RETAIL ENERGY CODE

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STATUS	FOR DISCUSSION

I0198 - GAS MEMS MOVE TOWARDS A SINGLE INTERFACE FOR KEY MARKET MESSAGES

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1 PURPOSE

This paper seeks to explore solution options for I0198 and understand the views from REC Users, specifically Metering Asset Managers (MAMs). The Code Manager would like Change Issues Group participants to view the below Issue background, and proposed solution options through the following prism:

- The ultimate goal expressed in the I0198 Issue proposal of moving to a single communications method for MAMs will be explored within future REC Change.
    - At this stage, it is the Code Manager's intention that a series of "stepping stone" changes will lead up to this ultimate goal.
- The scope of I0198 is limited specifically to the "interim solution" of exploring a communications register.
- The communications register interim solution must pass a cost-benefit test in it's own right, where it's benefit is not contingent on the approval of future changes.

2 BACKGROUND AND SOLUTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

Metering Asset Managers (MAMs) are permitted within the REC to communicate Market Messages via up to three methods: the Data Transfer Network (DTN), the Information Exchange (IX), or via email. Whilst some Market Messages and scenarios mandate one method only, many scenarios (especially those found in Schedule 14 – Metering Operations) allow for a MAM to communicate via any of the three aforementioned methods. Whilst this provides flexibility for MAMs to adapt to differing requirements across diverse business scenarios, it also presents challenges in assuring the quality of gas market data.

Following investigative work conducted by the REC Performance Assurance (RPA) team, it has been determined to be likely that having a spread of viable communication options may result in gas data quality issues. For example, if a MAM sends a Market Message to another MAM using a method that the receiving MAM does not use, it is likely that the message will be missed. Additionally, it was also determined that having a spread of viable methods makes RPA led data gathering exercises harder to achieve.

As such, this Issue was raised so that the Code Manager can investigate the possibility of reducing the number of viable communication methods from three to one. In the original submission, and investigative work led by RPA, it was suggested that IX is the best candidate for a primary communication method. Additionally, due to the size, impact and complexity of such a change, the scope of this Issue is limited only to exploring interim solutions that might facilitate an eventual move to a single method.

2.2 SOLUTION

This Issue was raised with the expectation that it's scope would be limited to exploring an interim solution that would act as a "stepping stone" to the ultimate goal of exploring a reduction in permissible MAM communication methods. The Issue with raised with a suggestion for an interim solution, in the form of a communication method register. This register would support REC Parties in knowing how they might expect to receive communications from any given MAM. This would support in MAM operations by providing an additional means by which missed messages could be resolved.

The initial proposal for the communications register contained the four following items:

- Party Name
- Company Registration Number
- Operational Contact
- Method of sending various flows (IX, DTN, Email).

Following further discussion between the Code Manager, relevant stakeholders, and the proposer, we have further iterated upon the initial proposal to produce a more comprehensive register that we anticipate will provide more functionality to both Users and to the Code Manager. The Code Manager proposes that the following features be added to the register:

- Primary communication method
- Backup communication method
- Communication methods against market scenarios

The Code Manager expects that the ability to record communication methods against different market scenarios will better reflect operational practices for MAMs. For example, it may be a single MAM may, for a complex I&C job, communicate via email, for example, but may communicate typical domestic jobs via the DTN. As a result, a greater array of real-world applications are captured on the register, in a way that a binary choice of a single method to encompass all scenarios does not.

Additionally, the Code Manager expects that the ability to record a primary and backup communication method allows for a more accurate reflection of actual MAM operational practices. It may be, for example, that a MAM primarily communicates via the IX, but in the event that no response is received, or due to temporary inability to access the IX, they may resort to using the DTN.

An example of how this register might look is captured below (NB – This is a working example, and is not reflective of how a finished product might look):

	Market Scenario							
	8.5.3 - Respond to Metering Asset Exchange Request RRJOB		8.5.9 - Notification of Metering Asset Exchange ONJOB		8.5.13 - Notification of Metering Asset Removal ONUPD		9.5.13 - Communicate details of Metering Asset Exchange ONDET	
Comms Method MAM	Primary	Backup	Primary	Backup	Primary	Backup	Primary	Backup
MAM 1	IX	DTN,Email	DTN	None	Email	None	DTN	IX
MAM 2	DTN	IX	IX	Email	DTN	None	IX	DTN, Email
MAM 3	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.
MAM 4	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.
MAM 5	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.
MAM 6	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

3 QUESTIONS FOR THE CHANGE ISSUES GROUP

- Do you support the introduction of a communications method register?
- Would you find this communications method register useful for missed message resolution?
- What level of detail would you like to see in a communications method register?
- What should our approach be in recording a backup communication method? Should the backup see a significant amount of usage to qualify as a backup, for example? Or would even occasional use of email in niche situations qualify as a backup, for example?
- Do MAMs regularly use two communications methods on an equal basis, not necessarily as a primary and a backup? If so, how would you expect to see this captured?
- Do you ever change your communication methods? If so, how would you like to see updates to comms methods managed within the register?
- Would you expect that a communications method register be binding? i.e. if a MAM were to signify that they only use IX, for example, would you expect that this would be subject to monitoring and performance assurance activities?
- What degree of control would you support to manage the communications register? I.e. Should this register be a voluntary document, or should completion be compelled as a requirement of being a REC Party?
- Do you have any general comments about this Issue, or the proposed solution options?
- Do you have any general comments about the ambition to transition to a single MAM communication method?
- Within Schedule 14 – Metering Operations, there is scope for a Gas Supplier to communicate via DTN, IX and email, when sending Market Messages to MAMs and/or other REC Parties/Service Users. Would you support expansion of the scope of the register to include Gas Suppliers as well as MAMs?