



Ofgem consultation on updates to Data Best Practice Guidance and Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan Guidance

SP Energy Networks Response

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Internal Use

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

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?

SPEN welcome Ofgem's move to more prescriptive guidance and the introduction of the intended outcomes, viewing this as a positive step in facilitating alignment across the licensees.

We agree with Ofgem's view that a lack of clarity in the DBP principles leads to different interpretations and different development approaches between the licensees. Whilst we agree with the proposal to introduce the intended outcomes, we believe that opportunity remains to further refine the "explanations" and "intended outcomes" of some of the principles, we set this out in our response to question 2.

Q2. What are your views on the proposed wording of our intended outcomes for each principle in DBP Guidance?

SPEN are supportive of Ofgem's proposed wording for the majority of the intended outcomes, however, believe opportunity remains to refine areas set out below:

Principle 2: Use common terms within Data Assets, Metadata and supporting information

SPEN fully support the aim of this Principle but believe that there would be further benefit in collective consultation and DNO agreement on the glossary. Given the numerous glossaries available, there is a risk that without agreement of a standard glossary, the use of "common terms" between licensees will be difficult to achieve and will function as a barrier to full data and whole system interoperability. The use of a standard glossary of terms will also facilitate compliance with Principle 8 of the DBPG: Ensure Data Assets are interoperable with Data Assets from other data and digital services.

Principle 8: Ensure Data Assets are interoperable with Data Assets from other data and digital services

SPEN believe that cross-industry data and Metadata standards are crucial in achieving full data and whole system interoperability. We note the requirement in Ofgem's open letter on "The Common Information Model (CIM) regulatory approach and the Long Term Development Statement", in addition to clause 3.4 of Ofgem's Smart Optimisation Output Guidance, to make use of CIM as the expected data standard for data exchanges in the energy industry and believe that this requirement should be included in the intended outcomes of principle 8.

Principle 9: Protect Data Assets and systems in accordance with current regulations and legislation relating to cyber security

SPEN support the proposed changes to Principle 9 and the associated "intended outcome", however, suggest that Ofgem should consider reference to Network and Information Systems (NIS) Regulations. There is a need to ensure that the requirements of the DBPG do not conflict with NIS Data Security, whereby a position of 'presumed closed' is applied with regards to data access.

Principle 11: Treat all Data Assets, their associated Metadata and Software Scripts used to process Data Assets as Presumed Open

As set out in our comments related to the proposed changes to Principle 9, we believe that there is a need to further clarify the alignment between the DBPG and the requirements of the NIS Data Security.

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

Guidance scope and content

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?

SPEN are supportive of Ofgem's proposal to mandate the use of Dublin Core as the Metadata standard.

As we set out in our response to the recent Request for Information, we consider that cross-industry and Metadata standards are crucial in achieving full data and whole system interoperability. Our approach will be to implement Dublin Core Metadata, specifically the fifteen metadata items, as our core elements which we will build and expand on as required, facilitating a more complete capture of required data related fields.

Q4. If you do not agree with this proposal, are there alternative Metadata standards that should be utilised by licensees instead?

N/A – SPEN agree with this proposal.

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?

The implementation of Dublin Core as SPEN's metadata standard will take place in parallel with the development of our Data Governance Platform, scheduled for 2023.

SPEN are currently in the process of negotiating a supplier for our new Data Governance platform, targeting for procurement and implementation Q3 this year. This Data Governance platform will become our central data catalogue, provide a holistic view of our metadata in a centralised location, and provide the foundation for the implementation of Dublin Core as SPEN's metadata standard. We will develop and enhance our data catalogue incrementally, focusing on priority areas as identified by internal assessment and prioritisation through our Data Governance Forum.

In addition, we will transform our current published datasets into the new metadata standards, and are already in communication with Open Data Soft, the supplier of our Open Data Portal, with a view to align the metadata structure used on our Portal with Dublin Core DCMES.

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?

