

Liam Bennett
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU

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Dear Liam

SEEN Distribution response: updates to the Data Best Practice Guidance and Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan Guidance

SEEN Distribution welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on updates to the Data Best Practice Guidance and Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan Guidance.

We have always considered that digitalisation plays a significant role in the wider delivery of a smarter, greener energy system, as reflected in earlier iterations of our Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plans and our RIIO-ED2 Business Plan. Our most recent Digital Strategy was published at the end of March and sets out how SEEN will support our communities and develop the functions of a Distribution System Operator to help the transition to net zero. It sets out the digital products and services we will provide to the people we deliver services for and the people we work with. With RIIO-ED2 having started on 1 April 2023 our voluntary obligation to comply with these guidance documents has now been formalised.

We are broadly supportive of the direction of travel and have provided detailed response to the consultation questions in Annex 1. However, we would like to draw Ofgem's attention to the following points, which we consider to be material:

1. While we recognise that the restructuring proposed by Ofgem to introduce the intended outcomes could help provide further clarification, care must be taken to ensure that these intended outcomes drive the right behaviours without restricting innovation. This is particularly important in the context of what are intended to be a set of principles rather than prescribed solutions or implementation approaches. In addition, it is not clear what action if any would be taken by Ofgem if an intended outcome cannot be achieved, for example, because of factors outside of licensee control. Ofgem must ensure that a pragmatic and proportionate approach is taken, which also recognises that digitalisation is a new and fast-moving area.
2. We note that the introduction of intended outcomes at this stage in the process means that these were not captured as part of our original business plan submission for RIIO-ED2. The digitalisation re-opener should be the route for additional funding where this may be required.
3. In general, the full benefits of good data practice and open data are dependent on increasing levels of maturity from all actors. To this extent, the work by DNOs is dependent on wider initiatives to ensure public value is released from open data and efforts are not distracted by niche or otherwise wasteful diversions.
4. Regarding the specific proposals for smart metering data:

- We do not agree with October 2023 deadline for publishing non-interoperable smart meter data as this would provide nugatory benefit and distract from work in develop interoperable sharing.
- We do agree that publishing an interoperable methodology by February 2024 is reasonable.
- We note that the implementation of this methodology should be subject to a timeline set out as part of the design process.

If you have any further questions about our detailed response, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Clothilde Cantegreil

Head of Strategy
SSEN Distribution

Annex 1 – Response to consultation questions

Chapter 2: Changes to the design approach of Data Best Practice Guidance

Chapter 2 Questions	
Q1.	Do you agree with our proposal to implement a structural change to DBP Guidance, introducing intended outcomes for each principle? If not, how do you suggest we could clarify the aim of each principle?
R1.	<p>Intended outcomes have the potential to be an efficient way of understanding what is expected of licensees when applying these principles and how compliance will be measured.</p> <p>However, there is a risk that these outcomes will become outdated and/or stifle innovation in what is a fast-paced environment. Likewise, it is not clear how these outcomes will be used to assess increasing levels of level of maturity, and we are concerned that they may tend to a rigid and binary assessment. In addition, a practical and pragmatic approach will be required, recognising that intended outcomes may take to achieve, and in some circumstances may not be consistently achievable for factors outside of DNO control.</p> <p>Much of the Data Best Practice Intended Outcomes are focussed on open data and engagement with data consumers. Whilst we agree with a consumer centric approach, we do not consider it appropriate to lose sight of good practice for internal data governance as well.</p>
Q2.	What are your views on the proposed wording of our intended outcomes for each principle in DBP Guidance?
R2.	<p>DBP1. We believe that the intended outcome is acceptable.</p> <p>DBP2. We believe the language used in this intended outcome does not provide any additional insight or expectation of the principle. We believe this principle requires cross collaboration across industry peers to use terminology, descriptions and metadata that may not be used at all amongst the licensees' business users.</p> <p>DBP3. We believe that while Dublin Core is a widely understood metadata standard, it doesn't describe the data in a useful way for what data consumers want in terms of metadata. We believe that Attribute level descriptions of data would be more useful for the end data consumer. Dublin Core and similar standards like DCAT are however good for indexing. This will allow easier access and cataloguing of cross-referenced datasets and portals. We believe that this intended outcome would be better aligned to DBP5.</p> <p>DBP4. There is more detailed understanding of what "Core Supporting Information" is held in Supporting Information document, however we believe this information needs to be made clearer in the intended outcome for the end consumer. We are keen to understand risks for Intellectual Property (IP) exposure through software scripts as part of providing supporting information for</p>

data assets. This may be part of the data triage process in which IP is not shared for commercial purposes but would be helpful to have a clearer call out to this, like call outs of metadata sensitivities in DBP5.

