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**Generalized Multiprotocol Label Switching (GMPLS) control of  
Ethernet Provider Backbone Traffic Engineering (PBB-TE)**

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## Abstract

This specification is complementary to the GMPLS Ethernet Label Switching Architecture and Framework and describes the technology specific aspects of GMPLS control for Provider Backbone Bridge Traffic Engineering (PBB-TE). The necessary GMPLS extensions and mechanisms are described to establish Ethernet PBB-TE point to point (P2P) and point to multipoint (P2MP) connections. This document supports, but does not modify, the standard IEEE data plane.



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## Conventions used in this document

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. Introduction**

The IEEE 802.1 Provider Backbone Bridge Traffic Engineering (PBB-TE) [IEEE 802.1Qay] standard supports the establishment of explicitly routed traffic engineered paths within Provider Backbone Bridged (PBB) networks. PBB-TE allows disabling of:

- the Spanning Tree Protocol
- unknown destination address forwarding
- source address learning

for administratively selected VLAN Identifiers. With PBB-TE an external provisioning system or control plane can be used to configure static entries in the managed objects of bridges and so establish traffic engineered paths in the network.

Generalized MPLS (GMPLS) [\[RFC3945\]](#) is a family of control plane protocols designed to operate in connection oriented and traffic engineering transport networks. GMPLS is applicable to a range of network technologies including Layer 2 Switching capable networks (L2SC). The purpose of this document is to specify extensions for a GMPLS based control plane to manage PBB-TE explicitly routed traffic engineered paths. This specification is complementary to with the GMPLS Ethernet Label Switching Architecture and Framework [\[RFC5828\]](#) document.

### **1.1. Co-authors**

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## **2. Terminology**

In addition to well understood GMPLS terms, this memo uses terminology from IEEE 802.1 [IEEE 802.1ah] [IEEE 802.1Qay]:

- BCB	Backbone Core Bridge
- BEB	Backbone Edge Bridge
- B-MAC	Backbone MAC
- B-VID	Backbone VLAN ID
- B-VLAN	Backbone VLAN
- CBP	Customer Backbone Port
- CCM	Continuity Check Message
- CNP	Customer Network Port
- C-MAC	Customer MAC
- C-VID	Customer VLAN ID
- C-VLAN	Customer VLAN
- ESP	Ethernet Switched Path
- ESP-MAC SA	ESP Source MAC Address
- ESP-MAC DA	ESP Destination MAC Address
- ESP-VID	ESP VLAN ID
- Eth-LSP	Ethernet Label Switched Path
- IB-BEB	A BEB comprising of both I and B components
- I-SID	Ethernet Service Instance Identifier
- TAG	An Ethernet Header Field with Type and Values
- MAC	Media Access Control
- PBB	Provider Backbone Bridges
- PBB-TE	Provider Backbone Bridges Traffic Engineering
- PIP	Provider Instance Port
- PNP	Provider Network Port
- PS	Protection Switching
- P2P	Point to Point
- P2MP	Point to Multipoint
- SVL	Shared VLAN Learning
- TESI	Traffic Engineering Service Instance
- VID	VLAN ID
- VIP	Virtual Instance Port
- VLAN	Virtual LAN

### **2.1. PBB-TE and GMPLS Terminology**

The PBB-TE specification [IEEE 802.1Qay] defines some additional terminology to clarify the PBB-TE functions. We repeat these here in expanded context to translate from IEEE to GMPLS terminology. The terms bridge and switch are used interchangeably in this document. The signaling extensions described here apply equally well to a PBB-TE capable bridge supporting GMPLS signaling or to a GMPLS capable switch supporting Ethernet PBB-TE forwarding.





