



**Southwest Area Transmission (SWAT)
Subregional Planning Group
CHARTER**

**Approved by SWAT Oversight Committee
February 18, 2020**

SWAT Charter

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I. Purpose

Southwest Area Transmission (SWAT), a WestConnect Subregional Planning Group, is a collaborative study group that has been created to meet the following purpose:

To provide an open and collaborative forum where stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the planning, coordination, and implementation of robust transmission systems within the SWAT footprint. The open participation in this process is intended to result in transmission expansion plans that meet a variety of needs and have a broad basis of stakeholder support.

II. Scope

The scope of SWAT is transmission planning related topics in Arizona, New Mexico, southern Colorado, west Texas, southern Nevada, and southern California. SWAT transmission planning focuses on the Bulk Electric System¹ (BES), but may include some sub-transmission system areas that impact the BES or otherwise benefit from coordinated local planning.

III. Goals

The goals of SWAT are to:

- Promote efficient use of the transmission systems in the Desert Southwest and avoid duplicate facilities
- Encourage development of robust transmission systems to support a variety of uses
- Facilitate the development of new transmission projects
- Provide a forum to discuss access to resources
- Provide a forum for stakeholder participation in the transmission planning process that aligns with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) orders and applicable state Commission Transmission Planning Rules and decisions
- Facilitate compliance with the following:
 - FERC orders
 - North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) reliability standards
 - Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) reliability standards
 - Applicable state commission rules, criteria, and policies
- Coordinate with regional and other subregional planning activities

¹ Bulk Electric System as defined in NERC's Glossary of Terms.

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- Provide a forum for interaction with regulatory body representative as transmission expansion plans are developed
- Follow WestConnect guidelines concerning Antitrust Laws

IV. Principles

SWAT operates in accordance with the following principles, the first nine of which are based on concepts promulgated in FERC Order No. 890²:

1. **Coordination** – SWAT helps facilitate the coordination of entities developing electric transmission systems, including the regulatory community and entities that utilize and benefit from the transmission systems. SWAT makes an effort to perform technical study work that is not duplicative of others' work and relies as much as possible on the technical studies conducted by project sponsors and work conducted in other forums to supplement the study work performed directly by SWAT.
2. **Openness** – SWAT meetings are open to all stakeholders and conducted in accordance with Critical Energy/Electric Infrastructure Information (CEII) regulations and FERC Standards of Conduct for Transmission Providers. The meetings provide an open forum for transmission project sponsors to introduce specific transmission projects to interested stakeholders and potential partners.
3. **Transparency** – SWAT provides a forum for transmission owners, transmission operators, transmission planners, generator owners, and transmission/generator developers to clearly disclose the criteria, assumptions, and data that underlie the transmission system plans to stakeholders.
4. **Information Exchange** – SWAT provides a forum for the exchange of information among transmission owners, transmission operators, transmission planners, transmission customers, generator owners, transmission/generator developers, market participants, and regulators that utilize and benefit from the transmission systems.
5. **Comparability** – SWAT treats members comparably by using consistent base cases and assumptions to develop technical transmission studies to address regional and subregional needs.
6. **Dispute Resolution** – Disputes not resolved through negotiation and voting will attempt to be resolved through mediation facilitated by the Chair of the SWAT Oversight Committee.
7. **Regional Participation** – SWAT coordinates its subregional efforts with WestConnect, other Subregional Planning Groups, and WECC planning committees.
8. **Economic Planning Studies** – SWAT neither conducts nor has a role in conducting economic studies.

