Minutes

DCC Sub-Group 1: Scope & Services Workstream

Minutes of Meeting 2 of the SSSG	From:	Ofgem	20 September 2010
	Date and time of Meeting:	16 Sept 2010, 10am	
	Location:	Ofgem	

1. Present

Dora Guzeleva (DG, Chair)	OFGEM
Rosie McGlynn	British Gas
Dave Crookes	EDF Energy
Neil Beckwith	ElectraLink Ltd
Jon Spence	Elexon
Dave Shattock	ENA (Morning only)
Alex Travell	Eon-UK
Jeremy Guard	First Utility
Jill Ashby	Gemserv
Paul Edwards	GTC
Richard Street	ICoSS
Richard Moore (pm only)	Ofcom
Alex Hurcombe	RWE Npower
Jamie Dunnett	Scottish Power
Mark Knight	SSE
Prashant Sharma	Utilita
Steve Nunnington	Xoserve
Jeff Studholme	AMO
Alastair Manson	ERA
Richard Pomroy (am only)	ENA
Tim Newton (PM only)	Eon
Nick Slocombe (PM only)	EDF Energy
Steve Burns (PM only)	ENA
Alan Claxton	ENA
Andy Evason (AE)	OFGEM
Colin Sawyer (CS)	OFGEM

2. Apologies

2.1. No apologies received

3. Agenda Item 1: Introductions, Context and Workplan

3.1. DG gave an introduction and stressed that wherever possible the group should identify benefits as well as costs.

4. Agenda Item 2: Minutes of SSSG1 and actions arising

4.1. Comments submitted in relation to the draft minutes were discussed and a revised version will be published. Actions were covered during the relevant sections of this meeting.

5. Agenda Items 3: DCC Scope

5.1. CS introduced the draft paper 'Option 1 – Initial Scope' that had been circulated prior to the meeting. In the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- References to Project NEXUS should be replaced with reference to the 'existing systems';
- The section 'DCC systems' should be 'DCC activities';
- In the DCC systems section, the last 2 sentences under the 'Scheduled data retrieval' heading should be placed under a new 'Network management' heading;
- In the 'Source of supplier registraction data' section, the 2nd paragraph should be moved to the 'Data managed by the DCC' section;
- In the CoS/CoT section, second sentence should be deleted;
- In the Settlements section the text in square brackets should be removed;

5.2. A discussion was held about Option 1. It was commented that:

- The functional scope of the option was seen to be internally consistent and a practical representation of the 'initial scope' as defined in the Prospectus;
- Interfaces and data flows that do not relate to the DCC would remain as at present;
- Two technical options were identified for interfaces to the DCC, namely:
  - 'Minimum change' option, where the technical interfaces to the DCC were designed to be as similar to existing market messaging solutions (i.e. DTN and iX)
  - New technology, whereby the technical interfaces were not constrained by legacy and might be implemented through a brand new interface using web services.
- As the format of DTN/iX messages will need to be modified and new flows added then costs will be incurred in the redevelopment of these legacy messaging systems. It may therefore be appropriate for DCC to develop interfaces utilising state-of-the-art technologies (e.g. web services).
- Under Option 1 the DCC would not hold any registration-related data and would obtain this from existing industry sources. However, it was observed that since the DCC would be billing suppliers and other users for services, it would need to keep historical transaction records and/or mapping of comms nodes (or meters) to suppliers in order to be able to enable invoice verification.

Registration

5.3. The intention is that Option 2 for the DCC will be broadly the same as Option 1 but with the DCC also being responsible for registration activities. A discussion was held to identify what was meant by registration and what the benefits would be of having DCC as the entity responsible for registration activities. The following observations were made:

- Registration is the process that maps a physical network exit point (i.e. MPAN or MPRN) to a metering system and to the registered supplier.
- Users have identified a number of issues with the existing registration processes – for example, inconsistent addresses for gas and electricty meters at the same property. It was noted that a DCC registration process that inter alia mapped a unique site ID / address to the electricity and gas meters and the associated suppliers at that location would provide significant benefits to the industry as a whole.
- In providing a registration service, the data that DCC would need to hold (and be recognised as being the 'industry master reference' for) would include:
  - Spatial reference (i.e. site ID and/or address) and MPAN/MPRN;
  - Identification of the registered supplier and its agent;
  - Meter device details;
  - Settlement details (e.g. HH/NHH/unmetered and profile class);
  - WAN unit network address;

- Customer type (e.g. priority customers) – it was noted that MPRS does not hold customer name and that xoserve's register only includes customer name for use by GT's in the event of incidents concerning safety. Accordingly it was postulated that DCC would not need to store customer names.
- It was not thought that DCC should record meter asset management events.

5.4. There was discussion around the options of DCC's registration system either (a) containing details related to sites with smart meters or (b) containing all sites: the latter option would require the migration of all registration data from DNO / IDNO, xoserve and iGT systems. It was suggested that the full benefits of streamlined customer switching would only be provided once the DCC registration system covered all meters.   It was indicated that Project Nexus may have assessed the benefits of centralised registration: xoserve will investigate and provide feedback at the next meeting.

