

Notes of iGTDG001

Pipeline Operator Standards of Service post-implementation review

Meeting of 17 February 2010

Present

Sham Afonja, RWE
Colette Baldwin, EON
Gethyn Howard, IPL
Anita Laurie, GTC
Jenny Rawlinson, GTC
David Speake, ESP (Chair)

Carly Gilchrist, FPL (Teleconf)
Cher Harris, SSE (Teleconf)
Paul Leighton, FPL (Teleconf)

The proposer introduced the subject and all parties were given the opportunity to share their experiences of the standards of service regime. They were asked to identify any issues that required further discussion in the meeting.

Parties also shared statistics on the number of queries raised over the last 18 months. There was a considerable variation between iGTs and shippers. Some of these numbers are available on the iGT UNC website.

Key points raised	
1	There are different interpretations of 'project' and 'bulk queries'. It was agreed that whilst it would not be appropriate to establish thresholds due to varying size of iGTs, it is worth attempting to refine the definitions of each. It was also agreed that in many cases, the best way to approach these is contact the iGT before raising the queries in order to agree how they will be handled.
	Action: DS to redefine project and bulk queries to allow more clarity.
2	Interpretation of 'outstanding queries' varies between parties. This leads to queries being shut down when one party does not consider them to be closed.
3	Application of the reporting rules and format is inconsistent among iGTs.
4	Handshake files are sometimes not being provided by the iGT.
5	Some shippers have found it difficult to get assistance with raising a query, for example when it is not a straightforward query.
6	It can be difficult to revive a query once it has been classified by the iGT as 'no further action required'. This can mean that a query needs to be raised again, with timescales being reset.
7	Sometimes queries seem to be abandoned when team members move jobs (for example).
8	Site visits were discussed, and a request was made for more frequent updates to the shipper where a query is on hold pending a site visit. It was felt that there was a need for

	some further thought around the wording in section 6.1 to see whether this could be reflected.
9	Some shippers noted a tendency for more complex queries to be put on hold in favour of addressing simpler ones. It was felt that more focus should be given to complex queries at an earlier stage in their life, if possible.
10	It was highlighted that many shipper operatives did not have internet access and so iGTs questioned how they were fulfilling their obligation to use SCOGES before raising a query with the iGT. Shippers thought that in such cases the operatives had access to a daily extract from SCOGES and agreed to check this. Action: shippers to confirm that operatives are able to interrogate other sources of information before raising queries with the iGT (where applicable).
11	The group questioned whether the query codes in 7.1 were sufficiently informative. It may be useful to have codes for 'No meter on site' and/or 'Plot not yet built', for example. Action: GTC to consider the addition of query codes based on their experience of common queries.
12	iGTs noted that a large proportion of queries raised were being returned as invalid, most frequently because the information is already available. Staff turnover was recognised as a factor here, but the need for renewed and continual training of shipper operatives was highlighted.
13	iGTs do not always include the shipper-generated reference number when they return handshake files. Action: iGTs to confirm whether this happens in every case, and that they were receiving the shipper reference number in the first place.
14	Reporting was discussed at length and it was agreed that reports would be far more useful if they gave an indication of why queries were being rejected as invalid. This would aid shippers with training requirements. It was thought to that do this, code categories would have to be re-assessed or added to. A free text field could be added to the report to be used to provide more detail on rejected queries. Action: GH to consider how categories can be improved for reporting purposes.
15	It was highlighted that the SoS regime did not explicitly allow for a single query between multiple parties (for example, a crossed meter situation involving multiple shippers). No conclusion was drawn as to how to co-ordinate queries across multiple parties.

Actions arising

1. DS to redefine project and bulk queries to allow more clarity.
2. Shippers to approach iGTs individually to consolidate current queries outstanding (if appropriate)
3. Shippers to confirm that operatives are able to interrogate other sources of information before raising queries with the iGT (where applicable).
4. iGTs to confirm whether they always receive and respond with the shipper reference number.
5. GH to consider how categories can be improved for reporting purposes.
6. JR and AL to consider the addition of query codes.

Next steps

The panel is asked to decide whether a further meeting is required to understand the issues, and what further steps are required of this workgroup.