

## **Standing Data Formats Group**

22 June 2011

Electricity Authority

### **MINUTES**

#### **Members present**

Nick Bennetts	Chair
Danny McManamon	Contact Energy
Stefan Kirkwood	Energy Market Services (EMS)
Jason Christini-Crawford	Genesis Energy
Helen Youngman	Meridian Energy
Zane Khan	Mighty River Power
David Hill	Powerco

#### **Also in attendance**

Chrissy Burrows	Consultant
Ron Beatty	Manager Market Operations, Electricity Authority
Michal Henderson	Assistant Adviser, Electricity Authority

**The meeting opened at 9 a.m.**

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## **1. Apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair noted apologies from Tony Ahern (Arc Innovations); Alex Nisbet (Orion New Zealand Limited); Joan Purdie (Vector) and Peter Smith (Northpower).

## **2. Welcome**

- 2.1 The Chair welcomed the group and outlined the purpose of the meeting – to try to finalise the data dictionary as much as possible.

## **3. EIEP 1 Discussion**

- 3.1 The group went through a number of issues received by email from members and documented by the consultant. It was noted that four members had supplied issues for EIEP1, only one of these being a distributor. It was further noted that this meeting had only one distributor in attendance, so not all EIEP1 issues may have been addressed. The comments below are replicated from the document presented with the resulting responses from the group

### *Required information for file*

- 3.1.1 Distributors not supplying EIEP 1 files, in some cases this is because there is no need to supply them e.g. GXP priced networks. Whilst it was suggested that regulating the requirement for this file should remove this issue it should be noted that regulation can only apply where an EIEP is relevant to use.

- 3.1.2 The practice by some participants to include Meter leasing charges in the EIEP1 file makes it very cumbersome to verify invoices (meter charges have to be manually removed). It was noted that the regulating of the content and the use of this file should remove this issue.

The group agreed that regulation of EIEP1 file would also apply to the required business rules. This would ensure that files with excess information would be deemed to be an incorrect file and they would have to be replaced.

- 3.1.3 The inclusion of NHH and HH in same file resulting in HH data that must be removed before invoice verification can be completed. (It is noted in other documentation that this EIEP is designed to cover both NHH and HH metered ICPs?). Recommendation that the group clearly define the use of EIEP1 and EIEP3. The group agreed that NHH and HH should be separate files defined by data type.

The SDFG response was that business rules are to instruct that HH and NHH files are to be separate, and that appropriate headers are used to alert to file content

- 3.1.4 Participants not providing clarification in the header as to whether files are 'as-billed' or 'normalised' (currently just has ICPMMNM). Recommendation that RM normalised be ICPMRRM and as billed normalised ICPMMNM.

The group advised that the headers to be used are;

- (i) As billed = ICPMMAB
- (ii) As billed normalised = ICPMMNM
- (iii) RM normalised = ICPMMRM.

3.1.5 Information was provided by a Distributor to the SDFG regarding how the report month field was being used; “*We presently report the month that the detail line is billed for and we intend to change this to align with EIEP1 protocols and report the month the report is run for.*” Several distributors currently divide the report month based on detail lines rather than report month. It was recommended that this be defined clearly in the business rules.

The group discussed possible methods for dealing with this and how to make it consistent with reconciliation information. Several distributors are including more than one month into the report month, which is inconsistent with the file format. The group decided to reword the EIEP so that the month a report is run for, should align with the month in the header. The consultant is to discuss this further with the Manager Market Operations.

3.1.6 An issue that comes up from time to time is management of prior period events, e.g. reversal and re-bill after a missed multiplier is found. The consultant had requested that members bring examples to the meeting of different scenarios. (*no samples were provided at meeting*).

- (a) This issue will be dealt with in the consultation paper.
- (b) The Powerco member raised questions around reversals, prior period corrections and how reversals will be re-billed.
- (a) The group advised that prior corrections can be run anytime but must have the correct flag in the header. The Contact member recommended that for prior corrections, examples should be added into the business rules. The Powerco member suggested that for prior period corrections the read status should be ‘RV’.

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**Action point**

- The Contact member will provide some examples of prior corrections to the group and the consultant will include them in the business rules.
  - Consultant to discuss appropriate wording with Manager Market Operations for inclusion in data dictionary.
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*Requests on trader to manipulate files*

3.1.7 Where a customers “move in” date does not line up with the registry information, some distributors request that the trader fill in the gaps. This may come about as a switch is processed earlier than the original date provided. Does this result from switches as well as from changes to “Inactive” and “Active” status?

