Meeting name	ISG
Date of meeting	27 April 2004
Paper Title	Review of Interface Documentation
Purpose of Paper	For Decision
Synopsis	ELEXON has reviewed the existing set of documents which specify the interfaces between Parties and the central systems under the Code. This paper details the result of this review and identifies several opportunities to improve the efficiency of the existing set of documents. The ISG are invited to endorse ELEXON raising a Change Proposal to progress the issue.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Balancing and Settlement Code (the 'Code') currently specifies the requirements for documenting interfaces between Parties and central systems. ELEXON has reviewed the existing set of documents which discharge these obligations.

1.2 Several opportunities to improve the efficiency of existing set of interface documents have been identified and are outlined in this paper. Prior to the expenditure of further effort in this area, views of the ISG on the use of interface documents by Parties are being sought.

2. CURRENT INTERFACE DOCUMENTATION

2.1 The existing set of Code Subsidiary Documents includes:

- **SVA Data Catalogue**

  The SVA Data Catalogue defines the data interfaces required by Supplier Volume Allocation (SVA) under the BSC. All of the interfaces are cross-referenced to the relevant Programme documents (Technical Specifications, BSC Procedures, Party Service Lines and BSC Service Lines) where the data flow and its usage were originally defined.

- **NETA Data File Catalogue**

  The NETA Data File Catalogue (NDFC) defines all interfaces between Parties and central service providers other than the SVA Agent (SVAA). It does not include interfaces between central service providers (e.g. between Central Data Collection Agent and Settlement Administration Agent).

  In most cases the NDFC outlines interfaces with BSC Agent services currently provided by Logica Central Services Agent (CSA). As such, the vast majority of information in the NDFC is available in the Logica Interface Definition Document (IDD) part 1. The NDFC currently contains a detailed description of each report/data item (typically this is a direct duplication of, and is derived from, information contained in the IDD). Furthermore, the NDFC is maintained as both an access database and a text document.

- **Reporting Catalogue**

The Reporting Catalogue is a stand alone document which outlines the data items within each of the reports in Section V of the Code. The Reporting Catalogue also covers other items which are reported, for example Code parameters set by the Panel and available on the BSC Website.

The Reporting Catalogue performs two main functions. Firstly, the Reporting Catalogue provides a high level summary of all the reporting requirements in the Code (the scope of this is wider than that of the Data Catalogues as it includes, amongst other things, BSCCo reporting and Panel set parameters). Secondly, the Reporting Catalogue provides a link between Code reporting obligations and defined flows and data items. As such, much of the information contained in the Reporting Catalogue is a high level duplication of information in the NDFC and IDD.

3. ISSUES IDENTIFIED

3.1 Having reviewed the existing interface documentation, ELEXON have identified several opportunities for improved efficiency in this area.

3.2 Currently there is significant duplication of information between the NDFC and the IDD. The majority of interfaces described in the NDFC are covered in detail within the IDD. This results in a duplication of effort by ELEXON when changes to reports/data items are required (as both the NDFC and the IDD must be updated). In addition, Parties are required to maintain and cross review to ensure consistency between the two documents. It is ELEXON's understanding that Parties use the IDD as the primary source of CSA interface information. Reducing any duplication of information between the NDFC and IDD would offer an efficiency benefit (both in terms of the maintenance effort required by Parties and reduced central system implementation costs for reporting changes).

3.3 Central service provider to central service provider interfaces are not covered in the NDFC. At present this information is defined in one or more places for each Central Service provider and, as Central Service providers each have there own interface definitions, inconsistencies can arise (for example the IDD and the SVAA Data Catalogue both define flows between CSA and SVAA). However, it should be noted that this current arrangement is consistent with Code obligations, which only require the NDFC to specify interfaces between BSC Agents and Parties. Expanding the scope of the NDFC to include Central Service provider to Central Service provider flows would ensure that a definitive source exists for all flows.

3.4 The Reporting Catalogue currently provides the only link between Code reporting obligations and actual electronic flows. However, in its current form, the document is not particularly effective. The level of detail is insufficient for system design purposes and there is no Data Catalogue cross reference to the relevant report (where such information is available). It should be noted that the Reporting Catalogue outlines data flows not covered in the NDFC (for example BSCCo reporting). However, this suggests a requirement to expand the NDFC rather than a purpose for a separate Reporting Catalogue. There is also a significant duplication of information between the Reporting Catalogue and the IDD.

