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**MPLS Forwarding Benchmarking Methodology for IP Flows**  
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#### Abstract

This document describes a methodology specific to the benchmarking of Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) forwarding devices, limited to the most common MPLS packet forwarding scenarios and delay measurements for each, considering IP flows. It builds upon the tenets set forth in [RFC2544](#), [RFC1242](#) and other IETF Benchmarking Methodology Working Group (BMWG) efforts. This document seeks to extend these efforts to the MPLS paradigm.

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## [1. Introduction](#)

Over the past several years, there has been an increase in the use of MPLS as a forwarding architecture in new and existing network designs. MPLS, defined in [[RFC3031](#)], is a foundation technology and basis for many advanced technologies such as Layer 3 MPLS-VPNs, Layer 2 MPLS-VPNs, and MPLS Traffic-Engineering.



However, there is no standard method defined to compare and contrast the foundational MPLS packet forwarding capabilities of network devices. This document proposes a methodology using common criteria (such as throughput, latency, frame loss rate, system recovery, reset etc.) to evaluate MPLS forwarding of any implementation.

## 2. Document Scope

The benchmarking methodology principles outlined in [RFC2544](#) [[RFC2544](#)] are independent of forwarding techniques, however, they don't fully address MPLS benchmarking. The fact that MPLS forwarding places a different burden on the resources of the network forwarding devices from that of IP forwarding, MPLS forwarding benchmarking specifics are desired.

The purpose of this document is to describe a methodology specific to the benchmarking of MPLS forwarding devices. The methods described are limited in scope to the most common MPLS packet forwarding scenarios and corresponding performance measurements in a laboratory setting. It builds upon the tenets set forth in [RFC2544](#) [[RFC2544](#)], [RFC1242](#) [[RFC1242](#)] and other IETF Benchmarking Methodology Working Group (BMWG) efforts. In other words, this document is not a replacement for, but a complement to, [RFC 2544](#).

This document focuses on the MPLS label stack [[RFC3032](#)] having only one entry, as it is the fundamental of MPLS forwarding. It is expected that future documents may cover the benchmarking of MPLS applications such as L3VPN [[RFC4364](#)], L2VPN [[RFC4664](#)], Fast ReRoute [[RFC4090](#)] etc., which require more than one entry in the MPLS label stack.

Moreover, to address the majority of current deployments' needs, this document focuses on having IP packets as the MPLS payload. In other words, label distribution for IP Forwarding Equivalence Class (FEC)[[RFC3031](#)] is prescribed (see [Section 4.1.2](#)) by this document. It is expected that future documents may focus on having non-IP packets as the MPLS payload.

Note that the presence of an MPLS label stack does not require the length of MPLS payload (which is an IP packet, per this document) to be changed, hence, the effective maximum size of a frame can increase by Z bytes (where  $Z = 4 \times \text{number of label stack entries}$ ), as observed in current deployments. This document focuses on benchmarking such a scenario.



### 3. Key Words to Reflect Requirements

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 [BCP 14](#), [RFC 2119](#) [[RFC2119](#)]. [RFC 2119](#) defines the use of these key words to help make the intent of standards track documents as clear as possible. While this document uses these keywords, this document is not a standards track document.

### 4. Test Methodology

The set of methodologies described in this document will use the topology described in this section. An effort has been made to exclude superfluous equipment needs such that each test can be carried out with a minimal number of devices. Figure 1 illustrates the sample topology in which the Device Under Test (DUT) is connected to the test ports on the test tool in accord with the Fig 1 of [RFC2544](#) -

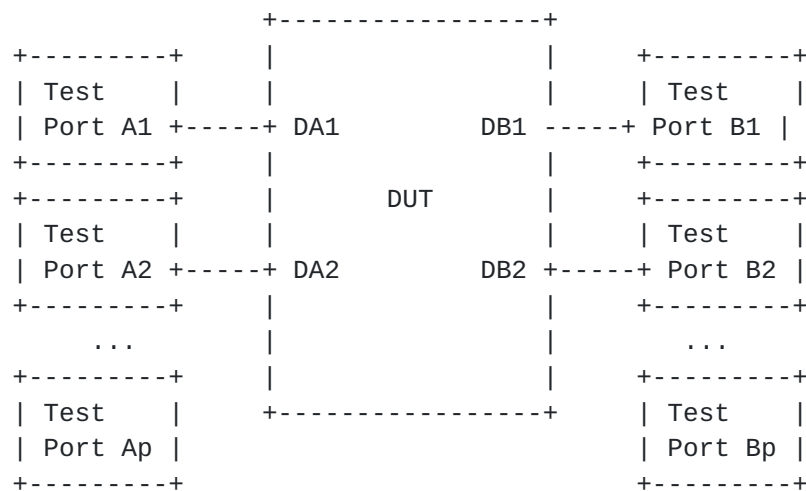


Figure 1 Topology for MPLS Forwarding Benchmarking

A represents a Tx-side Module of the test tool, whereas B represents an Rx-side Module of the same test tool. Of course, the suffixed numbers (1, 2...p) represent ports on a Module.