One member had recommended that the group clarify a wash up procedure either via standardisation or through clear instruction in the business rules. It was queried by a member why the distributor requires the gaps to be filled in.

The group discussed the problem where the distributor does not gain information from the registry. They queried whether it is worth re-writing a file for participants whose systems are not capable for dealing with processes with which the industry operates. The group decided that it is not up to the SDFG to deal with this type of issue.

3.1.8 A customer moving out on say the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month and new one doesn't move in until the 1<sup>st</sup> of the next month, the distributor requires zeros input to fill in the gaps for the 7 days between the two dates. Another group member has commented on this as follows:

It's not clear which report format this is referring to, if it's as-billed then gaps are appropriate e.g. if there was no customer to bill at a property. For as-billed normalised (and RM normalised) if the ICP remains active throughout the month on the Registry then there shouldn't be any gaps (eg one line for F days one line for V where site has a single meter and no network price change has occurred during the month)

- (a) There was a discussion around whether there will ever be a legitimate gap in billing where a residence is empty between consumers. The Powerco member asked whether it is possible to have an as billed file as 0. There's no transitional 'inactive' status.
- (b) The consultant pointed out that, as it stands, there will be gaps in data e.g. period between tenants. However, with smart meters this may become less of a problem because retailers will move to a quicker disconnection time frame from the point that the consumer vacates the property. It was suggested that the RM Normalised file is the most appropriate file as this contained complete data sets whereas the as billed filed only included data that was not billed. The group decided that the Powerco member's issue cannot be addressed here.
- (c) EIEP 1 should reflect as billed to the customer. A place holder was put here for later discussion on billing types.
- (d) The consultant reminded the group that its purpose is to advise the Authority on what decision to make, and if they are unsure issues can be included in the consultation paper. The consultant agreed to circulate the issue to wider group for feedback.

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**Action point**

- The consultant will use the comment "Additional consumption start date for 'as-billed' preamble to read – where the site has been vacant energised the date should be the start date of the new customer contract" and add that there may be gaps between the start and end date.
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- (e) The Chair raised a question over whether this comment is accurate – should it read 'start read' rather than 'start date' so as not to be misleading?
- (f) The EMS member suggested that, in the preamble, change 'UB' to mean unbilled during report month.

*Improvements that could be made*

- 3.1.9 Include provision for electricity flow direction in detail lines.
- (a) The group decided to add provision for this at the end of the file format and add to the business rules “for prior period connections the read status should be ‘RV” .
- 3.1.10 O/M flags - the possibility for example of a particular field such as ‘Network price/tariff rate’. The retailer if for example are sending RM normalised don't need to send this to the distributor, but it would be appropriate for the distributor to always send this back to the retailer. “O” for the retailer to distributor, “M” for the distributor to retailer. This may only be relevant where a file supports an invoice.
- (a) The Powerco member queried whether this level of detail is necessary. The group decided that too much information is better than not enough information.
- (b) The consultant suggested parking this query as it should come up again in the functional specifications discussion.
- 3.1.11 Should events be reported in a certain (sequential or “logical”) order and should precedence be given to reversal events; i.e. not report the reversal before the re-bill? If so what should the hierarchy be?
- (a) The EMS member thought yes, there should be some reversal sequence. The Powerco member stated that it makes no difference.
- (b) The group decided that it wasn't important.
- 3.1.12 Lines reporting variable consumption would it assist to also have fixed days populated?
- (a) Group decided this was not an issue.
- 3.1.13 Consider that a reversal of a previously VA event be reported as RV?
- (a) Group advised that status should be RV.
- 3.1.14 Is there a need for more concise rules around fixed and variable?
- Fixed – time (e.g. daily fixed charge) or capacity based.
- Variable – kVA demand/energy/power factor.
- (a) The group agreed to include this in the functional specification.
- 3.1.15 Is the customer number/consumer number useful? If they aren't other fields could be included in the file.
- (a) Group suggested status quo.
- 3.1.16 For consistency should the unit of measure table have “Day” or “Days” (some misinterpretation results)? The report rule has “Days”. One group member has agreed and suggests this should be “Days”.
- (a) This is just for naming. The group decided ‘days’ was appropriate.
- 3.1.17 Fixed charges - what about the literal fixed charge (one number for the billing period or month determined by the distributor, not based on number of days or capacity etc...) in the

case of as billed files. Could possibly be divvied up by DAYS, but worth thinking about. Probably rare if not ever encountered.

(a) The group decided this is a one-off situation that can be dealt with in business rules.

