latest version as identified on the Certification Program website, NFC Forum
[DOCSMAIN]	NFC Forum Compliance Committee Test Case and Document Maintenance, Latest version, NFC Forum
[TOOLSVAL]	Administrative Process for Test Tool Validation, Latest version, NFC Forum
[LABSREQ]	Authorized Test Lab Requirements, Latest version, NFC Forum
[RFC2119]	Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels, RFC 2119, S. Bradner, March 1997, Internet Engineering Task Force

### 1.2.2 Informative References

[ISO/IEC_9646]	ISO/IEC 9646, Open Systems Interconnection – Conformance testing methodology and framework, 1995, ISO/IEC
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## 1.3 Administration

The NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide is supported by the Near Field Communication Forum, Inc., located at:

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The NFC Forum, Inc. maintains this specification.

## 1.4 Special Word Usage

The key words “MUST”, “MUST NOT”, “REQUIRED”, “SHALL”, “SHALL NOT”, “SHOULD”, “SHOULD NOT”, “RECOMMENDED”, “MAY”, and “OPTIONAL” in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC2119].

## 1.5 Name and Logo Usage

The NFC Forum *N-Mark Trademark License Agreement* (<http://nfc-forum.org/nfc-forum-inc-n-mark-trademark-license-agreement/>) defines the terms and conditions under which the NFC Forum Trademarks may be used on and in relation to Certified Implementations.

## 1.6 Intellectual Property

The NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide conforms to the Intellectual Property guidelines specified in the NFC Forum's *Intellectual Property Rights Policy* (<http://nfc-forum.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/NFC-Forum-IPR-Policy.pdf>), as outlined in the NFC Forum *Rules of Procedure* (<http://nfc-forum.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/NFC-Forum-Rules-of-Procedure.pdf>).

## 1.7 Glossary

### *Certification Administrator (CA)*

The organization appointed by the NFC Forum to manage the day-to-day operations of the Certification Program in accordance with the policies defined in this document.

### *Certification Information*

All of the information about a product that is submitted to the CA in support of an application for certification.

### *Certification Register*

The official list of all Certified Implementations and related information that is maintained by the CA and made available on the Certification Program website.

### *Certification Testing*

The testing that an NFC Forum Implementation must undergo to achieve certification.

### *Certified Implementation*

An NFC Forum Implementation that has successfully completed the certification process and for which the Supplier has been notified in writing by the CA that certification has been achieved.

### *ICS (Implementation Conformance Statement)*

A checklist of the capabilities supported by an NFC Forum Implementation. It provides an overview of the features and options of the specifications that are implemented, including the modes of operation that the product supports (see [DEVREQS]). The ICS is used to select and parameterize test cases and as an indicator for basic interoperability between different products (see [ISO/IEC\_9646]).

### *Interpretation*

A decision made by the NFC Forum NCIRP (NFC Forum Issue Resolution Panel) that elaborates or refines the meaning of an NFC Forum Specification or [DEVREQS], or an external standard referenced within them. An Interpretation is one possible outcome of a Problem Report (PR).

### *NCIRP Participant*

An individual representing an NFC Forum member company whose participation in the NCIRP as a body has been sanctioned by the Compliance Committee.

### *NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP)*

The NFC Forum committee responsible for responding to Problem Reports (PRs) and Notices of Non-compliance.

### *NFC Forum Functionality*

A set of features defined in the NFC Forum specifications.

### *NFC Forum Implementation*

The combination of hardware, software, and mechanical components that together deliver NFC Forum Functionality and that meets the requirements defined in [DEVREQS].

### *NFC Forum Issue Resolution Chair (NIRC)*

An independent third party, responsible for chairing the NCIRP and managing all related activities.

### *Notices of Non-compliance (NNCs)*

One or more notices to a vendor that an implementation does not fulfill the NFC Forum requirements for becoming certified.

### *Problem Report (PR)*

A question of clarification, intent, or correctness about a specification, a test case, or a procedure which, if accepted by the NCIRP, will be resolved into an Interpretation clarification, a Test Case Deficiency (TCD), or a process update.

### *Subject Matter Expert (SME)*

An expert about a specific technique, standard, specification, technology, etc.

### *Specifications*

The detailed technical specifications published by the NFC Forum that define the radio frequency and protocol capabilities and behaviors that deliver NFC functionality. The specifications may include, by reference, specifications and standards published by other organizations.

