

Modification proposal:	iGT UNC: "Use of Unbundled Meter Readings File Format and Response Files for Cyclic Meter Readings" (iGT015)		
Decision:	The Authority ¹ directs that this proposal be made		
Target audience:	Independent Gas Transporters (iGTs), Parties to the iGT UNC and other interested parties		
Date of publication:	01 July 2008	Implementation Date:	To be confirmed

Background to the modification proposal

Modification iGT015 was raised by ScottishPower Energy Management Limited. A variation² to the modification was proposed on 15 January 2008. A further variation³ to the modification was proposed on 4 March 2008.

In October 2003, a document "Operator Meter Reading (Cyclical Reads Only) & Meter Inspection File Formats" was produced following work undertaken by the Gas Forum Operator Workgroup. It recommended that for IGT purposes shippers adopt the unbundled meter reading file formats for transmitting meter reads and inspection notifications to IGTs. In addition, the report recommended that IGTs adopt unbundled meter read response file formats.

At present, cyclic meter readings are provided to IGTs by shippers utilising a modified version of the U01 file format. Confirmation of receipt and acceptance of these meter read files is not presently received from all IGTs. This causes a number of difficulties for shippers and indeed IGTs generally.

The modification proposal

The Modification requires shippers to submit notifications of cyclic meter reads to IGTs using file formats detailed in a new iGT UNC Ancillary document entitled "Use of Unbundled Meter Reading File Format and Response Files for Cyclic Meter Readings". The modification introduces the text of this new UNC Ancillary document, which also sets out the file formats and conventions for the submission of cyclic meter reads by shippers and the acknowledgement of their acceptance/rejection by IGTs.

This Modification also seeks to mandate the acknowledgement of acceptance/rejection by Operators within prescribed timescales. In particular IGTs must respond to the submission of a cyclic meter read file within 2 business days.

Panel decision

The IGT Modification Panel held on 21 May 2008 unanimously recommended the Modification for implementation, commenting that it supports the efficient and economic operation of the Pipeline Systems and the efficient discharge of the Licensees' Obligations. The Panel recommended an implementation date of the next release of the iGT UNC six months after Authority consent in accordance with clause 19.2(c) of section L of the IGT UNC.

¹ The terms 'the Authority', 'Ofgem' and 'we' are used interchangeably in this document. Ofgem is the Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority.

² The purpose was to add further clarity by specifying the header, trailer and file naming convention of the file formats.

³ It was proposed that the Unbundled Meter Reading File Format and Response Files be inserted as an iGT UNC Ancillary Document in the Code.

The Authority's decision

The Authority has considered the issues raised by the Modification and the Final Modification Report dated 2nd June 2008. The Authority has concluded that:

1. implementation of the modification proposal would further the relevant objectives as defined in Standard Condition 9 of the Gas Transporters License⁴; and
2. directing that the modification be made and is consistent with the Authority's principal objective and statutory duties.

Reasons for Authority decision

Ofgem considers that in particular, the implementation of the modification proposal would further relevant objective (d). Our reasons are set out below.

Relevant objective (d) - securing effective competition between relevant shippers and between relevant suppliers.

The requirements for cyclic meter read and response data to be sent in a consistent format will enable shippers to improve automation of their processes and reduce cost associated with managing their cyclic meter read submission requirements and any subsequent error resolution.

In addition, we consider that allowing shippers to send cyclic meter readings using the unbundled meter reading file formats and for these files formats to be used for the acknowledgement of acceptance/rejection by IGTs, will allow them to manage meter readings on IGT networks in a consistent manner with those submitted to other Gas Transporters.

We consider that the modification will increase certainty for both shippers and IGTs on when cyclic meter reads have been accepted or rejected. The inclusion of a defined timescale for a response from IGTs will further increase clarity for shippers.

We further agree that this modification will improve shipper's ability to submit cyclic meter reads and understand the reasons for their rejection. We consider that this transparency should help to reduce the number of cyclic meter reads that are rejected. In turn, more valid cyclic meter reads should therefore be available to derive AQ values and improve the accuracy of energy and cost allocation between shippers.

Decision notice

The Authority directs that modification proposal iGT015: "Use of Unbundled Meter Readings File Format and Response Files for Cyclic Meter Readings" be made.



Kersti Berge
Head of GB Markets

Signed on behalf of the Authority and authorised for that purpose.

⁴ http://epr.ofgem.gov.uk/document_fetch.php?documentid=13355