Similarly, DA represents an Rx-side Module of the DUT, whereas DB represents Tx-side Module. The suffixed numbers (1, 2...p) represent ports on a Module.

p = number of {DA, DB} pair ports on DUT. It is determined by the maximum unidirectional forwarding throughput of the DUT and the load capacity of the port media (e.g. interface) connecting the DUT to the test tool.

For example, if the DUT's maximum forwarding throughput is 100 frames per second (fps), and the load capacity of the port media (e.g. interface) is 50 fps, then  $p \Rightarrow 2$  is needed to sufficiently test the maximum frame forwarding.

The exact throughput is a measured quantity obtained through testing. Throughput may vary depending on the number of ports used, and other factors. The number of ports (p) used SHOULD be reported. Please see Test Setup in [Section 6](#), and recommended to follow Fig 1 from S6 of [RFC2544](#).

#### **[4.1. Test Considerations](#)**

This methodology assumes a full-duplex uniform medium topology. The medium used MUST be reported in each test result. Issues regarding mixed transmission media, speed mismatches, media header differences etc, are not under consideration. Traffic affecting features such as Flow control, QoS, Graceful Restart etc. MUST be disabled, unless explicitly requested in the test case. Additionally, any non-essential traffic MUST also be avoided.

##### **[4.1.1. Abbreviations Used](#)**

The terms used in this document remain consistent with those defined in "Benchmarking Terminology for Network Interconnect Devices" [RFC1242](#) [[RFC1242](#)]. This terminology SHOULD be consulted before using or applying the recommendations of this document.

Please refer to Figure 1 for a topology view of the network. The following abbreviations are used in this document -

M := Module on a device (i.e. Line-Card or Slot; could be A or B)

p := Port number (i.e. Port on the Module; could be 1, 2 etc.)



RN := Remote Network (i.e. network that is reachable via a port of a module; could be B1RN1 or B2RN5 to mean the first network reachable via port 1 of module B e.g. B1, or the 5th network reachable via port 2 of module B, etc.). RN is considered to be the FEC from MPLS perspective.

#### **4.1.2. IGP Support**

It is highly RECOMMENDED that all of the ports (A1, DA1, DB1, and A2) on DUT and test tool support a dynamic Interior Gateway Protocol (IGP) for routing such as IS-IS, OSPF, RIP etc. Furthermore, there are testing considerations in this document that the device be able to provide a stable control-plane during heavy forwarding workloads. In particular, the procedures defined in [section 11.3 of RFC2544](#) must be followed. This is to ensure that control plane instability during load conditions is not the contributing factor towards frame forwarding performance.

The route distribution method (OSPF, IS-IS, EIGRP, RIP, Static etc.), if used, MUST be reported. Furthermore, if any specific configuration is used to maintain control-plane stability during the test (i.e. Control Plane Protection, Control Plane Rate Limiting, etc.), then it MUST also be reported.

#### **4.1.3. Label Distribution Support**

The DUT and test tool must support at least one protocol for exchanging MPLS label/FEC bindings for Prefix Forwarding Equivalence Class (FEC) [[RFC3031](#)]. The DUT and test tool MUST be capable of learning and advertising MPLS label/FEC bindings via the chosen protocol(s), and use them during packet forwarding all the time (including when the label/FEC bindings change). The most commonly used protocols are Label Distribution Protocol (LDP) [[RFC5036](#)], Resource Reservation Protocol-Traffic Engineering (RSVP-TE) [[RFC3209](#)] and Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) [[RFC3107](#)].

All of the ports (A1, DA1, DB1, B1 etc.) either on the DUT or the test tool used in the testing SHOULD support LDP, RSVP-TE, and BGP for IPv4 or IPv6 Prefix Forwarding Equivalence Classes (FECs).

This document does NOT recommend the use of static label to establish the MPLS label switched paths (LSPs), unless specified



explicitly by the testcase. This is because the use of static label is quite uncommon in the production networks.

#### **4.1.4. Frame Formats**

This section explains the frame formats for IP and MPLS packets ([Section 4.1.4.1](#)), the usage of IP as the mandatory layer 3 protocol and as the MPLS packet payload ([Section 4.1.4.2](#)), change in frame format during forwarding ([Section 4.1.4.3](#)) and recommended frame formats for the MPLS benchmarking ([Section 4.1.4.4](#)).

##### **4.1.4.1. Frame format for IP vs. MPLS**

A test frame carrying an IP packet is illustrated in the figure 1 below. Note that [RFC2544](#) [[RFC2544](#)] prescribes using such a frame as the test frame over the chosen layer 2 media.

```
+-----+
| Layer 2 | Layer 3 = IP | Layer 4 = UDP      |
+-----+
```

Figure 1 Frame Format for IP packet

Unlike a test frame carrying an IP packet, a test frame carrying an MPLS packet contains an 'MPLS label stack' [[RFC3032](#)] immediately after the layer 2 header (and before the IP header, if any) as illustrated in figure 2 below -

```
+-----+
| Layer 2 | MPLS   | Layer 3 = IP | Layer 4 = UDP      |
+-----+
```

Figure 2 Frame format for MPLS packet

The MPLS label stack is represented as a sequence of "label stack entries", where each label stack entry is 4 bytes, as illustrated in figure 1 of [[RFC3032](#)]. This document requires only a single entry in the MPLS label stack in an MPLS packet.