- Ethernet Switched Path (ESP):  
A provisioned traffic engineered unidirectional connectivity path between two or more Customer Backbone Ports (CBPs) which extends over a Provider Backbone Bridge Network (PBBN). The path is identified by the 3-tuple <ESP-MAC DA, ESP-MAC SA, ESP-VID>. An ESP is point-to-point (P2P) or point-to-multipoint (P2MP). An ESP is analogous to a (unidirectional) point-to-point or point-to-multipoint LSP. We use the term Ethernet-LSP (Eth-LSP) for GMPLS established ESPs.
- Point-to-point ESP:  
An ESP between two CBPs. The ESP-DA and the ESP-SA in the ESP's 3-tuple identifier are the individual MAC addresses of the two CBPs.
- Point-to-multipoint ESP:  
An ESP among one root CBP and n leaf CBPs. The ESP-DA in the ESP's 3-tuple identifier is a group MAC address identifying the n leaf CBPs, and the ESP-SA is the individual MAC address of the root.
- Point-to-Point PBB-TE service instance (P2P TESI):  
A service instance supported by two point-to-point ESPs where the ESPs' endpoints have the same CBP MAC addresses. The two unidirectional ESP are forming a bidirectional service. The PBB-TE standard [IEEE 802.1Qay] notes the following: for reasons relating to TE service monitoring diagnostics, operational simplicity, etc. the IEEE PBB-TE standard assumes that the point-to-point ESPs associated with a point-to-point TESI are co-routed. Support for a point-to-point TE services which comprises non co-routed ESPs is problematic, and is not defined in this standard. Hence, a GMPLS bidirectional LSP is analogous to a P2P TE Service instance. We use the term bidirectional Ethernet-LSP for GMPLS established P2P PBB-TE Service instances.

### **3. Creation and Maintenance of PBB-TE paths using GMPLS**

IEEE PBB-TE is a connection oriented Ethernet technology. PBB-TE ESPs are created bridge by bridge (or switch by switch) by simple configuration of Ethernet forwarding entries. This document describes the use of GMPLS as a valid control plane for the set-up, teardown, protection and recovery of ESPs and TESI and specifies the required RSVP-TE extensions for the control of PBB-TE service instances.

PBB-TE ESP and services are always originated and terminated on IB-Backbone Edge Bridges (IB-BEBs). IB-BEBs are constituted of I and B components, this is illustrated in Figure 1. A B-component refers to



the structure and mechanisms that support the relaying of frames identified by Backbone VLANs in a Provider Backbone Bridge. An I-component refers to the structure and mechanisms that support the relaying of frames identified by service instances (I-SIDs) in a Provider Backbone Bridge. PBB and PBB-TE relay frames with added I-Component TAGs in the I-Component and VLAN TAGs in the B-Component. PBB and PBB-TE forward frames based on VLAN ID in the VLAN TAG (in the PBB case a B-VID) until the destination MAC address is supported locally by a B-Component on this bridge indicating the destination has been reached. At that point, the B-VLAN tag is removed and processing or forwarding on the next TAG begins (in the PBB case an I-Component TAG) until the I-Component identified by the I-SID is reached. At the I-component the I-Component TAG is removed and the next Ethernet type identifies the TAG etc.

An Ethernet service supported by a PBB-TE TESI is always attached to a Customer Network Port (CNP) of the I-component. A Service Instance Identifier (I-SID) is assigned for the service. I-SIDs are only looked at by source and destination (edge) bridges so I-SIDs are transparent to path operations and MAY be signaled. The I and B components have internal ports which are connected via an internal LAN. These internal ports are the Provider Instance Ports (PIPs) and Customer Backbone Ports (CBPs). PIPs and CBPs are not visible outside the IB-BEB. ESPs are always originated and terminated on CBP ports and use the MAC address of that port. The I-Component encapsulates the service frames arriving from the CNP by adding an I-SID and a complete Ethernet MAC header with an ESP-MAC DA and ESP-MAC SA. The B-Component adds the ESP-VID.

This document defines extensions to GMPLS to establish ESPs and TESIs. As it can be seen from the above this requires configuration of both the I and B components of the IB-BEBs connected by the ESPs.

In the GMPLS control plane TE Router IDs are used to identify the IB-BEBs and Backbone Core Bridges (BCBs), and TE Links describe links connected to PNPs and CNPs. TE Links are not associated with CBPs or PIPs.