DBP5. We believe there is a clearly defined difference between discoverable and accessible. We consider that in most cases Metadata associated with sensitive datasets can be made available. We are keen that metadata indexing standards, like Dublin core and DCAT are used to engage with and enable third party catalogues for example Icebreaker One's Open Net Zero platform.

DBP6. We believe that the intended outcome of this principle will directly correlate with Digital Strategy and Action Plan publications, as well as commitments made within the ED2 Business Plans. However, there may be a risk in implementing these commitments if we are required to make ad-hoc data assets, data products and services available to a small number of data users. We believe there needs to be guidance or framework around the scale of consumer benefits compared against cost to produce.

DBP7. We believe that this intended outcome must be considered with respect to the level of maturity and needs of the data users against an ability and impact to implement. Data Quality and wider feedback processes are crucial in capturing issues and improving data quality.

DBP8. We understand the need to enable other data users to easily join their data assets with data assets of other licensees and that this may be supported by using industry standard metadata and common language, however licensee's internal glossary and descriptions may differ from licensee to licensee. Many different parties and industries may structure their data assets differently and are not under any obligation to meet these principles, which will require licensees to research data structures of other organisations outside of the Data Best Practice Principles scope. This requires cross party participation to enable interoperability and will require effort and appropriate maturity from the third-party users of this data.

DBP9. We believe the change from SPaR to cyber security improves the clarity of scope to considerations by calls out specifically to current regulations and legislation.

DBP10. We have concerns that there is a conflict between DBP9 and 10; where good Cyber Security practices will require Data Retention Policies. We would need further clarity on what is a reasonable timeframe to store data assets to ensure sustained benefits. We also would need more clarity on data versioning regarding the storage of a dataset version 1.4 over a more up to date / accurate version 1.5. We consider that this would be different to a historic refresh from January Version to February Version, in which both versions should be retained for a reasonable timeframe.

DBP11. We believe Creative Commons Attribution Licence is the licence in the best spirit of Open Data. This will be supported by Data Triage to identify where and why data has been classified.

Chapter 3: Data Best Practice Guidance and Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan

Guidance scope and content

Chapter 3 Questions

Q3.	What are your views on our proposal to require the use of Dublin Core as the Metadata standard for companies obligated under DBP Guidance?
R3.	We believe that Dublin Core doesn't provide the user with tangible value and understanding in the use and content of the data asset. While it does allow users to filter down data assets using common terms for example "Open Licence" or "Scotland" etc., users may be better served by data assets having a companion metadata file that contains metadata about attributes, their descriptions, quality, and technical metadata eg, Numerical Value Column with values ranging from 0 – 99, that details the weight of the asset. Dublin Core is, perhaps, more like administrative and index metadata, rather than descriptive / technical metadata, and is more suited to DBP 5..
Q4.	If you do not agree with this proposal, are there alternative Metadata standards that should be utilised by licensees instead?
R4.	We believe that DCAT / DCAT-AP (following engagement with the Icebreaker One and Open Net Zero Portal) not only improves indexing and visibility of Data Assets, but also provides a greater level of richness around data assets for data portals. We however currently have not identified any further standards for contextual metadata that would provide greater support to the data consumer.
Q5.	If you are a licensee required to comply with DBP Guidance, can you provide a timescale for the implementation of the proposal to adopt Dublin Core as your Metadata standard?
R5.	SSEN Distribution is looking to implement Dublin Core by October 2023 as part of our Distribution Data Portal Development. Dublin Core has been provided as a core technical requirement and to be implemented against published datasets on that Data Portal.
Q6.	What are your views on our proposal to require the use of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence or the Open Government Licence as the standard open data licence for companies obligated under DBP Guidance?
R6.	Creative Commons 4.0 Attribution Licence is the most appropriate licence in the spirit of "Open" Data. This can also be attributed to Public Data with additional Creative Commons 4.0 restrictions. As we move to shared data these may be bespoke agreements with customers or businesses engaging with Icebreaker Trust Framework.

Q7.	If you do not agree with this proposal, can you suggest alternative open data licences to be utilised as a common open data licence?
R7.	N/A
Q8.	If you are a licensee required to comply with DBP Guidance, can you provide a timescale for the implementation of the proposal to adopt the Creative Commons Attribution Licence or the Open Government Licence as your open data licence?
R8.	April 2023 will see the adoption of Creative Commons 4.0 Attribution Licence as SSEN Distribution's licence. This will be supported by a backlog of activity for retrospectively triaging and classifying currently published data appropriately. October 2023 will see the publication of the SSEN Distribution Data Portal and accompanying openly licenced data.
Q9.	What are your views on our proposal to require licensees to create and publish a Data Catalogue of their Data Assets?
R9.	<p>We believe the Data Catalogue is a valuable capability for Data Consumers to find, understand, and access data. However, we would need further clarity regarding idea of SLA's around Data Catalogue Uptime etc and under what instance it is acceptable for a Data Catalogue to not be available for a period of time.</p> <p>We are keen to understand if there would be any concerns around the majority of Licensees utilising one product vendor (for example OpenDataSoft) and potential impact one vendor has on Data Access within the Energy Sector.</p> <p>We believe that there is a need to commit a requirement that the data catalogue should enable indexing of data across wider industry data portals for example the Icebreaker One Net Zero Portal.</p> <p>It is recognised that the Smart Optimisation Output Licence Obligation also calls out a need for the creation of a data portal / catalogue.</p>