### *Supplier*

A product vendor that is interested in or applying for certification, or has certified a product in the NFC Forum Certification Program.

### *Test Case Deficiency (TCD)*

An error in an NFC Forum test case that is causing it to produce an incorrect result impacting certification, agreed to by the NCIRP. A Test Case Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.

### *Test Tool Validation Resolution Committee (TVRC)*

The committee responsible for validation of test tools and decision of revalidations.

### *Waiver*

Expressed or implied voluntary and intentional relinquishment or abandonment of a requirement.

### *Waiver Request*

A request through a PR to get a waiver for business reasons.

## **1.8 Language**

The NFC Forum Certification Program documentation and website are written in English.

All certification forms must be completed in English and all certification information and other information provided to the Certification Administrator in connection with certification must be in English.

## **1.9 Website**

The Certification Program website is available at <http://nfc-forum.org/our-work/compliance/certification-program/>.

## 2 Scope

The NFC Forum NCIRP Guide provides an overview of the NCIRP as a body, its composition, participant qualifications, roles, and responsibilities. It also provides a detailed description of the NCIRP issue resolution process itself, from inception of an issue through all of the process steps to its final resolution.

This document is based on the NFC Forum Certification Policy [CERTPOL], which at a high level only defines the role of the NCIRP as a body and the issue resolution process that it manages for its audience. The NCIRP Guide is supplementary to the Certification Policy in conjunction with the Certification Policy [CERTPOL], and provides a set of detailed guidelines within which the NCIRP and the individual participants are expected to operate.

## 3 Organization

### 3.1 Role

The NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) is a panel responsible for responding to Problem Reports (PRs), Notices of Non-compliance (NNCs), evaluating Test Tool validation reports and evaluating ILCT reports within the context of the Certification Program and related activities.

The NCIRP reports directly to Compliance Committee.

### 3.2 Composition

The NCIRP is a panel made up of no fewer than three individuals representing either a Sponsor or Principal member of the NFC Forum and whose participation in the NCIRP has been sanctioned by the Compliance Committee.

### 3.3 Meetings

All NCIRP meetings are conducted by the NCIRP Chair (NIRC). The NIRC is an independent third party responsible for chairing the NCIRP and managing all related activities. The NIRC must also track the expertise of all SMEs.

For any official business to be conducted, a quorum must be achieved. For the purposes of NCIRP business, a quorum consists of minimum of three NCIRP members plus the NIRC.

A NCIRP member is expected to withdraw from participating in the final resolution of an issue when there is a conflict of interests in any matter being considered by the NCIRP.

### 3.4 Membership

NCIRP participants are selected from the Compliance Committee, Technical Committee, and Board of Directors, including working group chairs based on their level of subject matter expertise.

The Compliance Committee is responsible for electing NCIRP members and formally approves the appointment of any new participants. As a rule, the BoD, TWG, CPWG, MLOI, and TC chairs are invited to this group, as well as SMEs and interested members of the Compliance Committee.

The NCIRP SME members **MUST** cover all the relevant technologies for certification. TWG, which is the group where the technical expertise of the NFC Forum resides, at request from the NCIRP, **MUST** indicate active or inactive TWG members ranked by technical expertise to NCIRP, indicating potential conflict of interests.

The ranked list of candidates has to be approved by TWG after at least 2 weeks of announcements to all of the TWG members.

NCIRP will analyze the technical background, potential conflict of interest, and availability to fulfill the group service levels. The NCIRP can contact the candidates.

The CC will have to decide and approve the SME candidates for each technical area. The approval has to be announced at least 2 weeks in advance in order to allow all of the interested and concerned CC members to express their opinions.

There is no term limit associated with participation in the NCIRP, but active participation in NCIRP activities is expected from all participants. When a member does not actively participate in the NCIRP activities (e.g., no meeting attendance, no response to email requests, no contributions to resolutions, etc.) for a period exceeding 6 calendar months, the NCIRP may request the Compliance Committee to remove such a participant from the NCIRP.

If a member is a chair of BoD, TWG, CPWG, MLOI, and TC, and then stops holding that position or changes companies, that person automatically stops being an NCIRP member. The CC needs to take actions for his replacement after request from the NIRC.

### **3.5 Voting Rights**

If a company has more than one (1) representative, only one of them can vote. Simple majority is used, which means approval by more than 50% of all votes cast (excluding abstentions and those that are not allowed to vote).