Note that since multiple internal CBPs may exist an IB-BEB receiving a PATH message MUST be able to determine the appropriate CBP that is the termination point of the Eth-LSP. To this end, IB-BEBs SHOULD advertise the CNP TE Links in the GMPLS control plane and RSVP-TE signaling SHOULD use the CNP TE Links to identify the termination point of Eth-LSPs. An IB-BEB receiving a PATH message specifying one of its CNPs can locally determine which CBPs have internal connectivity to the I-component supporting the given CNP. In the case there are more than one suitable CBPs, and no I-SID information is



provided in the PATH message or previously in the associated Call setup, then the IB-BEB can decide freely which CBP to assign to the requested connection. On the other hand, if there is information on the service (I-SID) that the given ESP will support, then the IB-BEB MUST first determine which PIP and CBP is configured with the I-SID and MUST assign that CBP to the ESP.

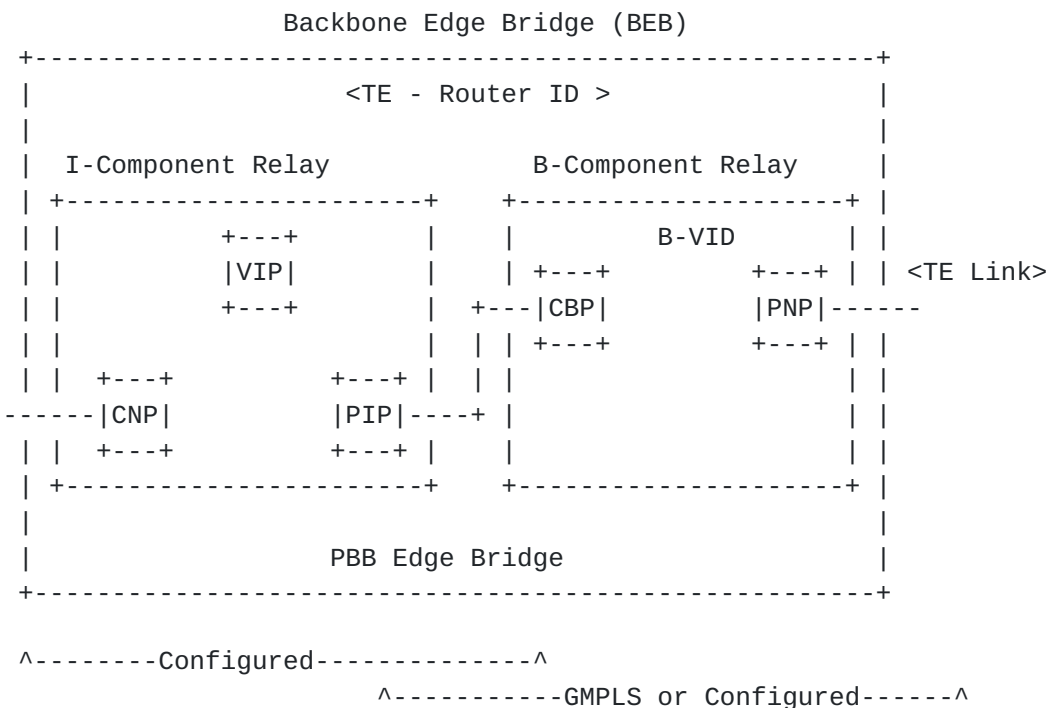


Figure 1 IB-BEBs and GMPLS identifiers

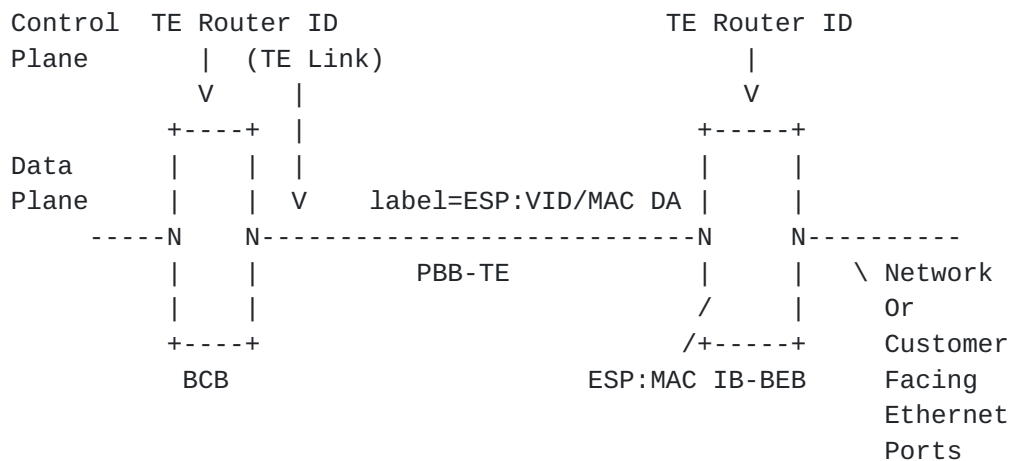


Figure 2 Ethernet/GMPLS Addressing & Label Space



PBB-TE defines the tuple of <ESP-MAC DA, ESP-MAC SA, ESP-VID> as a unique connection identifier in the data plane but the forwarding operation only uses the ESP-MAC DA and the ESP-VID in each direction. The ESP-VID typically comes from a small number of VIDs dedicated to PBB-TE. ESP-VIDs can be reused across ESPs. There is no requirement that ESP-VIDs for two ESPs that form a P2P TESI be the same.

When configuring an ESP with GMPLS, the ESP-MAC DA and ESP-VID are carried in a generalized label object and are assigned hop by hop but are invariant within a domain. This invariance is similar to GMPLS operation in transparent optical networks. As is typical with other technologies controlled by GMPLS, the data plane receiver MUST accept, and usually assigns, labels from its available label pool. This, together with the label invariance requirement mentioned above, result in each PBB-TE Ethernet Label being a domain wide unique label, with a unique ESP-VID + ESP-MAC DA, for each direction.

The following illustrates PBB-TE Ethernet Labels and ESPs for a P2P TESI.

GMPLS Upstream Label	<ESP:MAC1(DA), VID1> (60 bits)
GMPLS Downstream Label	<ESP:MAC2(DA), VID2> (60 bits)
