



Developer (Generators, Demand Customers), and interested parties

*Promoting choice and
value to customers*

Our Ref: JS/mc/05-139
Direct Dial: 020 7901
Email: john.scott@ofgem.gov.uk

19 August 2005

Dear Colleague

Decision on the Long Term Development Statements (LTDSs) for Electricity Distribution Networks

On 16 May 2005, Ofgem published an Open Letter seeking views on the value of the LTDSs and their further development. To assist the consultation, Ofgem published a usability questionnaire seeking views on specific LTDS issues. In order to ensure that existing users of the LTDSs had the opportunity to respond to the consultation, Ofgem requested the Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to inform users directly about the consultation.

This letter sets out the conclusions that Ofgem has drawn from the responses to the consultation and the actions it has decided to take. Attached to this letter is a summary of the consultation responses received.

Background to the LTDSs

The DNOs each publish a Long Term Development Statement (LTDS) annually in accordance with the requirements of Ofgem's Form of Statement (FoS) and Standard Licence Condition 25 (SLC25). LTDSs are intended to help prospective generators, demand customers and other interested parties assess network capability and connection opportunities. They were first published in 2002.

LTDSs Open Letter Consultation

In total, 13 responses were received. A list of respondents is shown in Appendix 1 and copies of the responses are available from the Ofgem library and website. Although the total number of LTDS users is relatively small, the number of connection opportunities that are assessed using the LTDSs is very significant. The responses received from consultants and developers show that some 23GW of potential distributed generation connections have been assessed using the LTDSs since their introduction.

The main conclusions that Ofgem has drawn from the consultation are as follows:

- The LTDSs are valuable and of benefit to users.
- The LTDSs are broadly satisfying the intent of SLC25.
- Improvements should be considered for certain areas of the LTDSs.

Further developments of the LTDSs were most requested in the following areas:

- Ease of accessing the LTDSs on DNOs' websites.
- The Part 1 statements; these are generally not considered to be very useful in their current form.
- Presentation and format of the LTDSs data.
- The need for GIS data and good quality geographic maps/drawings.
- Ease of navigating between relevant data.
- Scope of technical data requires review.

Ofgem is aware that a DTI sponsored project is currently progressing that is directly related to the further development of the LTDSs. This project is assessing the feasibility of linking network data with Geographic Information System (GIS) data and providing access to it via the internet. The project will be completed later this year.

Taking account of the comments received in response to Ofgem's consultation and the progress of the DTI project, Ofgem has decided to:

- Leave the FoS unchanged for the 2005 LTDSs; and
- Provide the consultation responses, subject to confidentiality constraints, to the DTI project partners so that they can be taken into account in their development work.

The way forward

The DNOs are required to publish their 2005 LTDSs in accordance with the August 2002 FoS.

Ofgem will reconsider the options for the further development of the LTDSs following the completion of the DTI project.

If you wish to discuss any aspects of this letter, please contact Ronke Adenuga on 020 7901 7461.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Scott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

JOHN SCOTT
Technical Director

List of Respondents to the LTDS consultation

Amec

Digital Landscape Company

Econnect

EDF Energy

Garrard Hassan

Imass

Ipsa

Laing O'Rourke

RWE Npower

Scottish & Southern Energy

Toby Manning

United Kingdom Generic Distribution System (UKGDS)

United Utilities

West Coast Energy

Summary of Responses to the LTDS consultation

The May 2005 consultation document included a usability questionnaire focusing on areas of the statement where users' views were required. The most popular views received on each of the two main areas of the usability questionnaire (General and Technical) are summarised below.

General

Ease of accessing LTDSs

- Some respondents reported difficulty in locating the LTDSs on DNOs' websites. They stated that the statements are not easy to find as they are usually in obscure locations and required some intelligent browsing and searching.
- Respondents also commented that access to the LTDSs is not standardised. Concerns were raised that the various formats, including web-based (often requiring registration procedures), CD, and paper, did not promote uniformity in accessing the statements. Standardised access arrangements should be put in place.