A minimum of three members representing three different member companies is required in order for a vote to carry. The NIRC conducts the meeting but has no voting rights. An NCIRP participant must refrain from casting a vote on any issue that may be perceived as a conflict of interests.

### **3.6 Non-disclosure/Confidentiality**

All information contained in Problem Reports or other materials being submitted to the NCIRP will be reviewed by the NIRC prior to distribution to the NCIRP members. The NIRC will take reasonable steps to remove the details of the Supplier and product from all information provided as part of PRs and/or Technical Reviews.

Participation in the NCIRP requires that all NCIRP participants agree to hold all information relating to a Supplier and or a Supplier's product confidential during and after the issue resolution process. Any such information shall not be disclosed in any publicly-available document or to any third party by an NCIRP participant or the NIRC. NCIRP participants implicitly agree to this condition when accepting their nomination for NCIRP participation after being endorsed by the Compliance Committee.

In the event that the Compliance Committee becomes aware of any NCIRP participant not abiding by this provision, such a participant will be required to withdraw from any further participation in the NCIRP.

## 4 Certification Issues Resolution

### 4.1 Issue Reporting

NFC Forum certification is only granted for NFC Forum implementations demonstrating compliance with the NFC Forum specifications. This means that all test cases required for a particular implementation, based on the Implementation Conformance Statement (ICS) claiming support for all mandatory requirements defined in [DEVREQS], have been successfully executed by a NFC Forum-authorized laboratory using an approved test tool.

On occasion, an NFC Forum implementation may fail a test case included in the implementation test plan, precluding the implementation from being certified. If the test case fails because of an issue with the specification, test case, or test tool, it can be addressed through Issue Resolution (see Section 4.2).. However, if the test case fails because of an issue in the implementation itself, certification would generally not be granted.

Strictly on an exception basis, the NCIRP may consider a request from a certification applicant claiming that a test case failed by the implementation is not critical to the correct operation and interoperability of the implementation with other NFC Forum devices. In such a case, the certification applicant may request that a specific requirement(s) be waived for the particular implementation in order for it to be certified.

Where a waiver is requested, the certification applicant is required to provide full details including:

- Test Case ID and brief description
- Reason the implementation fails the particular test case
- Explanation of why the test case is deemed to be of lesser importance to normal operation and interoperability, as well as what has been done to verify this
- Reason certification of the product is sought rather than first correcting the issue
- Reason why correcting the issue in the immediate term is not feasible
- Confirmation that the issue will be corrected in a future version of the implementation. Any such confirmation must include an action plan clearly indicating how and when the issue will be addressed, implemented, retested and recertified
- A three-month plan when the issue will be corrected

The above information must be provided using the standard Problem Report template, and the saved request submitted to the NCIRP at [ncirp@nfc-forum.org](mailto:ncirp@nfc-forum.org). A waiver request will largely follow the same process flow as defined for Problem Reports.

The NCIRP will review the waiver request and the supporting information provided, and conduct research of its own to obtain a level of assurance that waiving the particular requirement will not materially affect the operation of an implementation or result in interoperability issues when interaction with other NFC Forum devices is attempted. The NCIRP may request other information as it conducts its research.

Depending on the outcome of the research, discussion and conclusion, the NCIRP may agree to grant a waiver or decline the request. If a waiver is granted, the certificate when issued will reflect details of the particular requirement waived. Where an implementation is certified with an approved waiver noted, the results *cannot* be inherited for the purposes of certifying derivative products.

To submit a PR, refer to the NFC Forum certification public pages.

The NIRC must register the PR on the PR tracking spreadsheet hosted at the NCIRP web pages. Any evolution in its state must be recorded there with the corresponding date and responsible person if applicable.

Possible states are:

- Received
- Assigned
- Pending more information
- Resolution submitted
- Resolved

## 4.2 Issue Resolution

A Problem Report (PR) submitted to the NCIRP can be resolved with:

- Test Tool Deficiency (TTD) – A decision about the correct functioning of NFC Forum Approved Test Tools
- Test Case Deficiency (TCD) – A decision about the correctness of a Test Case or other test documents
- Interpretation (INT) – A decision resolving a question about [DEVREQS], test documentation, or the NFC Forum Specifications
- Certification System Deficiency (CSD) – A decision about the documentation or operation of the Certification Program itself
- Waiver (WAI) – A decision relating to a request from a Certification Applicant for waiving a technical requirement
- Reject (REJ) – The PR is rejected.