Upstream PBB-TE ESP 3-tuple	<ESP:MAC1, MAC2, VID1> (108 bits)
Downstream PBB-TE ESP 3-tuple	<ESP:MAC2, MAC1, VID2> (108 bits)

Table 1 Labels and ESPs

### **3.1. Shared Forwarding**

One capability of a connectionless Ethernet data plane is to reuse destination forwarding entries for packets from any source within a VLAN to a destination. When setting up P2P PBB-TE connections for multiple sources sharing a common destination this capability MAY be preserved provided certain requirements are met. We refer to this capability as Shared Forwarding. Shared forwarding is invoked based on policy when conditions are met. It is a local decision by label allocation at each end plus the path constraints. Shared forwarding has no impact on the actual paths that are setup, but it allows the reduction of forwarding entries. Shared forwarding paths are identical in function to independently routed paths that share a path from an intersecting bridge or link except they share a single forwarding entry.

The forwarding memory savings from shared forwarding can be quite dramatic in some topologies where a high degree of meshing is required however it is typically easier to achieve when the connectivity is known in advance. Normally the originating GMPLS switch will not have knowledge of the set of shared forwarding paths





rooted on the source or destination switch.

Use of a Path Computation Element [[RFC4655](#)] or other planning style of tool with more complete knowledge of the network configuration is a way to impose pre-selection of shared forwarding with multiple paths using a single forwarding entry and optimizing for both directions. In this scenario the originating bridge uses the LABEL\_SET and UPSTREAM\_LABEL objects to indicate selection of the shared forwarding labels at both ends.

### **3.2. P2P Connections Procedures for Shared Forwarding**

The ESP-VID/ESP-MAC DA can be considered to be a shared forwarding identifier or label consisting of some number of P2P connections distinctly identified by the MAC ESP-VID/ESP-MAC DA/ESP- MAC SA tuple. This is analogous to an LDP label merge but in the shared forwarding case the ESP header contains sufficient information to identify the flow to which a packet belongs. Resources can continue to be allocated per LSP with Shared forwarding.