MPLS label values used in any testcase MUST be outside the reserved label value (0-15) unless stated otherwise.

#### **4.1.4.2. MPLS packet payload**

This document prescribes using IP packet as the MPLS payload (as illustrated in figure 2 above). Generically speaking, this document mandates the test frame to include IP (either IPv4 or IPv6) as the layer 3 protocol, in accord with [Section 8 of \[RFC2544\]](#) and independent of the MPLS label stack presence, for three reasons:

- 1) This enables using IP Prefix Forwarding Equivalence Class (FEC) [\[RFC3031\]](#), which is a must for every MPLS network.
- 2) This provides the foundation or baseline for benchmarking of various other MPLS applications such as L3VPN, L2VPN, TE-FRR etc.
- 3) This enables leveraging [RFC2544](#) [\[RFC2544\]](#), which prescribes using IP packet with UDP data as the test frames. (Note that [\[RFC5180\]](#) also uses this prescription for IPv6 benchmarking).

While the usage of non-IP payloads is possible, it requires an MPLS application e.g. L2VPN, whose benchmarking may be covered in separate BMWG documents (MPLS L2VPN Benchmarking, for example) in the future. This is also explained in [Section 2](#).

#### **4.1.4.3. Change in Frame Format due to MPLS Push and Pop**

A frame carrying IP or MPLS packet may go through any of the three MPLS forwarding operations: label push (or LSP Ingress), label swap and label pop (or LSP Egress), as defined in [\[RFC3031\]](#). It is important to understand the change of the frame format from IP to MPLS or vice versa depending on the forwarding operation.

In label push (or LSP ingress) operation, the DUT receives a frame containing an IP packet and forwards a frame containing an MPLS packet if the corresponding forwarding lookup for the IP destination points to a label push operation.

In label swap operation, the DUT receives a frame containing an MPLS packet and forwards a frame containing an MPLS packet if the corresponding forwarding lookup for the label value points to a label swap operation.

In label pop (or LSP egress) operation, the DUT receives a frame containing an MPLS packet and forwards a frame containing an IP packet if the corresponding forwarding lookup for the label value points to a label pop operation.



#### **4.1.4.4. Frame Formats to be used for Benchmarking**

This document prescribes using two test frame formats to appropriately test the forwarding operations: (1) Frame format for IP and (2) Frame format for MPLS. Both formats are explained in [Section 4.1.3.1](#). Additionally, the format of the test frame may change depending on the forwarding operation.

1. For testcases involving label push operation - the test tool must use the frame format for IP packet (figure 1) to send the test frames to the DUT, and must use the frame format for MPLS packet (figure 2) to receive the test frames from the DUT.
2. For testcases involving label swap operation - the test tool must use the frame format for MPLS packet (figure 2) to send the test frames to the DUT, and must use the frame format for MPLS packet (figure 2) to receive the test frames from the DUT.
3. For testcases involving label pop operation - the test tool must use the frame format for MPLS packet (figure 2) to send the test frames to the DUT, and must use the frame format for IP packet (figure 1) to receive the test frames from the DUT.

#### **4.1.5. Frame Sizes**

Two types of port media are commonly deployed: Ethernet and POS (Packet Over Synchronous Optical Network). This section identifies the frame sizes that SHOULD be used for each media type, if supported by the DUT. [Section 4.1.4.1](#) covers Ethernet and 4.1.4.2 covers POS.

First, it is important to note the possible increase in frame size due to the presence of an MPLS label stack in the frame (as explained in the [Section 4.1.3](#)).

As observed in the current deployments, presence of an MPLS label stack in a layer 2 frame is assumed to be transparent to layer3=IP, which continues to follow the conventional maximum frame payload size [[RFC3032](#)] (1500 bytes for ethernet, say). This means that the effective maximum frame payload size [[RFC3032](#)] of the resulting layer2 frame is Z bytes more than the conventional maximum frame payload size, where  $Z = 4 \times \text{number of entries in the label stack}$ .

Hence, to ensure successful delivery of layer2 frames carrying MPLS packets and realistic benchmarking, it is recommended to set the





media MTU value to the effective maximum frame payload size [RFC3032], which equals  $Z$  bytes + conventional maximum frame payload size. It is expected that such a change in media MTU value only impacts the effective Maximum Frame Payload Size for MPLS packets, but not for IP packets.

Note that this document requires only a single entry in the MPLS label stack in an MPLS packet. In other words, the depth of the label stack is set to one e.g.  $Z = 4 \times 1 = 4$  bytes. Furthermore, in accord with [Section 9](#) and 9.1 of [RFC2544](#), this document prescribes that each test case is run with different (layer 2) frame sizes in different trials. Additionally, results MAY also be collected with multiple simultaneous frame sizes (sometimes referred to as an IMIX to simulate real network traffic according to the frame size ordering and usage). There is no standard for mixtures of frame sizes, and the results are subject to wide interpretation. See [Section 18 of RFC 2544](#). When running trials using multiple simultaneous frame sizes, the DUT configuration MUST remain the same.