The NCIRP handles resolution of all Problem Reports, while the Certification Administrator is to be kept informed of all ongoing issues and the status of the issue resolution. Issues can be presented to the NCIRP by completing the Problem Report Template available from the NFC Forum Certification page, explaining the details of the certification issue, and submitting it to [ncirp@nfc-forum.org](mailto:ncirp@nfc-forum.org).

## 4.3 PRs Process and Service Levels

All Problem Reports must be submitted to the NCIRP via email to [ncirp@nfc-forum.org](mailto:ncirp@nfc-forum.org) using the Problem Report Template available from the Certification page. The following process starts when a PR is submitted:

1. Upon receipt, the NIRC reviews the PR to ensure that all necessary information has been provided, determines whether the PR relates to an already existing resolution, assesses the severity of the reported issue, and identifies a subject matter expert (SME) for the initial research.
2. In the event that the PR is not completed in full or further information or additional supporting documentation (e.g., supporting test logs) is required from the PR submitter, the PR is put on hold until all relevant information is received.

3. The NIRC immediately notifies the NCIRP members by email and assigns the PR to an appropriate SME to research the issue and propose a resolution.
4. Depending on the urgency of the issue, the NCIRP chair holds a conference call or electronic discussion (i.e., email or virtual meeting) within five business days of the PR being received or at the next weekly scheduled slot to review the issue and resolution proposal. An NCIRP quorum must be achieved for resolution approval (see Section 3.3).
5. In the event that the resolution proposal is not approved, research continues and the proposal is amended as necessary for resubmission to the NCIRP within four business days.
6. The NIRC must issue a response to the submitter within four calendar days of the meeting at which a resolution was approved.
7. The NIRC shall track the service level.

The NCIRP will make its best efforts to resolve all issues within fourteen (14) calendar days. If the NCIRP takes more than the specified number of days to resolve an issue, the NCIRP chair will advise the Certification Administrator that a waiver can be issued for that issue for that application for certification. If a waiver is issued, it will only be valid for that specific product. Waivers are associated with a specific Certified Implementation and will be identified on the Certification Register.