3.1.18 As some parties include different levels of information in files there is a need over and above the mandatory and optional fields to state the minimum required information in a file by either party. Group member supplied following as example:

*“When a retailer sends the EIEP1 to the distributor, at bare minimum the ICP, F or V with the appropriate content code or tariff mapping with the appropriate units can be sent for the distributor to bill. However for the distributor file to be entirely useful, it needs the charges as well as maybe other mappings as compulsory. If the distributor sends the bare minimum such as what the retailer sends them, the file is pretty much useless.”*

The consultant recommended that the group consider some mandatory provision for what is used by either party, e.g. format with the least amount of information to interpret it. This was parked for later discussion.

#### *Formatting issues*

3.1.19 Network price/Tariff code description, the 50 character limit is exceeded in some cases.

(a) Group agreed that this signalled that a larger field was required and instructed that the character limit be changed to 75.

3.1.20 Start/End dates do not match the number of days (e.g. 01/09/2010 – 01/10/2010 with number of days as 30).

(a) The group queried whether both are needed decided it is possible to have a start and end date with different day count. It should however match what is in the registry.

(b) It was decided that the definition in the data dictionary would provide the answer to this.

3.1.21 Network charge dollar amount includes commas, commas should be prohibited within fields.

(a) Addresses have commas. *(Group discussion moved on therefore did not reach a final conclusion)*

3.1.22 The Powerco member raised the question of why all the unique file identifications are a number; the Powerco system accommodates alphanumeric and not just numbers.

(a) The EMS member noted that the RM functional specifications state that it has to be a number. The intention was for it to be a time stamp.

(b) The group decided that there is no point narrowing it to numbers, when character gives more flexibility. They agreed that it will be mandatory and alphanumeric (characters).

*The Manager Market Operations joined the group at 10:40am.*

#### **4. Other points for discussion**

##### *Billing and reconciliation reporting options*

- 4.1 The Manager Market Operations referred to the EIEP draft discussion paper:
  - 4.1.1 There still remains the need to make a decision on the appropriate version for the purposes of the functional specification. It has been suggested that more detail is preferred as this is a complex area and needs clarification to be clear.
  - 4.1.2 The recent consultation paper “More standardisation of distribution arrangements” gives a version of the definition that contains subtly less information than the paper presented to the group in May 10 from Rod Crone. Attached to this discussion paper are these two versions for the group to evaluate and decide what would be considered sufficient information.
  - 4.1.3 Appendix 1 is a more detailed definition as written by Rod Crone, whereas Appendix 2 is a more simple definition.
  - 4.1.4 A couple of points that need to be taken into consideration when making a decision on these;
    - (a) As these EIEPs are going to be regulated the requirement is that information that relates to each individual EIEP needs to be part of the business rules or specifications of the EIEP that it pertains to.
    - (b) Whilst the functional specifications are written for an audience that should know the different components that make up the format, the SDFG must allow for new entrants that may not be entirely familiar with the terms. There may be an official definition set by the Authority, so the definition arrived at for the functional specification needs to reflect that definition. (Manager Market Operations can keep the group informed of this possibility)
- 4.2 The consultant introduced a discussion on the definitions of “as-billed”, “as-billed normalised” and “RM Normalised”. She advised that the Standardisation Projects consultation paper was aiming for the standardised term, “as billed” to be the only method used.
- 4.2.1 The discussion around the definition of ‘as billed’ was then taken up by the Manager Market Operations.
  - (a) He advised that this depends on what is required under Use of System agreements. Often Use of System Agreements are silent on the reporting of vacant consumption under an “as billed” methodology. Traders have interpreted the use of “As Billed” methodology for line charges as a ‘user pays’ arrangement. The group agreed that the definitions need to be very clear about what this means.
  - (b) The Genesis member asked whether the label should be ‘electricity supplied’ or ‘as billed’ as there is confusion between these in the industry. He noted that the current definition is quite clear. The Manager Market Operations said that it depends on what the industry wants.

