Pipeline Operator Standards of Service Query Management

Operational Guidelines

An ancillary document to the iGT UNC

February 2015
Version 2.~~1~~2

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Change history	
August 2008	6.1(b) 3rd bullet: suppliers changed to Pipeline User 6.2 Use of SCOGES made optional Changes made to query template (details in Excel workbook)
August 2010 DRAFT v. 1.2	Change to bulk queries section to limit varied interpretation. Additional query rejection reasons Further guidelines for communicating process where site visits are required Addition to reporting template to permit free-text commentary
October 2010 v. 2.0	Further amendments made to draft to reflect feedback from affected parties. This version presented to iGT UNC panel for consideration and at the November 2010 Panel it was agreed to implement the changes in the February 2011 release of the iGT UNC.
February 2015 v2.1	Changes made via iGT073S to ensure industry parties are fully aware of the treatment of queries following the implementation of IGT039.
March 2017 v2.2	Further change identified as part of the iGT086 work to recognise that the references to Transporter Agency change to CDSP. This will also take effect as of the implementation of iGT039

1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the high level principles of operation for the management of queries. The successful application of its approach is dependant on a series of defined responsibilities.

It also sets out the principles of operation of a Standards of Service (SoS) regime for queries, the scope of queries included in such a regime, together with details of the reporting and calculation of performance.

Following the implementation of IGT039, a number of necessary consequential changes have been identified to this document. These changes have been made to ensure all parties are clear of the scope, principals of operation and performance standards associated to queries handled by the Pipeline Operator and to ensure appropriate references are made for those Operational queries that are facilitated by the ~~Transporter Agency~~Central Data Service Provider (CDSP) on behalf of the Pipeline Operator.

To clarify, the arrangements established within this revised Ancillary Document will superseed those set out in version 2.0 of the 'Pipeline Operator Standards of Service Query Management' Ancillary Document.

2   SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

The SoS requires certain Planned Performance Levels (PPLs) to be achieved for the resolution of Pipeline Operator queries

2.1   Query Definitions

A substantiated challenge is a query which contains all mandatory information, and where appropriate, additional optional and desirable information. It will detail what action the Pipeline User has taken to conclude that the query should be raised and what action the Pipeline User expects the Pipeline Operator to take.

The Query Type and Query Code within the query template will be determined by the Pipeline Operator (see Appendix 7). The highlevel categories for queries will be:

- Operational Queries:

  o   Asset; and/or
  o   Address

- Invoice Queries

2.1.1 Pipeline Operator Queries

An **Operational Query** is a reasoned and substantiated challenge by a Pipeline User as to the validity of the following:

- Those Portfolio related data items in the Supply Point Register that have been originated by the Pipeline Operator;

And/or

- Those data items provided or confirmed by the Pipeline User where they can demonstrate that these have been misrepresented by the Pipeline Operator

And which is intended to require action from the Pipeline Operator to amend incorrect and/or missing data and if necessary correct any related information which is derived from that data.

An **Invoice Query** is defined within the iGT UNC. This will include:

- Those relevant related data items that have been originated by the Pipeline Operator.

  And/or

- Those data items provided or confirmed by the Pipeline User where they can demonstrate these may have been misrepresented by the Pipeline Operator

  And/or

- Any amounts, including adjustments, where the Pipeline User can demonstrate that such charges have not been properly calculated in accordance with the Transportation Statement or Metering Charges Statement.

    And/or

- Those invoice documents, supporting data, remittance advices or payments where the Pipeline User can demonstrate have not been received by the specified due date.

And which is intended to require action from the Pipeline Operator to amend incorrect and or missing data and if necessary correct any related information, which is derived from that data.

2.2 Query Categories Excluded

Where Operational queries are facilitated by the ~~Transporter Agency~~ CDSP on behalf of the Pipeline Operator, the Standards of Service and treatment of Operational queries will adhere to those which are recognised and applied under the larger Transporter Uniform Network Code (TPD Section S (4.7 and Annex S-3)).