² FERC Order No. 890 can be found at: <https://www.ferc.gov/whats-new/comm-meet/2007/021507/e-1.pdf>

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9. **Cost Allocation** – SWAT performs transmission planning studies that support the development of joint participation transmission projects. SWAT does not directly address cost allocation.
10. **Collaboration with Regulators** – SWAT transmission studies are open so they can be developed in collaboration with regulators to facilitate the implementation of energy policy and information sharing, and to enhance and streamline project permitting, financing, and construction.
11. **Shared Workload** – SWAT has no permanent staff and utilizes its members to complete the study work. Members proposing specific studies are responsible for the performance, cost, and completion of the work. In general, members study the geographic areas in which they have an interest. Study results are shared with all SWAT members. SWAT is supported by WestConnect and the WestConnect Planning Manager as defined by the WestConnect Objectives and Procedures for Regional Planning for the WestConnect Planning Area.
12. **Authority** – SWAT studies, reports, and conclusions represent only the consensus view of the participating SWAT members, as supplemented by any applicable dissenting views, and do not constitute any form of approval or commitment by any utility to undertake projects identified therein.
13. **Civilized Discourse** – SWAT’s goal is to engage a broad spectrum of entities, all of which share an interest in the optimum development of transmission systems within the SWAT footprint. All ideas are welcomed, and all concerns will be addressed, consistent with these principles. Respectful and professional debate is encouraged.
14. **Confidential Information** – Information considered business sensitive, CEII, or identifying BES critical assets will not be discussed or disclosed at SWAT Oversight Committee meetings. Members of the Oversight Committee, its Subcommittees and Task Forces shall follow each utility’s established CEII tariff procedures to enter into a suitable non-disclosure agreement to be followed in connection with the use and sharing of non-public information.

V. Membership

SWAT is a voluntary organization. Membership is open to all parties that wish to participate in the stakeholder process for developing transmission systems within the SWAT footprint. To become a member of SWAT, a party must notify the Chair of the SWAT Oversight Committee and request to be added to the SWAT membership list.

VI. Organization

The SWAT organization consists of the SWAT Oversight Committee, Subcommittees, and Task Forces (collectively known as the “SWAT committee structure”).

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SWAT Oversight Committee - The responsibilities of the SWAT Oversight Committee are to ensure accuracy and technical adequacy of SWAT study work, consistency among the various studies, proper focus on objectives, and adherence to SWAT principles and processes. When the SWAT Oversight Committee does not approve an item submitted from a Subcommittee or Task Force, the SWAT Oversight Committee is responsible for providing direction to make the work acceptable. The SWAT Oversight Committee also helps the Subcommittees and Task Forces to resolve issues and offer feedback and direction as appropriate.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the SWAT Oversight Committee are based on a rotation to serve one-year terms. After serving for one year, the Vice Chair will become the Chair and a new Vice Chair will be appointed. The rotation for the Chair and Vice Chair positions is posted on the SWAT web page³ of the WestConnect website. Requests to modify the rotation can be submitted by email to the SWAT Oversight Committee Chair and they will be reviewed by the SWAT Oversight Committee.

Subcommittees - The responsibilities of SWAT Subcommittees are to address a variety of needs and issues defined by the Subcommittee membership. Subcommittees are formed for a multi-year duration to serve a long-term purpose. Each Subcommittee will elect its own Chair and create a charter to define its role and purpose. The charter will be submitted to the SWAT Oversight Committee for approval.

Task Forces - The responsibilities of SWAT Task Forces are to address a single or highly focused need defined by the SWAT Oversight Committee or the Task Force membership. With a duration of two years or less, a Task Force addresses a short-term issue affecting either a portion of or the entire SWAT footprint. Each Task Force will elect its own Chair.

VII. Voting

Planning and study efforts undertaken within the SWAT committee structure are self-defined by the SWAT members participating in the process. Study plans and final reports require approval by the sponsoring Subcommittee or Task Force and by the SWAT Oversight Committee.

Decisions and actions by the SWAT committee structure will be reached, to the maximum extent possible, through consensus. To facilitate consensus-building, SWAT members seek individual input, rely on data and expert advice, and encourage minority reporting where differences are not resolved. SWAT's success is largely based on the use of an open vetting process, with decisions being reached on the basis of unanimous agreement.

³ Link to SWAT web page: <http://regplanning.westconnect.com/swat.htm>

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The goal is to reach consensus on all approval items. If approval by consensus within the SWAT committee structure cannot be achieved, SWAT members attending the committee meeting will conduct a formal vote with one vote per company. SWAT members not attending a meeting in person may vote in advance by submitting their selection by email to the Chair at least one day in advance of the meeting. A motion will pass by simple majority of those voting. When necessary, the Section IV.6 Dispute Resolution principle may be applied.