4. SOLUTIONS

4.1 ELEXON have identified two possible changes to the existing baseline which could improve the efficiency of the existing document suite. One of these would require a Code Modification whilst the other could be progressed via a Change Proposal.

4.2 These two potential solutions, considered further in Annex 1, are as follows:

- **Solution 1** – Full review of the existing interface documentation. Merging of the NDFC, Reporting Catalogue and IDD documents to produce a single definitive source of interface information; and

- **Solution 2** – Rationalisation of the NDFC and Reporting Catalogue to minimise duplication of information contained in the IDD.

5. ANALYSIS SOLUTION 1- FULL REVIEW OF THE EXISTING SET OF INTERFACE DOCUMENTS

5.1 Solution 1 would address all the issues identified and would provide a definitive source of interface information. It would also reduce the duplication present in the existing baseline. However, a Code Modification would be required to merge the NDFC and Reporting Catalogue (as the Code currently specifies separate documents for these).

5.2 Changes to the baseline required to implement this solution would have a significant impact on the existing baseline and the implementation cost would be relatively high. Furthermore, the impact on the working practices of Parties could be significant, as they would be required to use a new set of interface documents.

5.3 It is ELEXON's view that the cost of this solution could not be justified purely on the central systems benefits. Therefore, a significant industry cost benefit and support from Parties would be needed to justify implementation of this solution.

5.4 Although this approach is not recommended by ELEXON, it remains open for a Party to raise a Modification Proposal in this area.

6. ANALYSIS SOLUTION 2- RATIONALISATION OF THE NDFC AND REPORTING CATALOGUE

6.1 Solution 2 would not address all the issues identified. However there would be a significant reduction in the duplication of information present in the existing baseline. Furthermore, as this approach does not require supporting Code changes, ELEXON could raise a Change Proposal to progress this solution.

6.2 Implementation of solution 2 would not have a significant impact on the existing baseline. All documents would be retained, although the duplication of information would be reduced. As outlined in Annex 1, it has been estimated that, in terms of central system costs, solution 2 would pay for itself after two significant releases of the BSC Systems (in which both the NDFC and Reporting Catalogue are impacted). As such, the central cost analysis is not considered to be restrictive.

6.3 In addition to central system savings, there is an opportunity for benefits in terms of Party effort, as Parties' effort required for maintenance and review would be reduced. The extent of any savings in this area would be established during the Change Proposal process but initial views are being sought from ISG.

6.4 The impact on the working practices of Parties is not thought to be significant, as the IDD would continue to be the main source of CSA interface information. This is based on the assumption Parties currently use the IDD as the primary source of CSA interface information. However, if Parties are currently utilising the NDFC as the primary source of interface information it is unlikely the changes being considered would gain support during the Change Proposal process. As there will be a cost associated with progressing the required Change Proposal, ELEXON are seeking initial views in this area prior to raising a Change Proposal.

6.5   In light of the above analysis, ELEXON are seeking views of the ISG as to whether further effort should be expended in order to progress solution 2 as a Change Proposal.

7.   CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

7.1   An opportunity to improve the efficiency of existing baseline via rationalisation of the current set of interface documentation has been identified.

7.2   ELEXON are of the view that the potential changes should only be progressed to Change Proposal status if the ISG is of the opinion that there is a potential benefit worth further consideration. Therefore, ELEXON are seeking the views of ISG prior to raising a CP to progress potential changes to the interface documentation.

8.   RECOMMENDATION

8.1   ISG is invited to:

    a)   NOTE the results of ELEXON's review of the existing interface documentation;

    b)   COMMENT on Parties' current use of interface documentation, as set out in 6.3 and 6.4; and

    c)   ENDORSE the raising of a Change Proposal by ELEXON to consider further changes to the existing interface document set.

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ELEXON Change Delivery

List of enclosures
Annex 1- Potential changes to interface documentation

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Solution 1: Full review of existing interface documentation

ELEXON have considered the optimum structure for reporting documentation, which could be implemented if full review of the existing set of interface documents were performed. This approach forms solution 1 as follows:

SVA data catalogue:
Under solution 1, no changes would be proposed to the SVA Data Catalogue.

NETA Data File Catalogue:
The NDFC would be split into two parts, NDFC Part 1 and NDFC Part 2.