Query types and query formats are available in documentation referenced in UNC Related Document TPD '~~ ~~Standards of Service Query Management Operational Guidelines v6.0', with further operational guidance and support available on the ~~Transporter Agency~~CDSP website, detailed below~~;~~:
http://www.xoserve.com/index.php/our-systems/contact-management/contact-management-service-guides/ ~~http://www.xoserve.com/index.php/our-systems/cm/contact-management-service-guides/Contact Management – Service Guides « Xoserve~~

3   PRINCIPLES OF OPERATION

For the SoS to operate for Query Management, there is a requirement for both the Pipeline Operators and Pipeline Users to adhere to a set of principles and supporting business rules. This section states the principles and rules which will apply to the SoS regime.

3.1   General – Query Submission & Receipt

Pipeline Operators can best resolve queries when they are clearly specified and contain the necessary information for allocation to the service provider best suited to resolve them.

To help the Pipeline Operators provide an effective and efficient service, the following principles have been identified that will apply to the SoS regime.

a) For the purposes of the SoS, queries will be "counted" at supply point or meter point level for Operational queries, and at invoice item level for Invoice queries. Queries will be counted by each query type. If there are different query types which relate to the same MPRN, they will be counted seperately.

b) In good faith Pipeline Users should aim not to submit "double" queries and Pipeline Operators will seek to identify instances of such submissions (a "double" query is one which is duplicated or replicated).

c) Pipeline Users shall provide the appropriate mandatory information which the Pipeline Operator's require to properly resolve the query within the Query Initiation QTI file, or equivalent, as defined in the relevant Pipeline Operator's Network Code. In order for the query to be accepted for measurement (within the SoS), Pipeline Users will be required to provide a minimum set of mandatory data items in use at that time. Where possible, Pipeline Users should also provide further optional and desirable information i.e customer contact telephone number, to assist the resolution of the query and specifically the Pipeline Users view of what constitutes resolution. To assist the Pipeline Operator in investigating the query, where the Pipeline User challenges the accuracy of the data held by the Pipeline Operator, the query should include evidence demonstrating that the data held by the Pipeline Operator is incorrect. This will help to determine between suspected incorrect data and known incorrect data and will assist the Pipeline Operator in resolving the query satisfactorily.

d) An initial handshake file (automated e-mail or equivalent), will be sent from the Pipeline Operator to the Pipeline user, including a copy of the original query (if e-mailed), to confirm receipt. The Pipeline Operator will respond thereafter, per Section 3.2 (c), using the Query Response QTR file, or equivalent, as defined in the relevant Pipeline Operator's Network Code, either accepting or rejecting the query. The response file will include the Query Type and Reference Number assigned by the Pipeline Operator. If rejected, the rejection reason will be contained within the QTR file, or equivalent, as defined in the relevant Pipeline Operator's Network Code, in line with the categories in Appendix 7.3. However at the discretion of a Pipeline Operators, they may telephone a Pipeline User to resolve a particular issue rather than rejecting it.

e) For the avoidance of doubt, all communications relating to a specific query must include the original query reference number where this was provided.

f) Measurement within the SoS will only apply to those queries issued to a Pipeline Operator using the agreed mechanism. This template will be submitted electronically via email, or other agreed method. As a contingency fax may be used.

g) Pipeline Users shall submit their queries in a balanced and a regular manner on a reasonable endeavours basis, so as not to disrupt the Query Management process and in order to assist the Pipeline Operator to efficiently resolve queries. However, it should be noted that invoice queries may occur in larger numbers during periods when invoices are received.

h) Pipeline Operators will provide an appropriate and up-to-date contact point for query submissions (according to query type if required), including telephone/fax numbers and e-mail addresses, for each type of query included in the SoS regime. The contact information will be stored centrally and can be located on the Pipeline Operator UNC website, or will be provided by the Representative.   The content will follow that detailed in Appendix 7.4. It is the Pipeline Operator's responsibility to ensure the latest and most contact accurate information is provided and stored.

i) For queries requiring additional information in excess of that set out in 3.1(c), Pipeline Operators will request the information. The query will be closed after 5 business days if no further information is provided, with notification of closure being sent to the Pipeline User.

j) The start time will be the working day on which the query was received with a cut off time of 16:00 hours unless this is a non business day, in which case, it will be the immediate following business day.

