nationalgrid

Minutes

Meeting name	Electricity Balancing System (EBS) IT Subgroup
Meeting number	1
Date of meeting	6th December 2011
Time	10:00 - 15:00
Location	National Grid Wokingham

Attendees

Name	Initials	Company
Robert Paterson	RP	Chair, National Grid
Sally Cox	SC	Technical Secretary, National Grid
Pete Smith	PS	National Grid
Steve Roberts	SR	National Grid
Afe Ogun	AO	National Grid
Rob Apperley	RA	National Grid
James Mitchell	JM	Centrica
Lee Rowling	LR	Intergen
Stuart Green	SG	International Power
Kevin Kennedy	KK	International Power
Andy Scott	AS	International Power
Joanne Heine	JH	Alstom Grid
John Sherban	JS	Quorum Developments
Martin Macleod	MM	SSE
Tony Flaks	TF	EDF Energy
Mike McDermott	MMcD	Siemens
Paul Hardy	PH	Siemens
Ian McDonald	IMcD	Thames Power
Graham Bunt	GB	EDF Energy
Darren McCann	DMcC	Logica
Allan Viney	AV	Scottish Power
Simon Piercy	SP	Contigo
Steve Francis	SF	Elexon (teleconference)
Michael Joyce	MJ	E.ON (teleconference)
Paul Coates	PC	RWE (teleconference)
Susan McNicholl	SMcN	ESBI (teleconference)
Mahesh Chauhan	MC	E.ON (teleconference)

Apologies

Alan Souch	RWE

1 Introductions

RP opened the meeting by thanking everybody for attending both in the room and by teleconference. There were introductions from all participants.

2 Overview of Electricity Balancing System including timescales

RP gave an overview of the Electricity Balancing System and the associated timescales. He said that all the slides and the Terms of Reference would be e-mailed to all participants after the meeting.

RP continued with an overview of the arrangements to support the existing industry interfaces, EDL and EDT. PS talked about the transition from the BM Systems version of EDL and EDT to the EBS version. The EBS version of the EDL and EDT interfaces would be functionally identical to the BM Systems' versions and no software or hardware changes should be required at the client-end in order for them to exchange data with EBS. In addition, it is National Grid's intention to minimise, and if possible eliminate, the need for client-end configuration changes in order to support EBS go-live. In any event, it should not be necessary for market participants to make any changes to their systems on the day of EBS go-live.

The question was raised as to whether it was feasible to have no software changes at the client-end of EDT, as they relied on the use of VMS commands and EBS will not be using the VMS operating system.

Action AO – to investigate the implications of VMS operating system specifics, including commands and password rules, on the EBS version of EDT

SR went on to discuss National Grid's proposed approach to testing the EBS implementation of the existing industry interfaces with IT suppliers' client software prior to go-live. National Grid proposed that the initial testing be with IT suppliers, rather than market participants, so that any general issues could be caught early and to avoid unnecessarily involving all market participants at this stage. The existing industry interfaces cover both EDT and EDL and the intention is to certify all versions of client-end software that will be running at go-live. He said that in the past the testing with suppliers has consisted of a Type Test and then there had been a short Business Process Interface Test (BPITs) with Market Participants. It is anticipated that National Grid will continue with this approach for EBS.

Action SR - to update the BPITs test scripts for EBS

In response to a question, SR said that it was anticipated that the type testing & BPITs facility for the existing EDL and EDT interfaces would be available until the end of the 5 year cut-off period for migration to the replacement interfaces.

RP moved on to talk about the assurance of production interfaces - he said that as the non-functioning of industry interfaces following EBS go-live would adversely affect all concerned, then, where reasonably practicable, National Grid would like to check that market participants' production systems can connect through to EBS. The area in which this has been undertaken in the past, is briefly routing participants' production EDL clients to the new system to check that they can connect, but in such a way that no operational data can be exchanged.

RP gave an overview of the replacement industry interfaces, EDL* and EDT*, that will be made available to market participants after EBS go-live. Telecommunication options and security & access were also covered. AO said that it was yet to be decided whether hard tokens would be required to access EBS over the internet. It was agreed that hard tokens were unlikely to be practicable for computer-to-computer EDT* data exchanges over the internet – several attendees asked whether alterative security arrangements could be put in place for this, as this would offer market participants a back-up telecommunications route if their private network connections to National Grid failed. When asked by RP whether XML file upload via the EBS web pages would offer the same facilities, KK said not as it would tend to mean that the data in market participants' internal systems would become out of date.

Action AO – To consider the options for computer-to-computer EDT* data exchanges over the internet and discuss this with National Grid IS Security

Action AO – Will EDT* still have sequence numbers?

RP then ran through a summary of the planned data changes, in the main those that it is intended will be supported by the replacement EDL* and EDT*. In relation to the intention to not implement gate-closure checks on MEL submitted by the EBS version of EDT, KK said it was acceptable for certain validation rules to be relaxed in the EBS versions of existing EDL and EDT, but not for them to be tightened.

AO gave a brief overview of the architecture and infrastructure around EBS. AO advised that there were no plans to upgrade all the EDL network circuits for EBS go-live. He said that prior to go-live, National Grid would synchronise the data on the old and new systems, therefore market participants would not need to resubmit their data to the new system. In response to a question, AO responded that EDT* and EDL* use similar technology, but that EDL* is based on a JMS messaging service and EDT* web-services.

