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CTG Meeting 09

10:30 – 13:30, 20 December 2023

CTG_09_2011– Meeting Headlines

Decision, Discussion and Information Items

1. Previous Meeting's Minutes (For Decision)

The Communications Transition Group (CTG) reviewed the minutes from the CTG 08 meeting including proposed amendments and **APPROVED** them as final.

2. Actions Log Update (For Information) (**RED**)

The CTG **NOTED** the actions log update and **AGREED** to close all actions marked as Propose to Close with the **EXCEPTION** of CTG08CON/02, which remains open due to ambiguities around VMO2 2G contract termination date and post-contract end support clauses.

3. DCC Update: CH&N Programme (For Information) (**AMBER**)

DCC presented an overview of the overall plan for CH&N Transition to 4G Comms Hubs. The DCC provided updates on its programme risks and issues noting that all areas are green with the exception of Test Phases, Order Management System (OMS), and Business Readiness and Transition which are at Amber.

Vodafone presented an overview on the 4G coverage assurance approach and will provide a Coverage Assurance Report in June 2024 for the August 2024 **Plan on a Page (POAP)** milestone. Vodafone noted their Coverage Assurance activities centred around a dual modelling and measurement approach, which included a data gathering phase in early 2024 involving real world testing with Toshiba's 4G Comm Hubs.

DCC reminded members DCC had organised a Mesh Workshop for 29 November.

DCC provided an update on VMO2 3G Sunsetting and noted that the current VMO2 proposal has identified impact on two service measures out of 64: Meter Firmware downloads and CAT3 Alerts. DCC advised this is currently only a draft position and DCC is still aiming to have services aligned with current measures, recognising that performance measures are SEC mandated requirements. CTG members raised concerns with the information provided, including if cost reductions should be offered if VMO2 could not deliver against their contractual obligations. The CTG requested the DCC return to CTG when contract negotiations have progressed further.

The CTG **NOTED** these updates.

4. DESNZ Update: 4G Comms Hub Exchange Visit Finance – Cost Recovery (For Information) (**GREEN**)

DESNZ provided an update on potential options for cost recovery of 4G Comms Hub installation and reminded members of three options previously presented to CTG: (1) recover the costs from sites at

which replacement of 2G/3G to 4G had taken place; (2) recover based on market share; (3) recover from sites where either a replacement has taken place or is needed. DESNZ advised CTG that Option 1 could disincentivise suppliers to undertake early replacements and was not deemed compatible with a model under which costs are not financed. DESNZ noted Option 2 is the current proposal, with costs to be recovered through DCC Fixed Charges using a form of market share, which is consistent with the treatment of other DCC WAN related costs, and occurring on a Great Britain-wide scale.

DESNZ noted they would release a consultation on the proposed options once previous financing consultations had closed and further noted that the DESNZ current thinking was for the Secretary of State to determine the methodology for cost being recovered.

The CTG **DISCUSSED** the update, **PROVIDED** initial views and agreed to provide a response to DESNZ post-meeting.

DESNZ asked CTG to discuss the potential role of CTG in forecasting the number of CH-only replacements that might take place. CTG **NOTED** that forecasting would involve the sharing of commercially sensitive information and **AGREED** this activity should not take place through the CTG.

5. CTG Risks and Issues Register – monthly update (For Information) (RED)

The CTG **NOTED** changes made to the Risks and Issues Register, **REQUESTED** an additional risk or assumption be included in the register on 4G CH dimensions and **AGREED** to the changes and baselining of the draft as V8.0.

6. Draft Overall Transition Plan (For Information) (AMBER)

Engage provided an overview of the Supplier Readiness session held on 8 November and highlighted challenges raised by participants, including access to consumer premises, ensuring no existing defects on 4G CHs provided by DCC for IPV and mass deployment, uncertainty on cost implications, service dates, 4G coverage and performance, and skill requirements for installers/engineers, and having an overall comms strategy in place for consumers.

The CTG **NOTED** the updates and further **NOTED** changes to the Overall Transition Plan (OTP) and POAP, which will be presented at CTG_10 in December for Baselining.

7. CH Exchange Skills/ Competences (GREEN)

The Chair presented a paper on CH Exchange Skills and Competencies, which would be provided to the Retail Energy Code (REC) Issues Group on 4 December 2023. The Chair noted that initial consultations indicated that changes to the REC are unlikely to be required.

The CTG expressed dissatisfaction with the level of clarity around the issue of fully qualified Metering Engineers being required for Comms Hub installations which they believed was implied.

The Chair **REQUESTED** CTG Members review the REC Skills and Competencies paper and submit any comments by 25 November, following which the paper will be finalised and shared with the REC Issues Group.

8. AOB (GREEN)

Factsheets

The Chair informed members that the Factsheets will be updated to include a small amendment regarding 4G CH dimensions and issued to members for approval.

Quarterly Finance Forum (QFF)

A member raised the challenges at the most recent DCC Quarterly Finance Forum meeting regarding the assumptions associated with the 4G CH&N programme and how they impact cost. The CTG **AGREED** that the assumptions should be shared with CTG to validate.

Asset Life Project

SECAS provided an update on previous discussion regarding the Asset Life project and presented a draft scope of the project. The CTG **DISCUSSED** the project objective and raised potential issues with the value that could be added by carrying out independent cost modelling and the feasibility of a street-by-street CH replacement strategy.

CTG further **DISCUSSED** the need for further investigation into cost modelling and benefit analysis of the overall programme. The Chair and SECAS to discuss next steps for the Asset Life project.

DCC Training

The DCC highlighted training it is planning to roll-out on CH, and asked if CTG members would like to be involved in the development of the training packages. CTG requested more details and DCC agreed to share further details about the training via SECAS including an email address to respond to. The CTG **NOTED** the update.

Next Meeting Date: 11 December 2023