VLAN tagged Ethernet packets include priority marking. Priority bits MAY be used to indicate Class of Service (COS) and drop priority. Thus, traffic from multiple COSs could be multiplexed on the same Eth-LSP (i.e., similar to E-LSPs) and queuing and drop decisions are made based on the p-bits. This means that the queue selection can be done based on a per flow (i.e., Eth-LSP + priority) basis and is decoupled from the actual steering of the packet at any given bridge.

A bridge terminating an Eth-LSP will frequently have more than one suitable candidate for sharing a forwarding entry (common ESP-VID/ESP-MAC DA, unique ESP-MAC SA). It is a local decision of how this is performed but a good choice is a path that reduces the requirement for new forwarding entries by reusing common existing paths.

The concept of bandwidth management still applies equally well with shared forwarding.



## **4. Specific Procedures**

### **4.1. P2P Ethernet LSPs**

Note, PBB-TE is designed to be bidirectional and symmetrically routed just like Ethernet. That is, complete and proper functionality of Ethernet protocols is only guaranteed for bidirectional Eth-LSPs. In the following we discuss the establishment of bidirectional Eth-LSPs.

Note however that it is also possible to use RSVP-TE to configure unidirectional ESPs, if the UPSTREAM\_LABEL is not included in the PATH message. To initiate a bidirectional Eth-LSP, the initiator of the PATH message MUST use the procedures outlined in [\[RFC3473\]](#) with the following specifics:

- 1) MUST set the LSP encoding type to Ethernet (2) [\[RFC3471\]](#).
- 2) MUST set the LSP switching type to "802\_1 PBB-TE" suggested value 40.
- 3) SHOULD set the GPID to Ethernet (33) [\[RFC3471\]](#).
- 4) MUST set the UPSTREAM\_LABEL to the ESP-VID1/ESP-MAC1 tuple where the  
ESP-VID1 is administered locally for the local MAC address: MAC1
- 5) SHOULD set the LABEL\_SET or SUGGESTED\_LABEL if it chooses to influence the choice of ESP-VID/ESP-MAC DA.
- 6) MAY carry an I-SID via Call / Connection ID [\[RFC4974\]](#).

Intermediate and egress bridge processing is not modified by this document, i.e., is per [\[RFC3473\]](#). However, as previously stated intermediate bridges supporting the 802\_1 PBB-TE switching type MUST NOT modify LABEL values.

The ESP-VID1/ESP-MAC1 tuple contained in the UPSTREAM\_LABEL are used to create a static forwarding entry in the Filtering Database of bridges at each hop for the upstream direction. This behavior is inferred from the switching type which is 802\_1 PBB-TE. The port derived from the RSVP\_HOP object and the ESP-VID1 and ESP-MAC1 included in the PBB-TE Ethernet Label constitute the static entry.

At the destination, an ESP-VID (ESP-VID2) is allocated for the local MAC address: MAC2, the ESP-VID2/ESP-MAC2 tuple is passed in the LABEL object in the RESV message. As with the PATH message, intermediate bridge processing is per [\[RFC3473\]](#), and the LABEL object MUST be passed on unchanged, upstream. The ESP-VID2/ESP-MAC2 tuple contained



in the LABEL Object is installed in the forwarding table as a static forwarding entry at each hop. This creates a bidirectional Eth-LSP as the PATH and RESV messages follow the same path.

#### **4.1.1. P2P Path Maintenance**

Make before break procedures can be employed to modify the characteristics of a P2P Eth LSP. As described in [[RFC3209](#)], the LSP ID in the sender template is updated as the new path is signaled. The procedures (including those for shared forwarding) are identical to those employed in establishing a new LSP, with the extended tunnel ID in the signaling exchange ensuring that double booking of an associated resource does not occur.

Where individual paths in a protection group are modified, signaling procedures MAY be combined with Protection Switching (PS) coordination to administratively force PS switching operations such that modification is only ever performed on the protection path. PS is a native capability of PBB-TE [IEEE 802.1Qay] that can operate when two paths are set up between two common end points.