k) A Pipeline Operator shall provide adequate information to enable efficient query identification by the Pipeline User. As a minimum (where originally provided by the Pipeline User) this shall include:
   * Meter Point Reference
   * Originator's Name and contact details
   * Supply Start date
   * Pipeline User Name
   * Query Type and Reference Number
   * Invoice Number (for invoice queries only)

l) All parties should ensure that good practice is maintained in the operation of the SoS regime. Particular consideration should be given to ensuring that queries are handed over when staff are absent or leave. This may include the use of shared mailboxes.

m) Where email is used to raise a query, the subject line should clearly identify that a query is being raised (for example "SoS Query", or "QTI Query"). This allows the Pipeline Operator to identify the email quickly, and to prioritise accordingly.

n) Pipeline Operators will endeavour to provide regular updates to the relevant Pipeline User(s) where a query is particularly complex or long-running.

N.B. For invoice queries both Pipeline Users and Pipeline Operators should refer to Part G of the iGT UNC in conjunction with this SoS Document.

3.2 Query Investigation and Resolution

Successful achievement of the planned performance levels (PPLs) will depend on a Pipeline Operator's ability to investigate and resolve queries. There is a recognition that in many cases there is a need for a joint and collaborative approach to the operational resolution of queries. The following provide further details of the regime which will support the previously stated principles.

a) The Pipeline Operators will endeavour to provide a reasonable resolution to all accepted queries and a query may be deemed resolved if investigation demonstrates that no corrective action is required.

b) The parties will make reasonable endeavours to resolve a query.

c) Upon receipt of a query, the Pipeline Operator will have a further assessment period of 2 business days in which to determine whether any additional information in excess of that set out in 3.1(c) is required. Where further information is required, the Pipeline Operator will request the information from the Pipeline User.

d) As much information as possible should be provided at the initial query stage. This will prevent queries from being closed too early by the Pipeline Operator and is particularly important when metering information stored by the Pipeline Operator is being challenged by more up-to-date information. Where this is the case, this should be supported by evidence if possible so that it is clear that the query is a 'challenge' to existing information rather than simply a request for confirmation of existing details.

e) Pipeline Operators shall endeavour to respond to the Pipeline User in accordance with the Performance Standards as defined in Section 6.

f) In some circumstances, there may be a need for the relevant Pipeline User(s) to complete corrective actions or provide information before the query can be resolved. In such cases the relevant Pipeline User(s) will take this action. The query will be closed after 5 business days if no further information is provided to the Pipeline Operator, with notification of closure being sent to the Pipeline User.

g) Should the Query be closed per 3.2 (e), the Pipeline User should endeavour to re-raise the query.

h) In some circumstances, there may be a need for the Pipeline Operator to request further information or corrective action from a 3rd party before the query can be resolved. In such cases the relevant Pipeline Operator will take this action. It is acknowledged that this may lengthen the time taken for query resolution and in such instances the Pipeline Operator will notify the Pipeline User that the query has been passed onto a 3rd party in order to manage their customers expectations.

i) The resolution of queries will be communicated to the Pipeline User by the Pipeline Operator electronically via the Query Final QTF file, or equivalent, as defined in the relevant Pipeline Operator's Network Code. Where there is an associated Pipeline User, they will also receive this information.

j) Where queries raised do require amendment to Pipeline Operator data, the Pipeline Operator will update the information on their systems within 2 business days of the resolution QTF file, or equivalent being sent to the Pipeline User.

4 HIGH VOLUME QUERIES

There may be a number of reasons why a User wishes to submit a large number of queries at once, for example as a result of a data cleansing exercise. These queries which could either be high volume, or complex (or both).

In such cases, the User will endeavour to notify the Pipeline Operator in advance of submission, by means of bi-lateral discussion betwen. This may take place between escalation contacts, but this is not a necessity.

Where Pipeline User and Pipeline Operator agree in advance, a number of queries submitted at once will be known as a Query Project

Query Projects are:

- High volume, complex, or both at once
- Often triggered internally to the Pipeline User (e.g. from data cleansing) rather than from end user contact
- Discussed and agreed by relevant parties in advance of submission. (Where there is no agreement, queries will be submitted and processed in the standard way.)
- Not submitted using the standard means, for practical reasons (unless by agreement)
- Regular updates and discussion between 'owning' parties
- Not part of the Standards of Service timescales or reporting

Due to the high volume of these queries, and/or the level of manual processing involved to submit or resolve them it is agreed that these queries sit outside of the SoS reporting and associated timescales. The reason for this is that it is less likely that these queries were triggered by external end user contact; and more likely that the query originates internally to the Pipeline User. For queries that are triggered by end user contact, Pipeline Users may wish to consider the use of standard submission procedures if it is felt that this may be beneficial.