3 Questions and Answers

Q. GB raised a question – Can checks be done in a test environment?

A. National Grid said they would envisage that a test system would be available prior to Q3 2012. Beta testing of the existing interfaces could, in the worst case, consist of cycles of testing i.e. fail test, modify system, re-test. SR said he saw it as his job to ensure that the interfaces were working correctly prior to Beta testing, so that this scenario does not occur.

Action SR – can National Grid provide a simulator for the new industry interfaces, which would perform a similar role to the various supplier-developed National Grid-server-simulators for the existing interfaces that are used for general testing?

Q. Should a new station, after EBS Go-Live, be on the replacement interfaces?

A. National Grid would look to encourage new participants and stations to use the replacement interfaces, but where they are part of a larger organisation that are still using the existing interfaces, then this may be impractical meaning that the existing interfaces would be used until the organisation as a whole had migrated to the replacement interfaces.

Q. What if a trading office is on EDT* with the capability to submit a wider-range of data, but the stations are still on EDL?

A. RP advised that some of this could be managed by participants restricting

particular data types to particular submitters e.g. PNs and BOD by the trading office using EDT*, MEL and dynamic data via EDL. However, he thought that it would probably be advantageous if the transition phase for a particular Market Participant and their stations was relatively short in order to minimise such issues.

Q. GB asked whether National Grid had considered providing an MPLS service for use by market participants as raised in response to the second industry consultation?

A. RP said a National Grid-provided MPLS service was problematic in terms of responsibility for submission of PNs if the service was unavailable or was being fully-utilised by other market participants. PS added that participant-provided MPLS was more likely and he expected instances to be in service prior to EBS go-live.

Q. PC from RWE (on phone) asked will there be a communication strategy for the transition and how will this be managed?

A. PS stated that a communications strategy is being developed.

Action PS – Develop a communications strategy for transition and cutover e.g. use of helpdesks etc. if a power station has a problem with EBS EDL

Q. API definition – when will this be published?

Action AO - To determine when a generic ABB client interface toolkit can be made available, as software suppliers would like early visibility of the style of the new EDT* & EDL* interfaces, without having to wait for the EBS-specific client Interface development toolkit

Q. How will acceptance/acknowledgement and time stamping of EDT* submissions work with the web interface?

Action AO – To provide an indicative date when details of EDT* acceptance/acknowledgement and time-stamping arrangements will be made available

Q. DMcC asked whether National Grid would consider hosting an EBS internet discussion forum for market participants and IT suppliers?

Action RP - National Grid to consider a mechanism to allow EBS questions to be asked and answers to be made available via the internet

Action RP - National Grid to determine where all the relevant EBS documents would be made available via the internet

Q. How will the new data submitted by the replacement interfaces be published?

A. Detailed discussions have not yet taken place with Elexon re. the migration to EDT* and the associated new & revised data, but initial thoughts are EDL, EDT and replacement EDT* data could co-exist by the use of NULL data etc. This would allow individual participants to migrate to the new interfaces when they are ready, rather than all at once.

Q. Will the EBS support Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) and HTML5?

Action AO - To investigate what support EBS will have for IPv6 and HTML5.

Q. Does the EBS support or comply with the ENTSO-E interface standards?

A. It is National Grid's intention that the data associated with the replacement EBS interfaces be incorporated into the ENTSO-E standards.

4 Stakeholders

Market participant and IT supplier views were sought regarding testing and transition. GB raised a question concerning nuclear stations and that testing that their production EDL would work with EBS could mean an outage to their production EDL.

RP responded that the outage of production EDL would in all likelihood be short (around 15 minutes) and that in its absence, the Grid telephone could be used to make any redeclarations normally sent by EDL.

There was discussion regarding the testing and transition phases and the "Electricity Balancing System – When?" slide was referred to. PS clarified that:

- Type testing with IT suppliers can be done using either test or real data against a test instance of EBS.

- End-to-end interface testing for market participants can be done from IT supplier or market participant sites to a test EBS system.

5 Terms of Reference

Comments have been received from the main Industry working group and have been fed into the ToR as it stands at present. It was felt that there should be an objective relating to industry input on the arrangements associated with the replacement interfaces.

Action RP – Include an objective in the ToR regarding industry input in the replacement industry interfaces.

Further comments will be requested from the subgroup via e-mail over the next few weeks.

6 Next Steps

The frequency of meetings was also raised and it was suggested that every 4 – 6 weeks it would be appropriate to have a face to face meeting rather than a teleconference.

Another point raised was should the meeting be segregated into existing interfaces & go-live, and the replacement interfaces. The meeting thought that only one subgroup was needed rather than two, as there would be a natural progression from the existing interfaces to the replacement interfaces as time moved on.

Next meeting to be arranged for March 2012. Suggested dates will be sent via e-mail and suggested days will be Tues/Wed/Thurs.

The target date for National Grid to progress actions and deliver of documentation for the next meeting would be the end of February 2012.

It was also agreed that should any market participant or supplier representatives be unable to make any of the meetings for any reason then they could nominate somebody else from their organisation to represent them.

It was also suggested that an EBS Project Bulletin could be sent to all Market Participants who couldn't attend the meeting

7 AOB

PS pointed out that as the draft ToR and today's meeting covered the subject of communications, then an invite for the next meeting should be sent to Jane Oates as the National Grid Project Manager responsible for the EBS Communications Strategy.