5.5. Prior to Meeting 3, the Programme Team will circulate a draft profile for Option 2 in which DCC's scope will include registration from Go Live.

6. Agenda Items 4: WAN Service Levels and Requirements

Service levels

6.1. AE introduced the objective of this session as being to review and validate the table of service performance metrics that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

6.2. With regard to the 'target response' time for scheduled meter readings, it was recognised that some suppliers may wish to receive readings within a response time less than the 6hrs target shown. While 6hrs may be appropropriate for billing of domestic customers, daily reads for non-domestic customers may provide input to traders who are trying to close out positions ahead of the 5:30 gate closure for gas balancing. Accordingly suppliers may wish to select different levels of target response for different groups of customers with different prices applying.

6.3. A general observation was made that a number of services may need to be offered on either a programmed basis or 'on demand'.

6.4. Specific points raised in relation to individual services were as follows:

- 1.53: the volume of transactions will be influenced by the manner in which 'recovery' is handled by meters – coordination is required with the Smart Meter Design Group (SMDG)
- 1.54: the requirements for checking the meter master clock need to be coordinated with the SMDG
- 1.55 & 1.56: it was noted that alarms in respect of gas leaks need to have high performance standards
- 1.57: the size of firmware update files could be as high as 2MB. Generally these updates will be full software replacements so will occur around once a year and a target response of 6hrs would be appropriate
- 1.62: it was noted that for a CoS transaction it would only be supplier-related data that needs to be purged whereas for a CoT transaction it would be customer-related data
- 1.63: 'configuration' embraces a variety of transactions – ERA offered to provide a paper on tariffs and calendars that they had prepared
- 1.67: it was noted that the Prospectus assumes that PAYG transactions will be handled 'on the meter'. This issue is being discussed by SMDG but the draft entries in the table were a valid basis for proceeding
- 1.70: it was noted that around 15% of domestic customers are currently in PAYG mode

- 1.72: the introduction of dynamic tariffs (e.g. to reflect 4hr ahead wind forecasts) would considerably modify the requirements in this area

Scenarios

6.5. AE identified a set of 'dimensions' which would be used to characterise the WAN scenarios that are to be developed, namely availability, small message transit time, and large message performance.

6.6. Availability will be defined in terms of % of time that the communcations network is available but needs to avoid any possibility that specific 'islands' experience disproportionate levels of availability. The initial target values were expressed in terms of 'maximum time to repair' as these makes the numbers easier to understand, but the target level definitions also need to identify the maximum number of occurrences of downtime per annum per group of meters and at a national level. Target values of maximum time to repair of 24 hours (Low), 4 hours (Medium) and 30 minutes (High) were proposed.

6.7. Latency / Small message performance: this was defined as the maximum time for 'small' messages (perhaps 150 bytes of user and security data) to go from the meter to being available for sending to the intended recipient from the DCC, including any queing and processing times within the DCC. Target values of 60s (Low), 5s (Medium) and 0.1s (High) were proposed. The medium figure was based on the 'On demand' time for round trip communications with meters. The Low figure was selected to provide a significantly lower figure than the Medium case. The High value represents a higher value of performance to support Smart Grid near real time monitoring requirements. No requirements have been currently identified for the High performance level, but information will be sought on the cost of providing this capability to understand the cost impact if this level of performance is required in the future for Smart Grid purposes.

6.8. Large file transfer performance: this was defined as the time to transfer a 500Kbyte file from the DCC to the meter. The performance targets were identified as 600s (Low), 120s (Medium), 10s (High), based on information from the previous meeting. Having identified in the previous discussion that files up to 2MB would be regularly encountered, in discussion the target values were modified to 3,600s (L), 600s (M) and 60s (H).

6.9. Two other candidate dimensions were also identified, namely:

- Contract length: to reflect the investment period and also the need to avoid technology obsolescence;

- Data volumes: to take account of options where the cost is affected by data volumes.

6.10.   Other parameters identified by the meeting as being important when requesting information include message volumes (for setting expectations in terms of loading and throughput purposes) and coverage. It was noted that single communications technologies may not be able to provide 100% coverage of UK premises and therefore that it will be important to ask service providers what % of the number of UK premises the provider's core telecommunications solution can cover and how they would propose that the remaining premises are to be connected.

6.11.   It was explained that the next step would be to combine the various dimensions and target values to identify a smll number of scanarios for service providers to cost. An initial draft of the relevant information request would be presented at the next meeting.

7. Actions

7.1.xoserve to investigate whether an assessment of the benefits of central registration was included in the preparatory work undertaken for Project Nexus.

7.2.The Programme Team to prepare a profile for Option 2 and circulate ahead of the next meeting.

7.3.ERA to provide its paper on Smart Metering Tariffs and Calendars.

7.4.The Programme Team to update and re-issue the service performance matrix and draft a set of scenarios for discussion.

7.5.All to review availability of information relating to percentage of customers that contact a supplier within the first month of a smart meter being installed.

7.6.All to review the slide describing the dimensions to be used in describing the WAN scenarios (submission to dcg@ofgem.gov.uk by lunchtime on 21 Sept).

7.7.Action carried forward from Meeting 1: ENA to provide a description of the 'high case' scenario.