However, Pipeline Operators will use reasonable endeavours to meet standard timescales where this is possible. It is also acknowledged that the User 'owner' of the Query Project will receive (and may request at any time) periodic updates on progress and expected resolution timescales.

5   PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

It is recognised that it is of most benefit to both Pipeline Operators and to Pipeline Users to establish the performance standards achieved on a regular basis and promptly. This is best achieved by reporting performance against a set timeframe and also to adopt an output based calculation and reporting mechanism.

Performance standards are measured on the total number of queries submitted.

   a) Pipeline Operators will endeavour to meet:

   - 35% of queries resolved within 4 business days
   - 90% of queries resolved within 10 business days
   - 95% of queries resolved within 15 business days
   - 100% of queries resolved within 40 business days

   b) Where the number of invalid queries exceeds 25% of the total queries submitted by the Pipeline User for 3 consecutive months, discussions will take place between the Pipeline Operator and the Pipeline User in an attempt to resolve the matter. The Pipeline Operator and Pipeline User will utilise the Escalation contacts (as detailed in Section 6.2) if required.

5.2   Escalation Procedure

This escalation procedure may commence for queries that have not been resolved between operational staff, within the prescribed timescales.

For the avoidance of doubt the Pipeline User should have taken all reasonable steps to ensure all available avenues have been exhausted prior to raising the initial query. This will include:

- Pipeline Operator Query Systems; and/or
- Portfolio Extract; and/or
- Pipeline User Internal Systems; and/or

Data Enquiry Service

Level 1 Process

Should the query originator fail to gain a satisfactory resolution or response to their query at D+15 they may escalate this to their supervisor/direct line manager. The supervisor/direct line manager will then review the facts, to ensure due process has been followed, prior to escalating to the appropriate Pipeline Operator contact.

Level 2 Process

If no satisfactory response is received at D+20 the query will be passed to the relevant Senior Operational Manager. This will include:

- A definition of the query;
- Current status; and
- Details of the actions/contacts previously taken

The Senior Operational Manager will then contact their equivalent level contact within the relevant Pipeline Operator to resolve the query.

Level 3 Process

Although it is envisaged that most queries will be resolved by the Level 2 process, if the query does remain outstanding at D+30 the Senior Operational Manager will pass the details to their iGT UNC Contract Manager (or equivalent) for further escalation to the equivalent level within the Pipeline Operator. At this stage resolution may involve meetings between the Pipeline User and Pipeline Operator.

Contact details for both iGT UNC Contract Managers and Pipeline Operators will be held on the iGT UNC web-site, on a limited access page, or as provided by the Representative.

Escalation Summary

The table below summarises the escalation procedure that should be taken when resolving any Pipeline Operator Queries. All timings referred to in this table are Workings Days.

Escalation Process	Timescale	Responsibility Level of Contact(s)
Level 1		
Raise Initial Query	Day 0	Operational Staff
First follow up	Day + 15	Supervisor/Line Manager
Level 2		
Second follow up	Day + 20	Senior Operational Manager
Level 3		
Final follow up	Day + 30	iGT UNC Contract Manager

5.3   Reporting Structure

It will be up to individual parties to monitor, to ensure the standards are being met. Where they are not being met, the impacted parties will try to resolve any disputes.

Pipeline Operators will issue quarterly reports, broken down per month, to individual Pipeline Users. For the avoidance of doubt, reports should be provided to all participating Pipeline Users even if there were zero submissions for the period.