SPEN supports use of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence or Open Government Licence as the standard open data licence. SPEN base our open data licence on the Open Government Licence v3.0.

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?

N/A – SPEN agrees with proposal.

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?

N/A – SPEN base our open data licence on the Open Government Licence v3.0.

Q9. What are your views on our proposal to require licensees to create and publish a Data Catalogue of their Data Assets?

SPEN are supportive of Ofgem’s proposal for licensees to create and publish a Data Catalogue of our Data Assets.

We are committed to the enhancement and further development of our Data Catalogue, recognising the benefits brought from promoting discoverability of our data assets both internally and externally, with clear ownership and accountability for all SPEN data and clearly defined metadata. As set out in our response to question 5, the development and enhancements of a full and complete data catalogue is a significant undertaking which we will complete incrementally during the RIIO-2 period. All data assets will be assessed by our data triage process to determine the data sharing classification and to ensure that no sensitivities are exposed in publication.

3. Chapter 4: Energy System Data and its application

Q10. Do you agree with our proposed position on treating aggregated smart meter consumption data as Energy System Data?

Note, SPEN’s response to questions 10-12 are aligned with the ENA’s response.

ENA members agree that it is reasonable for aggregated smart meter consumption data to be treated as Energy System Data.

The data has the potential to be a valuable resource providing insight into the electrical energy carried by distribution systems. Sharing this data in an aggregated format, with appropriate data privacy and security arrangements in place, would provide opportunities for organisations within the energy sector to benefit consumers by offering services and products previously not considered or yet developed.

It is important to recognise that each DNO has its own Ofgem approved Data Privacy Plan that is unique to each organisation and its Network, with differences as to how consumption data is collected and anonymised. Our members believe that to effectively share consumption data it will require a common standard with a level of regulatory mandate and intervention.

However, our members note that Ofgem in their MHHS Decision Document dated 20 April 2021, para 6.12 advising on the merits of daily data over monthly data, states that *"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"*.

The progress towards meeting the GB net zero targets, via increasing levels of electrification of heat and transport, will undoubtedly place an increasing burden on the existing electricity networks assets. Our members therefore also consider that having access to daily level of aggregated data, instead of monthly level aggregated data (as per SLC10A), would also deliver benefits to consumers and support DNO regulated purposes for the provision of a safe, reliable and improved quality of supply to customers.

As an alternative to removing the current restriction within SLC10A, which prevents accessing data with more granularity than monthly, some of our members suggest that it may be more appropriate to review SLC10A in its entirety, with a view to removing the requirement for DNOs to have a DPP. The basis for this proposal is that since SLC10A came into effect the DPA and GDPR have been introduced and the obligations on our members placed by this legislation surely provides the necessary safeguards and protections for consumers.

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?

Some of our members consider that this is achievable, providing that they are only required to share the data they have in their possession and are not required to retrieve additional data where they do not see a positive business case to do so.

However, the majority of our DNO members do not agree that publishing the data, in a non-interoperable fashion, by 14 October 2023 is reasonable. Most DNOs consider that it would not be appropriate, necessary, nor in the interests of the energy sector and consumers, that they make the necessary changes, which would include significant system developments, to make consumption data available for publication in a non-interoperable fashion by 14 October 2023.

To publish the Data Asset by 14 October 2023 would require each DNO to make changes to their Data Privacy Plan (DPP) and make changes to the associated documentation which supports their plan. The supporting documentation set is extensive and includes a Data Privacy Impact Assessment; Ofgem may also need to provide guidance on redrafting this assessment given that the use of the published data would be outside a DNO's control. A revised Data Privacy Plan would need to be approved by Ofgem, hence publication of the data by 14 October 2023 would be dependent upon the timing of a) Ofgem's decision to implement the proposed changes and b) approval of revised DPPs submitted by each DNO.