VIII. Transmission Planning Functions

SWAT transmission planning functions include, but are not limited to:

- Development and implementation of a planning process that results in transmission expansion plans that meet a variety of needs and have a broad basis of support through an open stakeholder process
- Identification of potential long-term transmission needs within the SWAT footprint
- Development, through an open and collaborative process, of strategic transmission options and specific alternative plans for expanding or reinforcing the transmission systems
- Review of technical studies performed by a transmission project sponsor
- Coordination of data, modeling, assumptions, processes, and other planning activities with WECC, WestConnect, Subregional Planning Groups, regulatory/governmental entities, and other industry entities involved in transmission planning
- Coordination with federal and state agencies on transmission corridor planning
- Provision of a subregional forum to meet WECC and WestConnect Regional Planning requirements
- Provision of a forum to evaluate impacts of proposed transmission or energy policy changes at the state and federal levels
- Response to requests and directives from regulatory entities
- Provision of briefings and sponsorship of educational workshops

IX. Coordination and Study Process

SWAT conducts both a Coordination Process and a Study Process.

Coordination Process – The SWAT Coordination Process enables sponsors of transmission projects to coordinate project development through receipt of input from participating technical planning experts who are knowledgeable about the electric system in the Desert Southwest. Transmission project sponsors are encouraged to present results of their independent study efforts to participating SWAT members.

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Study Process – The SWAT Study Process focuses on the development of transmission plans in order to assist and enhance the development of transmission projects.

SWAT provides technical support for implementation of transmission plans developed within the Study Process. Implementation of projects by developers may involve phased construction of a variety of short-term projects that will ultimately support implementation of a long-term plan. As a result, SWAT long-term plans will be revised periodically to incorporate changes in system assumptions.

The Study Process generally follows an annual study cycle documented in a study plan. The study plan must include:

- Purpose and need
- Objectives
- Assumptions and performance criteria
- Development of base case and other data
- Methodology and description of contingencies to be examined
- Schedule
- Assignment/allocation of study work

Once the study plan is approved by the SWAT Oversight Committee, the study participants conduct the study work, agree upon findings, share the results with SWAT, and document the work in writing.

In general, SWAT study participants study geographic areas in which they have an interest. Members seeking specific studies are responsible for the completion of the study work. Studies performed within SWAT will:

- Focus on local and subregional needs
- Consider a variety of alternatives to allow for a wide range of options
- Consider the flexibility of alternatives, including non-transmission alternatives
- Comply with established reliability standards, criteria, policies, and guidelines
- Be summarized in reports to be made available for general review, in compliance with applicable CEII requirements

Transmission plans developed by SWAT may be submitted to WestConnect for incorporation, as appropriate, into relevant regional transmission plans in accordance with applicable CEII requirements. SWAT Subcommittees and Task Forces will publish individual reports.

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Study work conducted within the SWAT committee structure is not intended to focus solely on or substitute for the study work required for implementation of a specific transmission project. For example, SWAT study work will not address generation interconnection requests and transmission service requests in a transmission provider's queue. SWAT study work is intended to support the most efficient use of the existing transmission systems and facilitate the development of long-term plans that meet the transmission objectives (load serving, resource delivery, etc.) for the subregion.

X. Meetings

SWAT meetings are open to all parties and may be attended in person or by conference call. The SWAT Oversight Committee, Subcommittees, and Task Forces meet periodically, generally following an annual study cycle. The SWAT Oversight Committee generally meets quarterly, and meeting notices are emailed to the SWAT distribution list at least 30 days prior to the meetings. Proposed agendas are provided at least two weeks in advance of meetings. Agendas and meeting notes are posted on the SWAT web page.

XI. Revision History

May 20, 2009 – Original charter approved

November 14, 2019 – Revised draft approved by SWAT Charter Task Force

February 18, 2020 – Revised charter approved by SWAT Oversight Committee