Ofgem/DECC Smart Grids Forum
Paper to 20 July SGF

WS5 – Ways of Working

Introduction

A number of practical issues were identified at the first SGF meeting relating to the operation of the Forum. This paper proposes ways of addressing these. It also poses a number of questions to be taken up by the workstream group to help develop our thinking on what we want this workstream to achieve more generally in terms of the Forum's dissemination, outreach and horizon scanning activities over the next 9 months.

What is clear, is that although DECC and Ofgem jointly lead this workstream, it will require significant input from members to understand what is useful for them to know about, and share. We will also need to keep it manageable by leveraging existing resources and mechanisms.

Access to the Forum

There needs to be clarity as to how members and non-members can bring issues to the SGF for action and/or information.

For members this would appear to be straightforward. Meeting agendas will always be published in advance and agenda items sought. Additionally, members will always be free to raise issues directly on an ad hoc basis if this is considered necessary.

For non-members, it is proposed that access should be made available in two ways. Firstly, stakeholders can always approach Forum members to bring issues forward. Secondly, it is proposed to provide a facility on Ofgem's web page for stakeholders to contact the Forum directly by email. At each Forum meeting, a report would be given of all the contacts made and the response actions taken/proposed.

Dissemination/Outreach by the Forum

We have stated very clearly that the SGF will operate in a transparent way and be accessible to all stakeholders. We have already established a page on Ofgem's website dedicated to the SGF (only two 'clicks' from the Home page) and have published the ToRs, meeting notes, list of members etc. There is therefore no issue in terms of openness in relation to the outputs produced.

However, this is essentially passive dissemination. The SGF needs to decide whether it also pursues more proactive dissemination activities. A key question is how far there should be formal outreach for the forum as a whole, or if outreach should be on an "as needs" basis through work stream activity. The following are options for consideration:

- The website could encourage stakeholders to engage/challenge the Forum;
- A consultation programmed into the work of specific workstreams, in particular WS2;
- A consultation or seminar held with the annual report;
- An event held (possibly linked to the IET) to allow engagement with stakeholders;
- The SGF could make regular contributions to SmartGrid GB meetings;
- SGF members speaking at selected conferences under the SGF banner.

Horizon Scanning

The visibility of smart grid developments is qualitatively judged not to be as good as it could be. It is not an insignificant task to carry this out in a thorough way. However, it appears that a number of bodies are attempting to do this. These include the European Commission, the IEA, ISGAN and, more 'locally', SmartGrids GB.

The European regulators are currently completing a status review of smart grids and this has shown that the regulators do not have a clear view of developments. More helpfully, the Joint Research Centre of the Commission has carried out a wide ranging (i.e. including smart meters) survey and this will be published very soon.

It would be useful to understand from Forum members what developments are most useful to track and for information to be shared on:

- Projects being undertaken in other countries?
- Projects being undertaken under the LCN Fund?
- European developments esp. anything linked to potential legislation e.g. SG communication?
- Funding developments and opportunities, both EU and domestic?
- Smart Meter coordination updates?
- DECC policy updates (e.g. policy on EVs, heat, DG etc)

It will also be important to find out from the Forum members what a usefully output from this piece of work would be.

Information/Data Repository
There's so much going on that there is a question of how to filter and make sense of it as a resource. It will be helpful to identify and leverage existing work to do some of this e.g.:
- ISGAN (and ENARD) workstreams that are looking to map international activity
- ENA (ENFG)work
- LCNF

It will be useful to understand what the Forum members feel would be a useful deliverable from this area of work.

Membership

There is no term specified for the founding members of the Forum. However, requests to join the Forum continue to be received and there would seem to be a need to have some process in place to ensure that members can leave and be replaced as circumstances change.