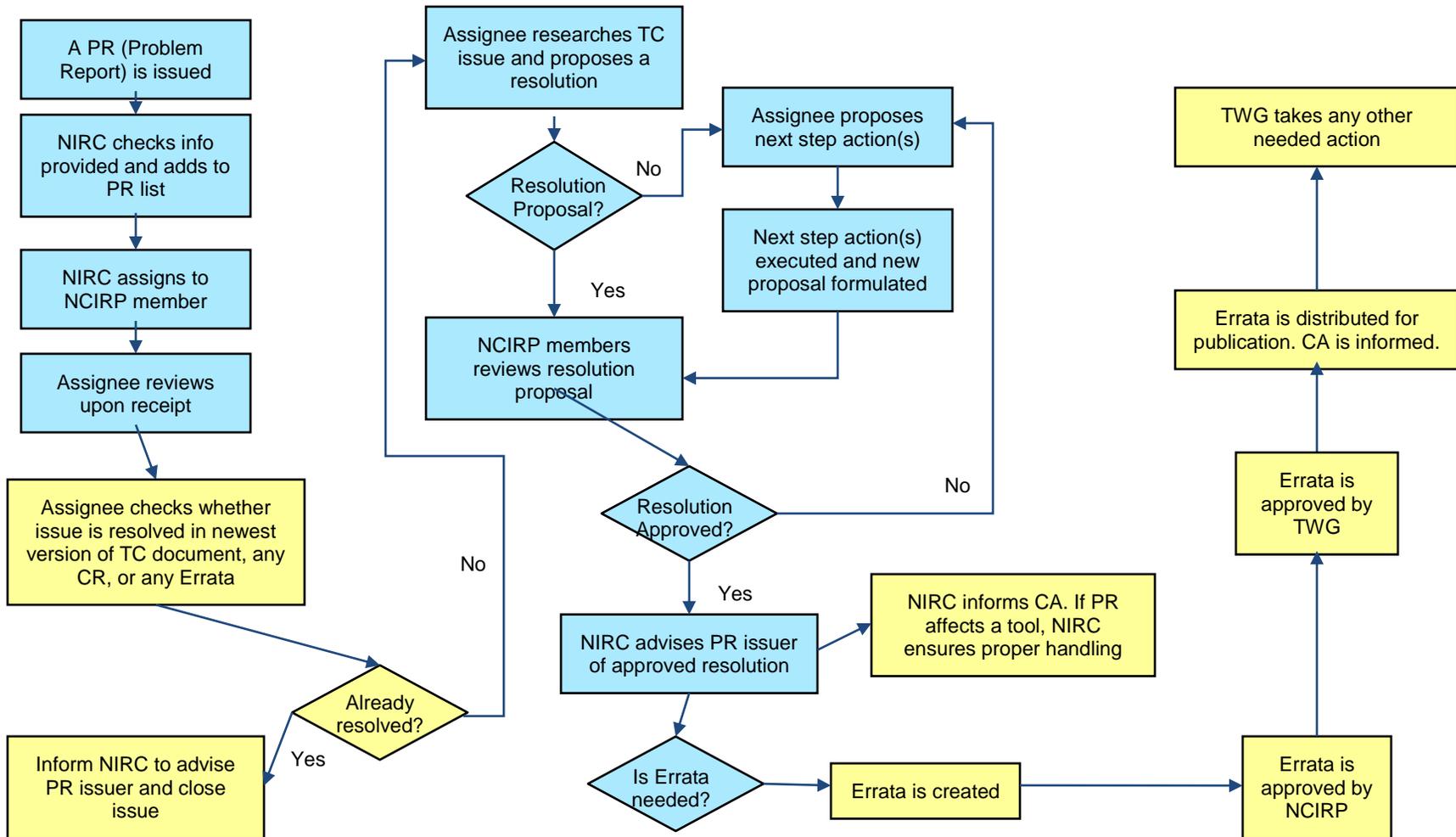


Figure 1: PRs Process Flow

The flow diagram in Figure 1 provides a comprehensive visual representation of the PR's process. It allows for all stakeholders (i.e., all entities with an interest in the NFC Forum Certification Program, such as Certification Administrator, laboratories, tool vendors, validation house, etc.) to submit a PR to the NCIRP. The flow diagram indicates the points where service level checks are completed and provides for the situation where the service level for resolution is exceeded. Additionally, it makes provisions for communication to the submitter of the PR and other stakeholders, where appropriate, that should occur once a PR has been resolved.

Where the NCIRP agrees that wider communication of a particular issue is necessary, the NCIRP Certification Advisory format is used (see Appendix B). Once approved by the NCIRP, the NCIRP Certification Advisory is distributed to certification stakeholders using the certification mailing list. A copy of the advisory is posted in the appropriate folder on the NFC Forum website Certification page.

#### **4.4 PR Post-Processing**

The NIRC must capture on the PRs tracking spreadsheet what deficiency was accepted and its progress. The responsible organisation or group will be contacted to provide an action plan to correct it.

The NCIRP must control its execution and put in place a mechanism to validate its resolution.

## 5 Test Tools Approval

Following the [TOOLSVAL], the NCIRP will receive the validation reports, will have to evaluate them, and will provide a recommendation to the CC for its approval or rejection.

## 6 Test Tool Delisting

A previously approved test tool that is no longer able to fulfill all requirements in [TOOLSVAL] or is not updated with an Errata in due time, or for any reason does not manage to pass a revalidation of a new Test Release, shall be delisted. When it is acknowledged, NIRC will inform the test tool vendor as well as Compliance Committee about this.

## 7 Test Labs Approval

Following [LABSREQ], the NCIRP will receive the required reports showing the test lab technical capabilities; namely, the ILCT measurements for the RF capabilities and others as applicable. The NCIRP will have to evaluate them and provide a recommendation to the CC for approval or rejection.

## 8 Authorized Test Lab Delisting

A previously authorized lab that is no longer able to fulfill all requirements in [LABSREQ] shall be delisted. When it is acknowledged, NIRC will inform the lab as well as Compliance Committee about this.

### 8.1 Appeals

Suppliers may appeal decisions made by the NFC Forum or the Certification Administrator. The occasions that may give rise to an appeal include, but are not limited to:

- The Supplier disagrees with the resolution of a Problem Report.
- The Supplier disagrees with the Certification Administrator's grounds for denying the award of certification.
- The Supplier of a Certified Implementation disagrees with a formal notification for the need to rectify a non-conformance.

Appeal requests should be made to the Certification Administrator and must be accompanied by the appeal fee as set by NFC Forum and listed on the NFC Forum Certification Program website.

Review decisions will be made in accordance with the policies of the NFC Forum.

Suppliers have the right to representation at the review meeting to make their case, though they are not required to do so. The appeals process will be anonymous if the Supplier does not wish to be represented at the review meetings. In such a case, the confidentiality provisions described in Section 3.6 apply.