#### **[4.1.5.1](#). Frame Sizes to be used on Ethernet Media**

Ethernet media, in all its types, has become the most commonly deployed port media in MPLS networks. If any test case execution (such as Label Push case) requires the testtool to send (or receive) a layer2 frame containing an IP packet, then the following frame sizes SHOULD be used for benchmarking over ethernet media: 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024, 1280 and 1518 bytes. This is in line with [Section 9](#) and 9.1 of [RFC2544](#). Figure 1 illustrates the header sizes for an untagged ethernet frame containing an IP payload (per [RFC2544](#)) -

```
<-----64-1518B----->
<--18B--><-----46-1500B----->
+-----+
| Layer 2 | Layer 3 | Layer 4 (and higher) |
+-----+
```

Figure 3 Frame Size for Label Push cases

Note: The 64 and 1518 byte frame size represents the minimum and maximum length of an untagged Ethernet frame, as per IEEE 802.3 [IEEE8023]. A frame size commonly used in operational environments may range from 68 to 1522 bytes, which are the minimum and maximum length of a single VLAN-tagged frame, as per IEEE 802.1D [IEEE8021].



Note: While jumbo frames are outside the scope of the 802.3 IEEE standard, tests SHOULD be executed with the frame sizes that are supported by the DUT. Examples of commonly used jumbo (ethernet) frame sizes are: 4096, 8192, and 9216 bytes.

If any test case execution (such as Label Swap and Label Pop cases) requires the testtool to transmit (or receive) a layer2 frame containing an MPLS packet, then the untagged layer2 frame must include an additional 4 bytes for the MPLS header, resulting in the following frame sizes to be used for benchmarking over ethernet media: 68, 132, 260, 516, 1028, 1284 and 1522 bytes. Figure 2 illustrates the header sizes for an untagged ethernet frame containing an MPLS packet -

```
<-----68-1522B----->
<--18B--><--4B--><-----46-1500B----->
+-----+
| Layer 2 | MPLS | Layer 3 | Layer 4 (and higher) |
+-----+
```

Figure 4 Frame Size for Label Swap and Pop cases.

Note: The Media MTU on the link between the testtool and DUT must be changed, if needed, to accommodate the effective maximum frame payload size [RFC3032] resulting from adding an MPLS label stack to the IP packet. As clarified in [Section 3.1 of RFC3032](#), most layer 2 media drivers are capable of sending and receiving layer 2 frames with effective maximum frame payload size. Many vendors also allow the Media MTU to be changed for MPLS, without changing it for IP. The recommended link MTU value for MPLS is Z bytes more than the conventional maximum frame payload size [RFC3032] (for example, the conventional maximum frame payload size for ethernet is 1500 bytes). This document prescribes Z=4 bytes. If a vendor DUT doesn't allow such an MTU change, then the benchmarking can not be performed for the true maximum frame payload size [RFC3032] and this must be reported.

#### [4.1.5.2. Frame Sizes to be used on POS Media](#)

Packet over SONET (POS) media are commonly used for edge uplinks and high-bandwidth core links. POS may use one of various



encapsulations techniques (such as PPP, HDLC, Frame Relay etc.), resulting in the layer 2 header (~4 bytes) being less than that of ethernet media. The rest of the frame format (illustrated in figure 2 and 3) remains pretty much unchanged.

If the MPLS forwarding characterization of POS interfaces on the DUT is desired, then the following frame sizes SHOULD be used:

Label Push testcases: 47, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024, 1280, 1518, 2048 and 4096 bytes.

Label Swap and Pop testcases: 51, 68, 132, 260, 516, 1028, 1284, 1522, 2052 and 4100 bytes.

#### **4.1.6. Time-to-Live (TTL) or Hop Limit**

The TTL value in the frame header must be large enough to allow a TTL decrement to happen and still be forwarded through the DUT. The TTL field may either be MPLS TTL, IPV4 TTL, or IPV6 Hop Limit depending on the exact forwarding scenario under evaluation.

If TTL/Hop Limit Decrement, as specified in [[RFC3443](#)], is a configurable option on the DUT, the setting SHOULD be reported.

#### **4.1.7. Trial Duration**

Unless otherwise specified, the test portion of each trial SHOULD be no less than 30 seconds when static routing is in place, and no less than 200 seconds when a dynamic routing protocol and LDP (default LDP holddown timer is 180 seconds) are being used. If the holddown timer default value is changed, then it should be reported and the trial duration should still be 20 seconds more than the holddown timer value.

The longer trial time used for dynamic routing protocols is to verify that the DUT is able to maintain a stable control plane when the data-forwarding plane is under stress.

#### **4.1.8. Traffic Verification**

In all cases, sent traffic MUST be accounted for, whether it was received on the wrong port, correct port or not received at all. Specifically, traffic loss (also referred to as frame loss) is defined as the traffic (i.e. one or more frames) not received where expected (i.e. received on incorrect port, or received with incorrect layer2 or above header information etc.). In addition, the presence or absence of MPLS label stack, every field value inside the label stack, if present, ethertype (0x8847 or 0x8848 vs. 0x0800), frame sequencing and frame check sequence (FCS), MUST be verified in the received frame.

