



# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

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This chapter provides an overview of the Cisco MPLS Diagnostics Expert (MDE) application.

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## 1.1 MDE Overview

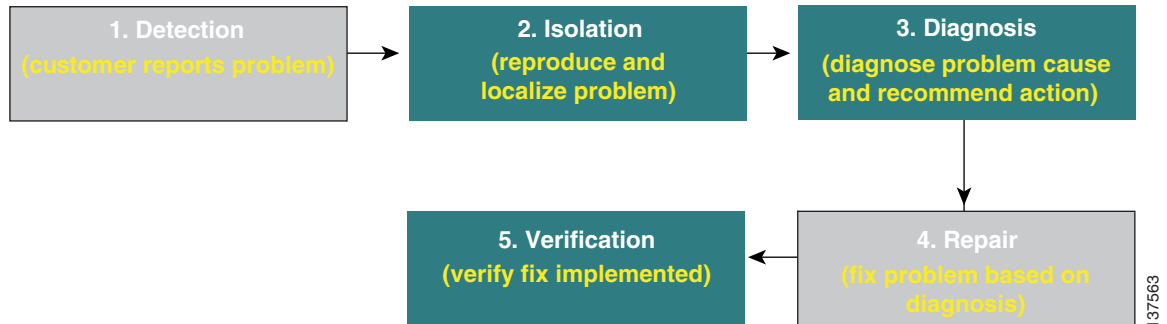
MDE is an automated, workflow-based network management application that troubleshoots and diagnoses problems in Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) VPNs. MDE offers users the capability to reduce the amount of time required to diagnose MPLS-related network outages—in many cases from hours to minutes. It performs diagnostics based on analysis of network failure scenarios, across MPLS access, edge, and core networks. It is equally applicable to both service provider and enterprise “self-deployed” MPLS VPN networks. Network operations center (NOC) support technicians as well as second-line and third-line support can benefit from this product. MDE optionally integrates with the ISC MPLS VPN provisioning component. To diagnose MPLS VPN core problems, Cisco IOS and IOS XR software releases supporting MPLS operations and maintenance (OAM) features including label-switched path (LSP) ping and LSP traceroute are required.

In effective fault finding and troubleshooting, there are five steps:

1. Detection
2. Isolation
3. Diagnosis
4. Repair
5. Verification

MDE is designed to support reactive situations in which an end customer reports a problem with their VPN service. This is essentially the Detection step in [Figure 1-1](#). The Repair function is not supported because many providers prefer to be in complete control of any changes made to router devices and might have specific in-house procedures for doing so.

**Figure 1-1 The Reactive Fault Lifecycle**



**Note**

Steps 2, 3, and 5 are performed by MDE. Steps 1 and 4 must be performed manually.

MDE focuses on the Isolation, Diagnosis, and Verification steps. It provides invaluable functionality for isolating and diagnosing failures in the network, determining the device(s) at fault, and checking appropriate device status and configuration to determine the likely reason for the failure. MDE also provides the ability to rerun tests to verify that changes made to the device configuration have resolved the issue.

The functionality can be used on its own, without any dependency on any other modules in ISC (for example, VPN provisioning or Traffic Engineering Management). It can also be used in ISC installations where some or all of the other ISC modules are used. If the MPLS VPN Provisioning functionality is used, then Customer and VPN data can be used as a starting point for troubleshooting, to locate the endpoints (for example, Customer Edge devices) between which connectivity is tested.

In addition to troubleshooting, MDE can also be used for VPN post-provisioning checks. After deploying a VPN, either manually or using ISC VPN provisioning, a connectivity test can be run to verify that the VPN has been provisioned successfully.

## 1.2 Prerequisite Knowledge

MDE has been designed for use by users who have minimal MPLS VPN knowledge. An MDE MPLS VPN Connectivity Verification Test can be performed by a user with little or no MPLS VPN knowledge, and, where necessary, the test results can be exported for interpretation by an engineer familiar with MPLS VPNs. However, due to the complex nature of MPLS VPNs, it is recommended that you will gain maximum advantage from MDE if you are familiar with MPLS VPNs, in accordance with RFC 2547. In particular, knowledge of RFC 2547 architecture, topology, control, and data planes is helpful to understand how to best use the application and interpret the results.

MDE now diagnoses Cisco devices and networks that use IETF RFC 4379 compliant Label Switched Path (LSP) ping and LSP traceroute. MDE continues to support the earlier draft (draft 3) available in Cisco IOS. You must use a consistent draft of LSP ping and traceroute across all devices in your network.