The NDFC Part 1 would deal with all interfaces between Parties and BSC Agents/ Transmission Company (excluding SVAA). This would be similar to the current document however the following changes would be incorporated:

a. Instead of including the detailed report/ data item specification a cross reference would be included to the appropriate interface specification where these flows were originally defined. In most cases this would be the IDD. This would remove the requirement to update both the NDFC and IDD when implementing reporting changes. It would also reduce the requirement for cross review between the IDD and NDFC. The revised structure would include the capability to define the flow in the case that no other interface specification exists.

b. Where an individual report or data item is covered in one or more interface specifications each of these will be cross referenced within the NDFC. The NDFC would also specify which document provides the definitive reference.

c. The scope of NDFC would be expanded to include reports currently outlined in the Reporting Catalogue but not covered in the NDFC (in particular BSCCo reporting). Furthermore, the cross link between Code reporting requirements and the actual data flows would be specified in the NDFC (thus fulfilling the functionality currently provided by the Reporting Catalogue).

The NDFC Part 2 would deal with interfaces between central service providers. The NDFC Part 2 would be structured as per the NDFC Part 1 and would reference the relevant Interface specification as required (typically this would be the IDD pt2).

These changes would require a significant restructuring of the NDFC and would potentially require a supporting Code change.

IDD:
The IDD would be unchanged but as a consequence of changes to the NDFC (i.e. removal of detailed report/ data item specification and replacement with a cross references) the IDD would effectively become part of the NDFC. As the IDD is currently a configurable item and hence under the same change control as a Code Subsidiary Document this is a minimal change.

Reporting Catalogue:
The Reporting Catalogue would be merged into the NDFC such that the Code reporting obligations and associated data items would be cross referenced to the relevant interfaces. This would serve two purposes. Primarily it would reduce the effort required to maintain what is, in its present form, a potentially redundant document. Secondly, it would provide a direct cross reference between interface definitions and Code reporting requirements within a single document, functionality not provided within the current suite of documents. This change would require a Code Modification to implement.

Solution 2: Rationalisation of the NETA Data File Catalogue

In light of the implementation effort required and requirement for supporting Code changes, ELEXON has considered an alternative to a full review of the existing interface documentation set. A solution has been identified that would provide an improvement over the current baseline, requires minimal changes and could be implanted under the scope of a Change Proposal.

SVA data catalogue:
Under Solution 2, no changes would be proposed to the SVA Data Catalogue.

NETA Data File Catalogue:
Where there is duplication of information between the IDD and the NDFC, detailed flow information would be removed from the NDFC and replaced with a cross reference to the IDD. This would remove the requirement to update both the NDFC and IDD when implementing reporting changes. It would also reduce the requirement for cross review between the IDD and NDFC. For information not contained in the IDD the detailed flow information would remain in the NDFC. This change would not require a significant restructuring of the NDFC and would not require a supporting Code change.

IDD:
The IDD would be unchanged but as a consequence of changes to the NDFC (i.e. removal of detailed report/ data item specification and replacement with a cross references) the IDD would effectively become part of the NDFC. As the IDD is currently a configurable item and hence under the same level of change control this is a minimal change.

Reporting Catalogue:
The Reporting Catalogue would be maintained as a separate document. However, rather than listing the data items in each flow (which is currently a less detailed version of information within the IDD), cross references to the IDD would be included where appropriate. This would reduce the effort required to maintain the document. However, the link between Code reporting requirements and data items would be maintained.

Cost Benefit Analysis: Solution 2
It has been estimated that, since NETA Go-live, ELEXON has spent 60 man days effort (equivalent to £24,000) updating the NDFC and the Reporting Catalogue in order to keep these documents aligned with the IDD. This includes 8 system releases requiring changes to the NDFC and 9 requiring changes to the Reporting Catalogue.

The cost of implementing solution 2 has been estimated as 20 man days effort (equivalent to £8,000) on behalf of ELEXON. In addition there will be a cost associated with the progression of the supporting Change Proposal of approximately 10 ELEXON man days (£4,000). Therefore, the total cost of implementing solution 2 is estimated as 30 ELEXON Man Days (£12,000).

It has been estimated that, in terms of central system costs, solution 2 would pay for itself after two large releases of the BSC Systems (in which both the NDFC and Reporting Catalogue are impacted).

Please note this cost benefit analysis has not taken account of any potential savings to Parties associated with rationalisation of the interface documentation.