The DNOs also consider that the penetration of smart meters, that they can communicate with, in their regions is still not at sufficient levels. There are also some technical challenges that remain in the CSP-N region which pose a barrier to the DNOs in that region accessing consumption data in an effective and reliable way. This means that these DNOs are not collecting significant volumes of smart meter consumption data to be able to share in the short term and 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. The changes by DCC will take time to complete and require DNOs to make their own system changes.

These DNOs therefore consider that publishing the Data Asset by 14 October 2023, in a non-interoperable fashion, is the not the right approach. Our members would prefer that the industry focuses efforts on resolving existing data access issues, so that consumption data is accessible by DNOs, before being distracted by making process and system changes to make this information more widely available. We also question the benefit to stakeholders of publishing non-interoperable incomplete data and believe that it would be a better use of limited resources to concentrate on defining then publishing interoperable data.

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?

Our members agree that if smart meter consumption data is Energy System Data, then it would be helpful for external stakeholders if that information were interoperable. However, in the context of smart meter consumption data our members will need to be clear on the precise meaning of 'interoperable' and we will be looking to reach a common understanding of this term across all stakeholders to help ensure that any outcomes are fit for purpose.

The prospective uses of aggregated consumption data are to some extent unknown. Therefore, to develop an interoperable methodology our members will also need to have a greater understanding of all the prospective uses for aggregated consumption data. For example, DNOs typically aggregate data depending on network topology e.g., at distribution substations and feeders. Clarity is also required on whether 'interoperable' relates simply to the presentation of the information or also in the assumptions that underpin the aggregation process, for example in relation to missing or unobtainable data, treatment of data from three phase meters etc.

Provided that there is clarity on the interpretation of interoperability, and depending on the implications associated with that clarity, we believe that 6 months from the date of a decision by Ofgem should be sufficient time to develop an interoperable methodology across all DNOs.

As part of the work to develop an interoperable methodology consideration should be given to the following aspects:

- Identifying the process and IT systems changes that would be required to implement a common methodology.
- Identifying the timescale and costs of making such changes.
- Whether there is additional supporting data associated with aggregated consumption data would need to be published so that external stakeholders could interpret the published data. It is important that stakeholders are aware of assumptions made during the aggregation process and the limitations of the data set, for example where only a partial data set is accessible.

- The need or otherwise to develop a common DPP, and the timescale to develop, and have approved, a common DNO DPP.

We are aware that IDNOs currently have limited obligations regarding smart metering, and we wonder what the implications of this are in relation to making aggregated consumption data publicly available. In conclusion, the proposal for determining an interoperable methodology by 28 February 2024 seems reasonable and is supported by our members, subject to the above considerations. However, our members consider that implementing the methodology and publishing Consumption data by 28 February 2024 is likely to be a challenge and clarification should be provided to confirm if this is the intent.

Q13. What are your views on our proposal that licensees treat Data Assets associated with flexibility market operation as Presumed Open?

SPEN are supportive of Ofgem's proposal for licensees to treat Data Assets associated with flexibility market operation as Presumed Open.

Licence Condition 31E already requires us to publish all data relating to bids (accepted or rejected) in a defined template on an annual basis, in addition to the results of any procurement activities a month after contract award. We also annually publish our Flexibility Performance Report setting out our flexibility utilisation information.

To facilitate a transparent approach, it is SPEN's intention to update this dataset after each round of tenders. An internal review will take place to ensure compatibility with our Open Data Portal. The dataset will also be processed through our Open Data Triage process to ensure that no sensitivities are published.

Q14. Do you foresee any specific barriers to treating Data Assets associated with flexibility market operation as Open Data?

SPEN consider that treating Data Assets associated with flexibility market operation as Open Data will be a positive step in reducing barriers.

Publishing information on the amount of flexibility that we are procuring, and dispatching allows flexibility providers to have confidence that we are actively managing the process and are transparent in our approach. We see this as a positive move in stimulating the market. We would initially intend to publish data periodically to our Open Data Platform, aligned with significant flexibility activities e.g., bi-annual tender windows and publication of the SLC31E procurement statement / performance report.