#### **4.2. P2MP Ethernet-LSPs**

PBB-TE supports P2MP VID/Multicast MAC (MMAC) forwarding. In this case the PBB-TE Ethernet Label consists of a VID and a Group MAC address. The procedures outlined in [[RFC3473](#)] and [[RFC4875](#)] could be adapted to signal P2MP LSPs for the source (point) to destination (multipoint) direction. Each one of the branches of the P2MP Eth-LSP would be associated with a reverse path symmetric and congruent P2P Eth-LSP.

Complete procedures for signaling bidirectional P2MP are out of scope for this document.



### 4.3. PBB-TE Ethernet Label

The PBB-TE Ethernet Label is a new generalized label with the following format:

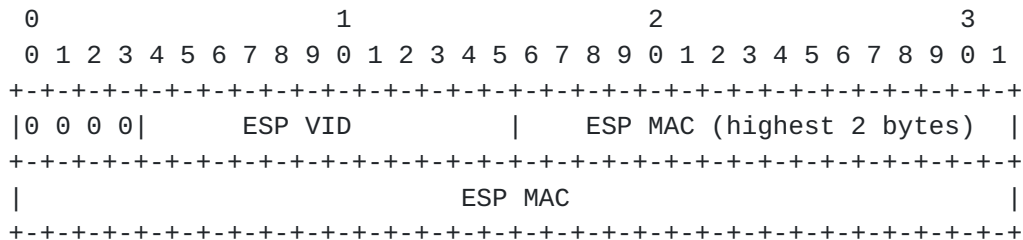


Figure 3 PBB-TE Ethernet Label

This format MUST be used for both P2P and P2MP Eth-LSPs. For P2P Eth-LSPs the fields specify a VID and a unicast MAC address, while for P2MP Eth-LSPs a VID and a group MAC address is carried in the label. The PBB-TE Ethernet Label is a domain wide unique label and MUST be passed unchanged at each hop. This has similarity to the way in which a wavelength label is handled at an intermediate bridge that cannot perform wavelength conversion, and is described in [[RFC3473](https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/rfc3473)].

### 4.4. Protection Paths

When protection is used for path recovery it is required to associate the working and protection paths into a protection group. This is achieved as defined in [[RFC4872](https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/rfc4872)] and [[RFC4873](https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/rfc4873)] using the ASSOCIATION and PROTECTION objects.

### 4.5. Service Instance Identification

The I-SID is used to uniquely identify services within the network. Unambiguous identification is achieved by ensuring global uniqueness of the I-SIDs within the network or at least between any pair of edge bridges. On IB-BEBs the Backbone Service Instance Table is used to configure the mapping between I-SIDs and ESPs. This configuration can be either manual or semi-automated by signaling described here.

RSVP-TE Signaling MAY be used to automate I-SID to ESP mapping. By relying on signaling it is ensured that the same I-SID is assigned to the service and mapped to the same ESP. Note, by signaling the I-SID associated to the ESP one can ensure that IB-BEBs select the appropriate CBP port.





CALL signaling [[RFC4974](#)] MAY be used to create an association between the Eth-LSP endpoints prior to establishment of the LSP. The CALL\_ATTRIBUTES object can be used during CALL signaling as described in [[RFC4974](#)] to indicate properties of the CALL. The Service ID TLV defined below can be carried in the CALL\_ATTRIBUTES object to indicate the I-SID to ESP mapping for the Eth-LSP that will be set up in association with the CALL.

Alternatively, the GMPLS RSVP-TE PATH message can carry the I-SID association using the Service ID TLV in the LSP\_ATTRIBUTES object [RFC5420] at the time of Eth-LSP signaling. Using this mechanism, it is possible to create the I-SID association either when the path is set up or at a later time using a PATH refresh.

A new Service ID TLV is defined for the CALL\_ATTRIBUTES and LSP\_ATTRIBUTES objects. The format is depicted below.