The report(s) will contain information on:
- Number of overall queries raised
- Number of queries raised that were rejected at the point they were raised (as detailed in Appendix 7.3)
- Breakdown of rejected queries by rejection type
- The number and percentage of accepted queries which were resolved in the 4, 10, 15, and 40 business day performance measures, split by query code
- The number and percentage of invalid queries in the 4, 10, 15, and 40 day performance measures, split by query code
- The number and percentage of queries resolved / closed greater than the 40 day performance measure, split by query code
- The number of queries closed after 5 business days as a result of the Pipeline User failing to respond to the Pipeline Operator's request for further information (timed out)
- The ability for the Pipeline Operator to provide a commentary on the rejected queries to assist with User training requirements

The structure of the reporting will be the following:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Month And Year	Query Code	Total Queries Received	Total Rejected	Total Timed Out	4 Day Target 35%		10 Day Target 90%	
					Total Resolved in Standard	Achieved Performance %	Total Resolved in Standard	Achieved Performance %

J	K	L	M	N	O
15 Day Target 95%		40 Day Target 100%		> 40 Day Target	
Total Resolved in Standard	Achieved Performance %	Total Resolved in Standard	Achieved Performance %	Total resolved outside of Standard	Total Outstanding

The Pipeline Operator may also wish to send a separate report detaling the rejections for the relevant reporting period. The Rejected codes used will be those listed in section 7.3. This report may support any commentary that the Pipeline Operator wishes to provide.

The structure of the report will be as follows:

A	B	C
Month and Year	Rejected category	Number of rejections

The Pipeline Operator may also choose to report on the total number of invalid rejections (either gross number or as a percentage of total queries).

A separate report following a similar structure for those queries passed to 3rd parties may also be provided.

6 APPENDIX6.1 Query Codes

Asset Queries		
Code	Description	
FOU	Any response to a query where meter details were not previously recorded for a property on the IGT system.	Found Meter Query
MFR	Any response querying receipt of meter asset details via Meter Fit Report	Meter Fit Report Query
PNB	Any response to a query relating to an MPRN or plot that has not yet been built	Plot Not built
PMS	Any response to a query relating to a plot not on the Operator's records	Plot missing from Pipeline Operator records
PDR	Any response to a query relating to an MPRN where the supply point has been demolished	Plot demolished

Invoice Queries		
Code	Description	
ADJ	Any response to a query in relation to the accuracy of an Invoice Adjustment	Adjustment Query
CAL	Any response to a query in relation to the way in which an invoice has been calculated	Invoice Calculation Query
DAQ	Any response to a query in relation to the data upon which an invoice has been produced	Data Query
ITQ	Any response to a query in relation to the timing of the invoice document, remittance advices or payment due dates	Invoice Timing Query
OTH	"Other" to be used where resolution codes list not accurate	"Other" Response Code

6.2   Query template

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6.3   Rejected Query Category Summary – At Point Query is Raised

Category	Explanation	Reporting Category	Include in Invalid Report*
1	No amendment required to Pipeline Operators System(s) following the Query, e.g. • Data already amended prior to submission of the query/data held is same as on query • Contact previously resolved	Invalid	Yes
2	No amendment required to Pipeline Operators System(s) following the Query, e.g. • "Double" query already open/received (The Pipeline Operator will provide the established query reference number to the Pipeline User)	Invalid	Yes
3	Poorly Worded Queries, e.g. the query is incomprehensible and no determination of the query can be determined or is inappropriate, such as "Please visit customer".	Invalid	Yes
4	Data Already Provided/Available to Pipeline User, e.g. via Portfolio Extract	Invalid	Yes
5	Rejected Query: • Incorrect Pipeline Operator • Incorrect Pipeline User	Invalid	Yes
6	Timed Out: Pipeline User has not provided additional information within 5 Business Days of the request by the Pipeline Operator	Invalid	Yes
7	Plot Not built	Valid	No
8	Plot missing from Pipeline Operator records	Valid	No
9	Plot demolished	Valid	No
10	Meter removed – supply point no longer live	Valid	No
11	Incorrect meter type/No. of dials	Valid	No

* Optional report provided by the Pipeline Operator showing either gross number of invalid queries or number of invalid queries as a percentage of total queries submitted by Pipeline User.

6.4   Pipeline Operator Query Contact Details

An example of the contact information details which will be provided per Pipeline Operator. Separate contacts may be provided for Invoice Queries. The contact information will be stored and maintained by the iGT UNC Representative.

PIPELINE OPERATOR	E-mail address	Telephone Number	Fax Number