Many test tools may, by default, only verify that they have received the embedded signature on the receive side. However, for MPLS header presence verification, some tests will require the MPLS header to be pushed while others will require a swap or pop. Hence, this document requires the test tool to verify the MPLS stack depth. An even greater level of verification would be to check if the correct label was pushed, but that is out of scope for these tests.

#### **4.1.9. Address Resolution and Dynamic Protocol State**

If a test setup utilizes any dynamic protocols for control plane signalling (eg. ARP, PPP (including MPLSCP), OSPF, LDP, etc.), then all state for the protocols MUST be pre-established before the test case is executed (i.e. packet streams are started).

## 5. Reporting Format

For each test case, it is RECOMMENDED that the following variables be reported in addition to the specific parameters requested by the test case:

Parameter	Units or Examples
Prefix Forwarding Equivalence Class (FEC)	IPv4, IPv6, Both
Label Distribution Protocol	LDP, RSVP-TE, BGP (or combinations)
MPLS Forwarding Operation	Push, Swap, Pop
IGP	ISIS, OSPF, EIGRP, RIP, static.
Throughput	Frames per second and Bits per second
Port Media	GigE, POS, ATM etc.
Port Speed	1 gbps, 100 Mbps, etc.
Interface Encapsulation	Ethernet, Ethernet VLAN, PPP, HDLC etc.
Frame Size [See Section 4.1.3]	Bytes
p (Number of {DA, DB} pair ports per Figure 1)	1,2, etc.

The individual test cases may have additional reporting requirements that may refer to other RFCs.



## 6. MPLS Forwarding Benchmarking Tests

MPLS is a different forwarding paradigm from IP. Unlike IP packet and IP forwarding, an MPLS packet may contain more than one MPLS header and may go through one of three forwarding operations : push (or LSP ingress), swap or pop (or LSP egress), as defined in [\[RFC3031\]](#). Such characteristics desire further granularity in MPLS forwarding benchmarking than those described in [RFC2544](#). Thus the benchmarking may include, but not limited to:

1. Throughput
2. Latency
3. Frame Loss rate
4. System Recovery
5. Reset
6. MPLS TC (previously known as EXP [\[RFC5462\]](#)) field Operations (including explicit-null cases)
7. Negative Scenarios (TTL expiry, etc)
8. Multicast

However, this document focuses only on the first five categories, inline with the spirit of [RFC2544](#). All the benchmarking test cases described in this document are expected to, at a minimum, follow the 'Test Setup' and 'Test Procedure' below -

### Test Setup

Referring to Figure 1, a single port ( $p = 1$ ) on both A and B Modules SHOULD be used. However, if the forwarding throughput of the DUT is more than that of the media rate of a single port, then additional ports on A and B Modules MUST be enabled so as to exceed the DUT's forwarding throughput. In such a case, the procedures described in [Section 16 of RFC2544](#) must be followed to accommodate the multi-port scenario. The frame formats transmitted and received must be in accord with [Section 4.1.4.3](#) and [4.1.4.4](#), and frame sizes must be in accord with in [Section 4.1.5](#).



Note - The test tool must be configured to not advertise a prefix or FEC to the DUT on more than one port. In other words, the DUT must associate a FEC with one and only one DB port. The Equal Cost Multi-Path (ECMP) behavior in MPLS networks uses heuristics [[RFC4928](#)], hence, the usage of ECMP is NOT permitted by this document to ensure the deterministic forwarding behavior during the benchmarking.

## Test Procedure

In accord with [Section 26 of RFC2544](#) [[RFC2544](#)], the traffic is sent from test tool port(s) Ap to the DUT at a constant load for a fixed time interval, and is received from the DUT on test tool port(s) Bp. The frame may contain either an IP packet or an MPLS packet depending on the testcase need, as described in [Section 4.1.4.3](#). Furthermore, the IP packet must be either an IPv4 or IPv6 packet, depending on whether the MPLS benchmarking is done for IPv4 or IPv6.

If any frame loss is detected, then a new iteration is needed where the offered load is decreased and the sender will transmit again. An iterative search algorithm MUST be used to determine the maximum offered frame rate with a zero frame loss.

This maximum offered frame rate that results in zero frame loss through the DUT is defined as the Throughput in [Section 3.17 of \[RFC1242\]](#) for that test case. Informally, this rate is referred to as the No Drop Rate.

Each iteration should involve varying the offered load of the traffic, while keeping the other parameters (test duration, number of ports, number of addresses, frame size etc) constant, until the maximum rate at which none of the offered frames are dropped is determined.

## **6.1. Throughput**

This Section contains the description of the tests that are related to the characterization of DUT's MPLS traffic forwarding.

### **6.1.1. Throughput for MPLS Label Push**

#### Objective

To obtain the DUT's Throughput (as per [RFC 2544](#)) during label push or LSP Ingress forwarding operation (i.e. IP to MPLS).

