

Minutes of the ECO Innovation Technical Advisory Panel

From: Roisin Curran

Date: 11 November 2020

Location: Conference call

Time: 9:00am

The technical advisory panel (TAP) has been set up to review ECO demonstration and innovation applications. It is formed by a number of independent panel members, with its Chair and Secretariat function provided by Ofgem. The TAP makes recommendations to Ofgem to approve or reject certain ECO applications. It does not, in and of itself, make any decisions to approve or reject such applications. Accordingly, these minutes provide a summary of each discrete review undertaken by the TAP as discussed by TAP members during group meetings. The TAP review is limited to the material submitted by applicants at application stage, or in subsequent correspondence, and these minutes provide a summary of the opinions offered by TAP members on the material submitted insofar as they inform the eventual recommendation made by the TAP. These minutes are reviewed by the TAP members prior to publication. These minutes do not represent a formal statement of opinion by Ofgem in regard to any product, measure, or application received by Ofgem in relation to ECO. Applicants who wish to challenge the opinions contained within these minutes may contact Ofgem directly.

Present

David Glew, Leeds Beckett University

Jason Palmer, Cambridge Energy

Neil Cutland, Cutland Consulting Ltd

Michael Testa, BEIS

Kay Popoola, BEIS

Kate Fielding, BEIS

Eric Baster, Ofgem

Andy Morrall (Chair), Ofgem

Christopher Mack, Ofgem

Roisin Curran (Secretariat), Ofgem

Introductory remarks by the Chair

The Chair welcomed all panel members to the meeting. Hunter Danskin was unable to attend, and sent his apologies.

The Chair introduced the aim of the meeting, to discuss the proposed amendment requests for the DA applications 'Airex', 'Airoom', and 'Chimella'.

1. Demonstration Action Amendment Request: Airex

- 1.1. The approved demonstration action 'Airex' applied for a retrospective amendment to the agreed monitoring methodology, as the monitoring had already been completed. The panel were not confident that the proposed methodology could achieve statistically significant results, and it was agreed to postpone providing a recommendation to Ofgem until the data was analysed and a final report provided. The final report was provided to Ofgem, and discussed during the meeting.
- 1.2. The panel were of the view that the significance test used in the final report was not appropriate for non-normal distribution, and requested a more appropriate test such as the Wilcoxon signed rank test, be applied to the data set.
- 1.3. The panel noted the section on the effectiveness of the product at achieving cost savings contained limited detail, and requested the cost savings were presented as the potential range of savings (lowest, highest, and central), based on the confidence interval for the HTC results. The section should also include an explanation as to how the cost saving results translate to, and are representative of, the UK housing stock.
- 1.4. The panel commented that completing this methodology without prior approval put the DA at high risk of rejection, and the applicant was fortunate that a statistically significant result seems to have been obtained. The panel recommended the amendment request

for 'Airex' is accepted in this case, pending the outcome of a more appropriate statistical test. The panel were reluctant to 'approve' this exact methodology for future DAs.

2. Demonstration Action Amendment Request: Airoom

- 2.1. The approved demonstration action Airoom requested an amendment to the agreed monitoring methodology. The panel were unsure why an amendment to the methodology was requested if the applicant intended to delay commencement of the demonstration action until the following heating season.
- 2.2. The panel could see no valid reason why a reduced monitoring period was proposed.
- 2.3. The panel recommended the request for pulse testing to be used in 25% of the properties in place of blower door tests be rejected. The panel were of the opinion that the pulse test was equally invasive in the current climate, as it also required entry into people's homes. The panel also noted that the blower door test is currently a more widely recognised test for airtightness.
- 2.4. The panel recommended the proposed reduction in energy monitoring frequency to before and after meter readings was also rejected. The panel noted that the application was approved on the basis that energy use would be monitored at a half hourly frequency, with the potential for a small proportion of properties to receive manual meter reads if it were unsuitable for half hourly meter readings to be taken. The panel acknowledged that the "Loop" system was no longer available for gas, however there are other data logging systems on the market for 'dumb' gas and electricity meters. The panel acknowledged the difficulty the applicant was having in recruiting ECO eligible households with SMETS 2 installed, as had been originally proposed, and suggested the applicant find an alternative method of reading meters at the higher half hourly frequency.

3. Demonstration Action Amendment Request: Chimella

- 3.1. The approved demonstration action Chimella submitted an amendment request, which included a proposal to expand the regions in which properties were recruited from a single region in the Midlands, to UK wide. The panel recommended this request was approved, providing there was an equal split achieved between the regions sampled.

- 3.2. The amendment request also included a proposal to reduce the monitoring duration from 3 months pre and post monitoring, to 8 weeks pre and post monitoring. This amendment was required due to the delay in recruiting the desired sample size during the current heating season, partly as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The panel recommended this was approved.
- 3.3. The panel recommended the proposal to reduce the energy monitoring frequency to before and after meter reads be rejected. Similar to the Airoom amendment request, the panel acknowledged the difficulty the applicant was having in recruiting ECO eligible households with SMETS 2 installed, as had been originally proposed, and suggested the applicant find an alternative method of reading meters at the higher half hourly frequency. The panel also acknowledged that the "Loop" system was no longer available, however advised there are other data logging systems on the market for dumb gas and electricity meters.

4. Date of next meeting

- 4.1. The next meeting of the TAP is on Tuesday 24 November 2020 via conference call.