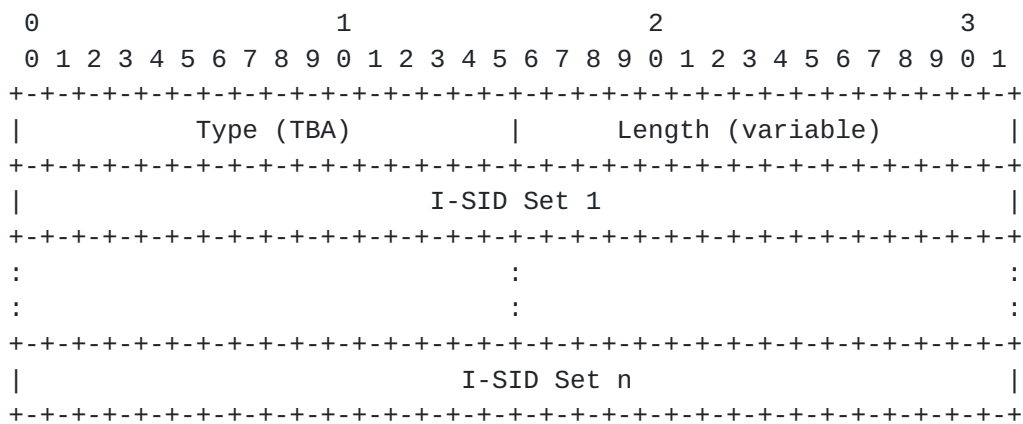


Figure 4 Service ID TLV

- Flags: are used to control properties of service configuration. This document does not define flags.
- I-SID Set TLV(Type 1): is used to define a list or range of I-SIDs. Multiple I-SID Set TLVs can be present. At least one I-SID Set TLV MUST be present. In most of the cases a single I-SID Set with a single I-SID value is used. The I-SID Set TLV is used to define a list or range of I-SIDs. The format of the I-SID Set TLV is based on the LABEL\_SET Object:



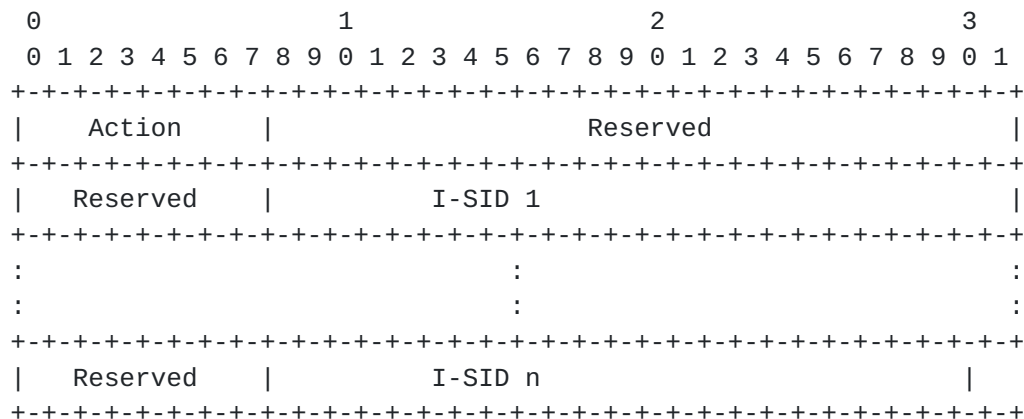


Figure 5 I-SID Set TLV

- Action: 8 bits

The following actions are defined: list (0), range (1). When a range is defined, there are only two I-SIDs that follow the beginning I-SID and the end of the range I-SID. When list is defined, a number of I-SIDs may be defined.

- I-SID: 24 bits

The I-SID value identifies a particular backbone service instance.

## 5. Error conditions

The following errors identify Eth-LSP specific problems.

In PBB-TE a set of ESP-VIDs allocated to PBB-TE must be configured. Therefore it is possible in some situations that the configuration of a bridge is not the same as other bridges. If the ESP-VIDs of various bridges have some ESP-VIDs in common it is possible some paths may be set up before encountering issues. This is a management issue since all bridges should have the same ESP-VID range. Configuration should be consistent.