#### Test Setup

In addition to the test setup described in [Section 6](#), the test tool must advertise the IP prefix(es) i.e. RNx (using a routing protocol as per [Section 4.1.2](#)) and associated MPLS label-FEC binding(s) (using a label distribution protocol as per [Section 4.1.3](#)) on its receive ports Bp to DUT. The test tool may learn the IP prefix(es) on its transmit ports Ap from DUT.

MPLS and/or label distribution protocol must be enabled only on the test tool receive ports Bp and DUT transmit ports DBp.

#### Discussion

The DUT's MPLS forwarding table (also referred to as FEC-to-NHLFE (FTN) mapping table per [[RFC3031](#)]) must contain a non-reserved MPLS label value as the outgoing label for each learned IP prefix corresponding to the label-FEC binding, resulting in DUT performing the IP-to-MPLS forwarding operation. The test tool must receive MPLS packets on receive ports Bp (from DUT) with the same label values that were advertised.

#### Procedure

Please see Test Procedure in [Section 6](#). Additionally, the test tool MUST send the frames containing IP packets (with IP destination belonging to the advertised IP prefix(es)) on transmit ports Ap, and expect to receive frames containing MPLS packets on receive ports Bp, as described in [Section 4.1.4.4](#).

#### Reporting Format



The result should be reported as per [Section 5](#) and as per [RFC2544](#).

Results for each test SHOULD be in the form of a table with a row for each of the tested frame sizes. Additional columns SHOULD include: offered load and measured throughput.

### **[6.1.2](#). Throughput for MPLS Label Swap**

#### Objective

To obtain the DUT's Throughput (as per [RFC 2544](#)) during label swapping operation (i.e. MPLS to MPLS).

#### Test Setup

In addition to setup described in [Section 6](#), the test tool must advertise IP prefix(es) (using a routing protocol as per [Section 4.1.2](#)) and associated MPLS label-FEC bindings (using a label distribution protocol as per [Section 4.1.3](#)) on the receive ports Bp, and then learn the IP prefix(es) as well as the label-FEC binding(s) on the transmit ports Ap. The test tool must use the learned MPLS label values and learned IP prefix values in the frames transmitted on ports Ap to DUT.

MPLS and/or label distribution protocol must be enabled on the test tool ports Bp and Ap, and DUT ports DBp and DAp.

#### Discussion

The DUT's MPLS forwarding table (also referred to as FEC-to-NHLFE (FTN) mapping table per [[RFC3031](#)]) must contain non-reserved MPLS label values as the outgoing and incoming labels for the learned IP prefixes, resulting in MPLS-to-MPLS forwarding operation e.g. label swap. The test tool must receive MPLS packets on receive ports Bp (from DUT) with the same label values that were advertised using the label distribution protocol. The received frames must contain the same number of MPLS headers as those of transmitted frames.

#### Procedure

Please see Test Procedure in [Section 6](#). Additionally, the test tool must send frames containing MPLS packets (with IP destination belonging to the advertised IP prefix(es)) on its transmit ports



Ap, and expect to receive frames containing MPLS packets on its receive ports Bp, as described in [Section 4.1.4.4](#).

#### Reporting Format

The result should be reported as per [Section 5](#) and as per [RFC2544](#).

Results for each test SHOULD be in the form of a table with a row for each of the tested frame sizes.

### **[6.1.3](#). Throughput for MPLS Label Pop (Unlabeled)**

#### Objective

To obtain the DUT's Throughput (as per [RFC 2544](#)) during label pop or LSP Egress forwarding operation (i.e. MPLS to IP) using 'Unlabeled' outgoing label.

#### Test Setup

In addition to setup described in [Section 6](#), the test tool must advertise the IP prefix(es) (using a routing protocol as per [Section 4.1.2](#)) without any MPLS label-FEC bindings on the receive ports Bp, and then learn the IP prefix(es) as well as the FEC-label binding(s) on the transmit ports Ap. The test tool must use the learned MPLS label values and learned IP prefix values in the frames transmitted on ports Ap.

MPLS and/or label distribution protocol must be enabled only on the test tool port(s) Ap and DUT port(s) DAp.

#### Discussion

The DUT's MPLS forwarding table (also referred to as FEC-to-NHLFE (FTN) mapping table per [\[RFC3031\]](#)) must contain an Unlabeled outgoing label (also known as untagged) for the learned IP prefix, resulting in MPLS-to-IP forwarding operation.

#### Procedure

Please see Test Procedure in [Section 6](#). Additionally, the test tool must send frames containing MPLS packets on its transmit ports Ap (with IP destination belonging to the IP prefix(es) advertised on port Bp), and expect to receive frames containing IP packets on its receive ports Bp, as described in [Section 4.1.4.4](#).





## Reporting Format

The result should be reported as per [Section 5](#) and as per [RFC2544](#).

Results for each test SHOULD be in the form of a table with a row for each of the tested frame sizes.

### **6.1.4. Throughput for MPLS Label Pop (Aggregate)**

#### Objective

To obtain the DUT's Throughput (as per [RFC 2544](#)) during label pop or LSP Egress forwarding operation (i.e. MPLS to IP) using 'Aggregate' outgoing label[RFC3031].