A Supplier that wants to dispute a decision may request a Technical Review. Technical Review requires that the NFC Forum Compliance Committee consider the matter and produce a response, with a recorded vote according to NFC Forum voting rules, within 45 calendar days of the request. The NFC Forum Compliance Committee may commission reports from independent experts and may seek input from other committees within NFC Forum as it sees fit.

## A. Problem Report Template

PR ID #	
Disposition	

### Problem Category

[Please select a category most applicable to the problem being reported]	
Problem with a Certification Test Tool	
Error in a Test Case or in test case documentation	
Issue with the NFC Forum Device Requirements or Technical Specifications	
Difficulty with the Certification Program process or related documentation	
Request to waive a technical requirement in a NFC Forum implementation	
Other (not any of the above categories)	

### Source Document Details

[Please provide full details of the source document relating to the problem]	
NFC Forum Document Name	
Document Version	
Document Date	

### Problem Area Details

[Please provide full details of the source document relating to the problem]	
Functionality Area/Subject	
Page and Section number	
Test Case ID (if applicable)	
Sub-case (if applicable)	
Test Case Scenario(s)	
Test Case Step(s)	

### Detailed Problem Description

### Describe steps already taken to resolve the problem

**Submitter’s Resolution Proposal/Request**

--

**Submitter Contact Details**

[Please provide the following contact details]	
Submitter’s Name	
Submitter’s Company Name	
Submitter’s Email Address	
Submitter’s Telephone Numbers	

**NCIRP Approved Resolution**

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**NCIRP Internal Information**

For NCIRP Use Only	
Assignee’s Name	
Date Assigned	
PR Resolution Type (TTD, TCD, INT, CSD, TRW, REJ)	
Date Resolution Approved	
Date Submitter Informed	
Date General Notification Released	

## B. Sample Certification Advisory

NCIRP Reference	NCIRP.PR.000001.15MAR12
Document Name	NFC Forum Test Case Mapping Table
Document Version & Date	1.0.02 28 October 2011
Functionality Area/ Subject	Digital Protocol Test Cases
Certification Advisory Effective Date	15 March 2012
Certification Advisory Sequence Number	CPCA-001

### Issue

According to the current version of the Test Case Mapping Table (TCMT), the test cases listed below are applicable, but the expressions for these in the TCMT are incorrect. The correct expressions are documented in [CR#64](#), [CR#65](#) and [CR#66](#), and approved for inclusion in the next revision of the TCMT document.

### Impact

The test cases applicable to certain optional functionality – if supported by the Device under Test (DuT) – would not be selected for inclusion in the Test Plan and Summary Test Report.

### Resolution

The NCIRP has authorized the use the Test Case Mapping Table (TCMT) in conjunction with [CR#64](#), [CR#65](#) and [CR#66](#), in order to ensure selection of the test cases listed below for inclusion into the Test Plan and Summary Test Report of a DuT that supports the corresponding functionality.

TC\_POL\_NFCB\_T4BT\_BI\_35\_x  
 TC\_LIS\_NFCA\_UND\_BI\_19\_xy  
 TC\_LIS\_NFCA\_UND\_BI\_119\_xy  
 TC\_LIS\_NFCA\_UND\_BI\_20\_xy  
 TC\_LIS\_NFCA\_UND\_BI\_120\_xy

## C. Revision History

Table 1 outlines the revision history of NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide.

**Table 1: Revision History**

Document Name	Revision and Release Date	Status	Change Notice	Supersedes
NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide	Version 0.1, July 2011	First Draft		
NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide	Version 0.2, December 2011	Second Draft	Modifications to address items for CC approval	Version 0.1, July 2011
NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide	Version 0.3, January 2012	Updated Draft		Version 0.2, December 2011
NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide	Version 0.4, June 2012	Updated Draft	Update confidentiality requirements and PR templates	Version 0.3 January 2012
NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide	Version 1.0 July 2012	Draft		Version 0.4 June 2012
NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide	Version 1.0, May 2013	Final	Add service levels from diagram into text	Draft Version 1.0

Document Name	Revision and Release Date	Status	Change Notice	Supersedes
NFC Forum Certification Issue Resolution Panel (NCIRP) Guide	Version 1.0.02, November 2015	Final	Add waiver requests setup Replaced logos and default language.	Version 1.0, May 2013