Chapter 4: Energy System Data and its application

Chapter 4 Questions

Q10.	Do you agree with our proposed position on treating aggregated smart meter consumption data as Energy System Data?
R10.	<p>We concur that consumption data from smart meters is a valuable resource to the energy system and to organisations in the wider energy sector.</p> <p>We agree that treating consumption data as Energy System Data and sharing through aggregation with other Electricity Consumption Data or by means of any other process, with the necessary data privacy and security requirements in place will benefit the energy sector and consumers by offering services and products previously not considered or yet developed.</p> <p>It is important to recognise that each DNO has its own Ofgem approved Data Privacy Plan (DPP) that is unique to each organisation and its Network, with differences as to how Consumption data is collected and anonymised or aggregated.</p> <p>We believe in order to effectively share consumption data it requires a common standard with a level of regulatory mandate and intervention.</p> <p>It may also be appropriate to review SLC10A in its entirety, with a view to removing the requirement for DNOs to have a DPP and restrictions around monthly consumption data. The basis for this proposal is that since SLC10A came into effect the DPA and GDPR have been introduced and the obligations placed on us by this legislation provides the necessary safeguards and protections for consumers.</p> <p>Reviewing the need for SLC10A supports the MHHS Decision Document dated 20 April 2021, para 6.12 advising on the merits of daily data over monthly data, states that "<i>access to daily data would be consistent with the permitted level of access to data for other regulated purposes that deliver benefits to the system as a whole, such as investigating suspected theft/fraud</i>".</p>
Q11.	What are your views on our position that this Data Asset should be published in a non-interoperable fashion by 14 October 2023, if the appropriate security controls are in place?
R11.	<p>We consider that it would not be appropriate, necessary, nor in the interests of the energy sector and consumers that DNO's make changes, which would include system developments, to make Consumption data available for publication in a non-interoperable fashion by 14 October 2023.</p>

	<p>We do not agree this is the right approach at this time, given that the penetration of smart meters in SSEN's region is currently at 46%; that we are not collecting significant volumes of smart meter consumption data to be able to share in the short term; and that there are material changes taking place across the Data Communications Company (DCC) smart meter infrastructure in order to maximise the success of requests for Consumption data, which require DNOs to make system changes.</p> <p>We are working towards fully implementing the ability to collect and aggregate large volumes of Consumption data, whilst also implementing the DCC's CSP North Scaling and Optimisation recommendations to maximise the success rate of Consumption data collection.</p>
Q12.	What are your views on our proposal that DNOs collectively determine an interoperable methodology by 28 February 2024, for publishing aggregated smart meter consumption data?
R12.	<p>Although our current DPP does not state we shall publish consumption data and make available in an Open Data format, an update to our DPP to recognise Consumption data as Energy System Data is reasonable.</p> <p>We agree that for the energy sector and consumers to make the best use of smart meter consumption data, having an interoperable methodology for publishing the data is the right approach, as is considering a single DNO Data Privacy Plan.</p> <p>Determining an interoperable methodology by 28 February 2024 is acceptable, however implementing the methodology and publishing consumption data by 28 February 2024 is likely to take longer and an appropriate timeline should be set out as part of developing the interoperability methodology.</p>
Q13.	What are your views on our proposal that licensees treat Data Assets associated with flexibility market operation as Presumed Open?
R13.	This would seem reasonable, and we already publish this data as per C31E guidance
Q14.	Do you foresee any specific barriers to treating Data Assets associated with flexibility market operation as Open Data?
R14.	This is subject to the terms and conditions agreed during flexibility market prequalification, to ensure these would permit us to publish a prospective provider's bid information (i.e. pre-contract).

The main challenge may well be practicality as there is an ever-increasing amount of manual reporting required for similar but different purposes (much of it duplicated). We would urge Ofgem to focus on simplifying the overall framework for publishing data to remove duplicated and wasted effort, and to minimise the potential for confusion and misunderstanding from related by subtly different cuts of data. For example, DNOs already publish flexibility data as part of their SLC31E reporting and, in a different format and using a different analysis, DNOs also report the same market activity in the Flexibility Market Price Data as required under DCUSA.