#### Test Setup

In addition to setup described in [Section 6](#), the DUT must be provisioned such that it allocates an aggregate outgoing label (please see [Section 3.20 in \[RFC3031\]](#)) to an IP prefix, which aggregates a set of prefixes learned on ports DBp from the test tool. The prefix aggregation can be performed using BGP aggregation ([Section 9.2.2.2 of \[RFC4271\]](#)), IGP aggregation ([Section 16.5 of \[RFC2328\]](#)), etc.).

The DUT must advertise the aggregating IP prefix along with the associated MPLS label-FEC binding on ports DAp to the test tool.

The test tool then must use the learned MPLS label values and learned IP prefix values in frames transmitted on ports Ap to the DUT. The test tool must receive frames containing IP packets on ports Bp from the DUT.

MPLS and/or label distribution protocol must be enabled only on the test tool port(s) Ap and DUT port(s) DAp.

#### Discussion

The DUT's MPLS forwarding table (also referred to as FEC-to-NHLFE (FTN) mapping table per [\[RFC3031\]](#)) must contain an aggregate outgoing label and IP forwarding table must contain a valid entry for the learned prefix(es), resulting in MPLS-to-IP forwarding operation (i.e. MPLS header removal followed by IP lookup).

#### Procedure



Please see Test Procedure in [Section 6](#). Additionally, the test tool must send frames containing MPLS packets on its transmit ports Ap (with IP destination belonging to the IP prefix(es) advertised on port Bp), and expect to receive frames containing IP packets on its receive ports Bp, as described in [Section 4.1.4.4](#).

#### Reporting Format

The result should be reported as per [Section 5](#) and as per [RFC2544](#).

Results for each test SHOULD be in the form of a table with a row for each of the tested frame sizes.

### **6.1.5. Throughput for MPLS Label Pop (PHP)**

#### Objective

To obtain the DUT's Throughput (as per [RFC 2544](#)) during label pop (i.e. MPLS to IP) or penultimate hop popping (PHP) using 'imp-null' outgoing label.

#### Test Setup

In addition to setup described in [Section 6](#), the test tool must be set up to advertise the IP prefix(es) (using a routing protocol as per [Section 4.1.2](#)) and associated MPLS label-FEC binding with a reserved MPLS label value = 3 (using a label distribution protocol as per [Section 4.1.3](#)) on its receive ports Bp. The test tool must learn the IP prefix(es) as well as the MPLS label-FEC bindings on its transmit ports Ap. The test tool then must use the learned MPLS label values and learned IP prefix values in the frames transmitted on ports Ap to DUT. The test tool must receive frames containing IP packets on receive ports Bp (from DUT).

MPLS and/or label distribution protocol must be enabled on the test tool ports Bp and Ap, and DUT ports DBp and DAp.

#### Discussion

This test case characterizes the Penultimate Hop Popping (PHP), which is described in [RFC3031](#).

The DUT's MPLS forwarding table (also referred to as FEC-to-Next\_Hop\_Label\_Forwarding\_Entry (FTN) mapping table per [\[RFC3031\]](#)) must contain a reserved MPLS label value = 3 (e.g. pop or imp-



null) as the outgoing label for the learned prefix(es), resulting in MPLS-to-IP forwarding operation.

This test case characterizes DUT's penultimate hop popping (PHP) functionality.

#### Procedure

Please see Test Procedure in [Section 6](#). Additionally, the test tool must send frames containing MPLS packets on its transmit ports Ap (with IP destination belonging to advertised IP prefix(es)), and expect to receive frames containing IP packets on its receive ports Bp, as described in [Section 4.1.4.4](#).

#### Reporting Format

The result should be reported as per [Section 5](#) and as per [RFC2544](#).

Results for each test SHOULD be in the form of a table with a row for each of the tested frame sizes.

## **[6.2. Latency Measurement](#)**

This measures the time taken by the DUT to forward the MPLS packet during various MPLS switching paths such as IP-to-MPLS or MPLS-to-MPLS or MPLS-to-IP involving an MPLS label stack.

#### Objective

To obtain the average latency induced by the DUT during MPLS packet forwarding for each of five forwarding operations.

#### Test Setup

Follow the Test Setup guidelines established for each of four MPLS forwarding operations in [Section 6.1.1](#) (for IP-to-MPLS), 6.1.2 (for MPLS-to-MPLS), 6.1.3 (for MPLS-to-IP Unlabeled), 6.1.4 (for MPLS-to-IP Aggregate) and 6.1.5 (for MPLS-to-IP PHP) one by one.

#### Procedure

Please refer to [Section 26.2 in RFC2544](#) in addition to following the associated procedure for each MPLS forwarding operation in

accord with the Test Setup described earlier -

IP-to-MPLS forwarding	(Push)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.1</a>
MPLS-to-MPLS forwarding	(Swap)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.2</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(Pop)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.3</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(Aggregate)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.4</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(PHP)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.5</a>

## Reporting Format

The result should be reported as per [Section 5](#) and as per [RFC2544](#).

### **6.3. Frame Loss Rate Measurement (FLR)**

This measures the percentage of MPLS frames that were not forwarded during various switching paths such as IP-to-MPLS (push) or MPLS-to-IP (swap) or MPLS-IP (pop) by the DUT under overloaded state.