- (c) The Manager Market Operations noted that consultation is out at the moment regarding 'RM normalised'. The Authority's intention is to regulate one method, however given the choice to opt out of this if agreed bilaterally between parties.
- (d) The Manager Market Operations confirmed that the SDFG should arrive at the definition in the EIEPs. The group does not have to wait for standardisation project to create definitions for all three terms. These are already defined.
- (e) The Genesis member noted that RM normalised definitions used in the standardisation document are not correct. He will provide the appropriate definition to the Consultant.
- (f) There was a discussion about the difference between the definitions – what is billed and what is just electricity that has been consumed.
- (g) The Manager Market Operations noted that 'as billed' can be interpreted two different ways. The EMS member suggested that 'as supplied' is the best for everyone, and parties can determine for themselves how that information is used.
- (h) The Consultant suggested that the group define these terms for the purposes of the EIEP documents, which will help the group to arrive at a decision and stay with it.
- (i) The Meridian member pointed out that if the industry changes definitions later then it will be confusing. The Manager Market Operations noted that whatever is decided by the SDFG will go out for consultation anyway so the group can review feedback later.
- (j) The group should make a clear indication of their preference. They agreed that the body of 'as billed' is correct but it may need tidying up. The group did not support one method of billing type for EIEP files.
- (k) The Powerco member noted that this is an important point. It may be worthwhile having a discussion on how these definitions actually work, in the context of the standardisation project. The project collected information from all distributors and retailers; however it appears that this information may not be accurate or representative. The consultation process should rectify this, and the SDFG has the aim to ensure that these definitions are correct and workable.

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**Action point**

- The Genesis member will provide information on the correct definition of 'RM normalised' to the Consultant.
  - The Consultant will review the definitions, discuss with the Manager Market Operations and distribute them to the group.
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## 5. Functional Specifications Discussion

- 5.1 The Consultant discussed her approach to the functional specifications document. The intention was to address the highlighted comments in the document and not to go through each point at this meeting. The consultant requested that members provide her with their marked up versions as soon as possible.

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**Action point**

- Members will go through functional specifications document in detail and provide any additional comments to the Consultant as soon as possible.

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- 5.2 The group addressed the points that the Consultant raised for clarification throughout the document. These will be amended and distributed to group next week for members to review the document.

- 5.3 There was particular discussion around the following points:

### 5.3.1 EIEP 6

- (a) There was a version of EIEP 6 out for consultation which was split into two – one for faults and one for service requests. The Contact member suggested that this be implemented. The format is very large and not widely used, so it could be advantageous to have them separated into two formats.
- (b) The Consultant noted the urgent need to have some direction as to which version of EIEP6 was going to go out for consultation.
- (c) This EIEP deals with information flow between distributors and retailers, which is based on a contractual arrangement. It is questionable whether distributors even use these formats – they usually know about unplanned outages anyway.
- (d) Each distributor has its own set of closure codes which need to be accommodated for. The Contact member suggested that there be standardised closure codes.

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**Action point**

- The Contact member and the Consultant will liaise on EIEP 6.

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- 5.3.2 The Consultant advised that the standardisation paper discussed the making of EIEP5, 6 and 12 mandatory. The consultation paper from this group would discuss making EIEP1, 2 and 3 mandatory. Due to the timing between the Standardisation Projects submissions and the release of this consultation paper there could be some confusion as to which EIEPs are going to be mandatory. The Manager Market Operations agreed to alert the consultant when submissions would be published.

- 5.3.3 The consultant was also unsure of the Mandatory/Optional fields in all the EIEPS as the original versions that contained these were not available. The Contact member advised that he had copies of these and would forward them to the consultant to update the functional specifications.

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- Action point**
- The Contact member will provide old EIEPs to the Consultant to clarify which are mandatory and optional.
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#### 5.3.4 EIEP 11

- (a) There was discussion around whether this should be deleted. None of the members use it currently, but the Contact member raised the point that there has been a lot of work done in this area so it may be worth retaining for future possible use.
- (b) The Genesis member queried whether it can be removed and archived. It is currently included, but is only voluntary.
- (c) The group decided to leave EIEP11 in and tidy it up. The consultant will reduce the file format down to a more manageable level as all detail files are duplicates (apart from 6 fields). It will be the header that can then determine the file type.

#### 5.3.5 Header for all EIEP file formats –

- (a) The header should be the same for every file format. The group decided to make it consistent with the registry and RM functional specifications. With the exception that each EIEP file will still have the header to start the document as some of these are going to be regulated files.

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- Action point**
- The Consultant to make amendments to EIEP1 as per discussions.
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*(Ron Beatty left the meeting at 12.20pm)*

*Lunch at 12:20pm – 1pm.*

## 6. Data Dictionary

6.1 The group continued to work on the data dictionary, reviewing the various definitions.

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- Action point**
- Some definitions were highlighted and will be further reviewed by:
    - The Consultant;
    - the Manager Market Operations,
    - the Mighty River Power member;
    - the Orion member.
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## 7. Next meeting: August 2011.

7.1 Meeting closed at 4:10pm.