Recommended reading:

- MPLS and VPN Architectures: Ivan Pepelnjak, Jim Guichard, Cisco Press
- Troubleshooting Virtual Private Networks: Mark Lewis, Cisco Press
- LSP ping/trace RFC: <http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc4379.txt>
- RFC 2547: <http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2547.txt?number=2547>

- RFC 4379: <http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc4379.txt?number=4379>
- MPLS Embedded Management—LSP Ping/Traceroute and ATOM VCCV: [http://www.cisco.com/en/US/partner/products/sw/iosswrel/ps1829/products\\_feature\\_guide09186a00801eb054.html](http://www.cisco.com/en/US/partner/products/sw/iosswrel/ps1829/products_feature_guide09186a00801eb054.html)

## 1.3 Supported Hardware, IOS, and IOS XR Versions

For details of Provider (P) and Provider Edge (PE) network device types and related Cisco IOS and IOS XR versions supported, see the *Cisco IP Solution Center Installation Guide, 5.1*.



### Note

Support for additional device types, IOS, and IOS XR versions could be added in patch releases. For details of the latest patch releases and the supported device types, IOS, and IOS XR versions, see [Cisco.com](http://www.cisco.com).

Device types, IOS, and IOS XR versions detailed in the *Cisco IP Solution Center Installation Guide, 5.1* support the MPLS label switched path (LSP) Ping and Traceroute feature. This feature is required for MDE troubleshooting. If all P and PE devices comply with the list of supported device types, IOS, and IOS XR versions, MDE can troubleshoot access circuit, MPLS VPN, and MPLS core problems. MDE is tolerant to other device types, IOS, and IOS XR versions, including other vendors' equipment. However, when the network includes P or PE devices that do not comply with this list, a complete diagnosis might not be possible. [Table 1-1](#) shows the possible scenarios and likely outcome.

**Table 1-1** Hardware, IOS, and IOS XR Version Compliance

Scenario	Outcome
All P and PE devices comply with the supported Cisco hardware, IOS, and IOS XR versions.	MPLS VPN Connectivity Verification test successfully troubleshoots access circuit, MPLS VPN, and MPLS core issues.
All PE devices comply with the supported Cisco hardware, IOS, and IOS XR versions. One or more P device(s) do not comply with the supported Cisco hardware, IOS, and IOS XR versions, including other vendors' equipment.	MPLS VPN Connectivity Verification test successfully troubleshoots access circuit and MPLS VPN issues, but might be unable to complete troubleshooting of MPLS core issues.
PE devices are Cisco hardware running unsupported IOS and IOS XR versions that do not support the MPLS LSP Ping and Traceroute feature.	MPLS VPN Connectivity Verification test <i>may</i> be able to successfully troubleshoot access circuit and MPLS VPN issues. The MPLS VPN Connectivity Verification test is unable to perform troubleshooting of the MPLS core.
PE devices are non-Cisco hardware.	MPLS VPN Connectivity Verification test cannot be run.

MDE supports both managed and unmanaged CE routers from any vendor. There are no device type, IOS, or IOS XR version requirements for CE devices.

MDE can work with other device types, IOS, and IOS XR versions that support the MPLS LSP Ping and Traceroute feature. Use the Cisco Feature Navigator for details of device types, IOS, and IOS XR versions that support this feature. See <http://tools.cisco.com/ITDIT/CFN/jsp/index.jsp>

**Note**

If the PE devices are running unsupported IOS or IOS XR versions, that do not implement the MPLS Ping and Traceroute features, access circuit and VPN edge troubleshooting is performed, but no troubleshooting of the MPLS core is possible. In this scenario some core failures are reported as a Label Forwarding Information Base (LFIB) mismatch on a PE device. The LFIB mismatch is a symptom of the core failure, but the actual core failure cannot be diagnosed because core troubleshooting is not possible.

## 1.4 MDE Features

MDE troubleshooting and diagnostics supports the following three domains:

1. **Access Circuit**—Access circuit troubleshooting includes basic routing protocol troubleshooting (IOS only), basic layer 1 and layer 3 troubleshooting, and advanced layer 2 troubleshooting for ATM, Frame Relay, and Ethernet.
2. **MPLS VPN**—MPLS VPN troubleshooting supports MPLS/MP-BGP VPNs based on RFC2547. The following topologies are supported: hub and spoke, central services, full mesh, and intranet or extranet VPN.
3. **MPLS Core**—MPLS core troubleshooting supports data plane and control plane diagnostics. This is provided for all MPLS core and edge devices (including troubleshooting of any discovered MPLS Traffic Engineered Tunnels) running a Cisco IOS or Cisco IOS XR version with MPLS Operation, Administration, and Maintenance (OAM) support. For details of Cisco IOS, and Cisco IOS XR versions with MPLS OAM support, see the [“1.3 Supported Hardware, IOS, and IOS XR Versions” section on page 1-3](#).

MDE does not troubleshoot routing protocols within the core, IP connectivity within the core, and some variants of inter-Autonomous Systems (AS) or Carrier-Supporting-Carrier (CsC), specifically Inter AS option B and CsC where there is no LSP.