Please refer to [RFC2544 Section 26.3](#) for more details.

## Objective

To obtain the frame loss rate, as defined in [RFC1242](#), for each of three MPLS forwarding operations of a DUT, throughout the range of input data rates and frame sizes.

## Test Setup

Follow the Test Setup guidelines established for each of four MPLS forwarding operations in [Section 6.1.1](#) (for IP-to-MPLS), 6.1.2 (for MPLS-to-MPLS), 6.1.3 (for MPLS-to-IP Unlabeled), 6.1.4 (for MPLS-to-IP Aggregate) and 6.1.5 (for MPLS-to-IP PHP) one by one.

## Procedure

Please refer to [Section 26.3 of RFC 2544](#) RFC2544 and follow the associated procedure for each MPLS forwarding operation one-by-one in accord with the Test Setup described earlier -

IP-to-MPLS forwarding	(Push)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.1</a>
MPLS-to-MPLS forwarding	(Swap)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.2</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(Pop)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.3</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(Aggregate)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.4</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(PHP)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.5</a>

#### Reporting Format

The result should be reported as per [Section 5](#) and as per [RFC2544](#).

### **6.4. System Recovery**

#### Objective

To characterize the speed at which a DUT recovers from an overload condition.

#### Test Setup

Follow the Test Setup guidelines established for each of five MPLS forwarding operations in [Section 6.1.1](#) (for IP-to-MPLS), 6.1.2 (for MPLS-to-MPLS), 6.1.3 (for MPLS-to-IP Unlabeled), 6.1.4 (for MPLS-to-IP Aggregate) and 6.1.5 (for MPLS-to-IP PHP) one by one.

#### Procedure

Please refer to [Section 26.5 of RFC2544](#) and follow the associated procedure for each MPLS forwarding operation in the referenced Sections one-by-one in accord with the Test Setup described earlier -

IP-to-MPLS forwarding	(Push)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.1</a>
MPLS-to-MPLS forwarding	(Swap)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.2</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(Pop)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.3</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(Aggregate)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.4</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(PHP)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.5</a>

#### Reporting Format

The result should be reported as per [Section 5](#) and as per [RFC2544](#).



### **6.5. Reset**

Note that BMWG plans to produce a separate document focusing on 'reset' aspects of benchmarking in order to ensure clarity and consistency in reset procedures beyond what's specified in [RFC2544](#).

This document does not specify the reset procedures. The text below describes the MPLS forwarding benchmarking specific setup that will have to be used in conjunction with the procedures from the separate document to make this test case meaningful.

#### **Objective**

To characterize the speed at which a DUT recovers from a device or software reset.

#### **Test Setup**

Follow the Test Setup guidelines established for each of four MPLS forwarding operations in [Section 6.1.1](#) (for IP-to-MPLS), 6.1.2 (for MPLS-to-MPLS), 6.1.3 (for MPLS-to-IP Unlabeled), 6.1.4 (for MPLS-to-IP Aggregate) and 6.1.5 (for MPLS-to-IP PHP) one by one.

For this testcase, the requirements of LDP and a routing-protocol are removed and replaced by static configurations. For the IP-to-MPLS iteration, static route configurations should be applied. For the MPLS-to-MPLS and MPLS-to-IP static label configurations must be applied.

For this test, all graceful-restart features MUST be disabled.

#### **Discussion**

This test case is intended to provide an insight into how long an MPLS device could take to be fully operational after any of the reset events. It is quite likely that the time an IP/MPLS device takes to become fully operational after any of the reset events may be different from that of an IP only device.

Modern devices now have many more reset options that were not available when [section 26.6 of RFC2544](#) was published. Moreover, different reset events on modern devices may produce different results, hence, needing clarity and consistency in reset procedures beyond what's specified in [RFC2544](#).



## Procedure

Please follow the procedure from the separate document for each MPLS forwarding operation one-by-one -

IP-to-MPLS forwarding	(Push)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.1</a>
MPLS-to-MPLS forwarding	(Swap)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.2</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(Pop)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.3</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(Aggregate)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.4</a>
MPLS-to-IP forwarding	(PHP)	<a href="#">Section 6.1.5</a>

## Reporting Format

The result should be reported as per [section 5](#) and as per the separate document.

## 7. Security Considerations

Benchmarking activities, as described in this memo, are limited to technology characterization using controlled stimuli in a laboratory environment, with dedicated address space and the constraints specified in the sections above.

The benchmarking network topology will be an independent test setup and MUST NOT be connected to devices that may forward the test traffic into a production network or misroute traffic to the test management network.

Furthermore, benchmarking is performed on a "black-box" basis, relying solely on measurements observable external to the DUT/SUT.

Special capabilities SHOULD NOT exist in the DUT/SUT specifically for benchmarking purposes. Any implications for network security arising from the DUT/SUT SHOULD be identical in the lab and in production networks.

There are no specific security considerations within the scope of this document.

## **8. IANA Considerations**

There are no considerations for IANA at this time.

## **9. Acknowledgement**

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This document was prepared using 2-Word-v2.0.template.dot.

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