### 5.1. ESP-VID related errors

The network operator administratively selects a set of VLAN Identifiers that can be used to setup ESPs. Consequently, any VID outside the allocated range is invalid and an error MUST be generated where the mismatch is discovered. The Error indication is carried in the PathErr message from any intermediate bridge that does not support the signaled source VID or optionally the destination VID. The Error MAY be indicated in the ResvErr if the allocation error happens on the RESV message. In this case a bridge that does not support the signaled destination VID MUST signal the error.



#### **5.1.1. Invalid ESP-VID value in the PBB-TE Ethernet Label**

If a bridge is not configured to use the ESP-VID value, carried in the Label object, for PBB-TE ESPs, it MUST immediately generate an error: Routing problem (24) / Unacceptable label value (6). Handling of this error is according to [[RFC3209](#)].

Note that an originating Bridge can reuse an ESP-VID with a different source or destination B-MAC address. By allocating a number of B-MACs and a number of ESP-VIDs a large number of PBB-TE connections may be supported.

Note, this error may be originated by any bridge along the path.

#### **5.1.2. Allocated ESP-VID range is exhausted**

The destination bridge after receiving the PATH message has to allocate a VID, which together with its MAC address will constitute the PBB-TE Ethernet Label. Depending on the size of the allocated VLAN range and the number of Eth-LSPs terminated on a particular bridge, it is possible that the available VIDs are exhausted and hence no PBB-TE Ethernet Label can be allocated. In this case the destination bridge SHOULD generate a PathErr message with error code: Routing problem (24) and error value: MPLS Label allocation failure (9).

#### **5.2. Invalid MAC Address**

IEEE defines a set of reserved MAC addresses Table 8-1 [IEEE 802.1Q] that have special meaning, processing and follow specific forwarding rules. These addresses cannot be used for PBB-TE ESPs. In the case the PBB-TE Ethernet Label refers to such a MAC address, a bridge encountering the mismatch MUST immediately generate an error: Routing problem (24) / Unacceptable label value (6). Handling of this error is according to [[RFC3209](#)].



## **6. Security Considerations**

This document does not introduces new security issues; the considerations in [[RFC4872](#)] and [[RFC4873](#)] apply.

GMPLS controlled Ethernet PBB-TE system assumes that users and devices attached to UNIs may behave maliciously, negligently, or incorrectly. Intra-provider control traffic is trusted to not be malicious. In general, these requirements are no different from the security requirements for operating any GMPLS network. Access to the trusted network will only occur through the protocols defined for the UNI or NNI or through protected management interfaces.

When in-band GMPLS signaling is used for the control plane the security of the control plane and the data plane may affect each other. When out-of-band GMPLS signaling is used for the control plane the data plane security is decoupled from the control plane and therefore the security of the data plane has less impact on overall security.

Where GMPLS is applied to the control of VLAN only, the commonly known techniques for mitigation of Ethernet DOS attacks may be required on UNI ports. PBB-TE has been designed to interwork with legacy VLANs and the VLANs provide isolation from Ethernet legacy control planes.

For a more comprehensive discussion on GMPLS security please see the Security Framework for MPLS and GMPLS Networks[RFC5920]. Cryptography can be used to protect against many attacks described in [[RFC5920](#)]. One option for protecting "transport" Ethernet is the use of 802.1AE Media Access Control Security, [[MACSEC](#)] which provides encryption and authentication."

## **7. IANA Considerations**

- Assign a new Switching Type: "802\_1 PBB-TE" (suggested value 40) in the GMPLS Signaling Parameters / Switching Types registry.
- Assign a new globally defined error value: "PBB-TE Ethernet Label VID allocation failure" (suggested value: 35?) under the "Routing problem" (24) error code in the RSVP Parameters / Error Codes and Globally-Defined Error Value Sub-Codes registry.





- Assign a new type from the Attributes TLV Space in the RSVP-TE Parameters registry (suggested value 2) for the Service ID TLV that is carried in the LSP\_ATTRIBUTES Object (class = 197, C-Type = 1) [[RFC5420](#)].
- Assign a new type (suggested value 2) for the Service ID TLV that is carried in the CALL\_ATTRIBUTES Object (class = 202, C-Type = 1) Registry class defined by [[MLN-EXT](#)].

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