Format

- There was general support for the inclusion of good quality electronic geographic diagrams and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to enable users to determine the physical location of substations and routes of distribution circuits.
- There was a high level of support for LTDS data to be presented electronically, in a common format.
- Most respondents agreed that publication of the statements in electronic format would be preferable. However, a number of respondents stated that requests for LTDSs in other formats should be met at an agreed cost.

Ease of retrieving data

- Some respondents reported difficulty in extracting data and linking data in different sections of the LTDSs. For instance, cross-referencing geographic data to tabular data is often difficult because geographical data is in a different document than the tabular data and there are sometimes discrepancies between the data shown on the schematic diagrams and the tabular data provided in the LTDSs.
- Some respondents particularly felt that the PDF report style format made it difficult to manipulate data and not all LTDSs are provided in PDF format that allows bookmarking, making the electronic PDF version difficult to browse. A few expressed the desire to see the technical data in the LTDSs presented electronically in a spreadsheet format to enable data to be easily used e.g. in a computer modelling package.
- A number of respondents would welcome a move to align the process of navigation between the various data sets in the LTDSs, namely geographic, tabular and schematic data. Standardisation would make it easier to collate data from these sources and electronic versions of the LTDSs in a standard format across the DNOs would greatly simplify the process of navigation.
- There was a high level of support for website publication of the statement due to the reduced costs and improved accessibility that this would offer. A respondent acknowledged that security of data and the information in the LTDSs is seen as a growing issue.

Usefulness

- Some respondents did not feel that the scope of the data within Part 1 of the LTDSs provided sufficient information to help them determine if the full statements would be of use to them. They consider the technical data contained in the full statements to be more useful.

Cost/Charges

- Over half of the respondents agreed that the charges levied for the statements are reasonable whilst the remainder would prefer the LTDSs to be downloadable free of charge via the Internet. Three respondents expressed the view that, given the high costs involved in

producing the statements, the revenue that could be generated by charging for access to the full statements, given the current user base, will never match the level of costs. They should therefore be free.

Presentation of Technical and Distributed Generation data

- Most respondents agreed that all relevant technical data should be provided in tables using an electronic system (database or spreadsheet format) to avoid the need to refer to other sources for information. This will introduce flexibility, allowing data to be easily manipulated, collated into other formats and detect data discrepancies.
- Some respondents stated it would help identify opportunities for connecting generation if the LTDSs provided details of exactly where generations scheme are already connected with brief technical details on their method of connection. Respondents would prefer that the LTDSs make reference to the primary busbar at which the generator is connected and not just the substation as is presently the case.
- Some respondents highlighted that it would help if LTDSs provide details of schemes that are not yet constructed but have accepted connection offers. They also indicated that it would be useful if the LTDSs provide indications of power flows on circuits and thus the potential capacity available for new generator connections. This information should include the effects of existing generators.

Technical

Areas requiring more or less technical data

- Only some of the LTDSs provide summer thermal ratings. The majority of DNOs require requests to be made.
- DNO standards for circuit complexity are not explicitly given in the LTDSs.
- For each table/substation there should be a commentary identifying specific issues, constraints, opportunities e.g. identifying spare capacity and demand.
- The LTDSs should specify where normally open points are located throughout the

distribution system at the various voltage levels.

- Most LTDSs do not provide LV transformer earthing impedance.
- Since voltage rise issues are a limiting factor to connecting generation, it would be helpful if the LTDSs provide information on the number of tap positions on tap changers. This would help the generator to ascertain if voltage rises can be contained within limits.
- The connection voltage, capacity of individual generation schemes, technology type, and fault in-feed of DG should be given.
- The value of the G74 fault contribution from loads separate from the overall fault level should be given.

Conclusion

The responses from users of the LTDSs showed strong support for these publications.

This summary represents a condensed version of the wide range of comments received on areas where they would most like to see improvements made to the LTDSs.