Open Networks Programme
Consultation on high-level scope for 2022: JRC Response

Executive Summary

The Joint Radio Company (JRC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation and as an active member of the Advisory Group since 2017 have experienced the process first hand. Our input considers the role of enhanced operational control capability in facilitating the transition to 'Smart Grid' network operation and the relevance of this to specific work programme initiatives. In particular, we note that key strategic initiatives, e.g. the 'DNO to DSO transition' and 'Whole Energy Systems' approach, are dependent on increased visibility and control of network assets which is subject to the roll-out of enhanced operational control capability. To this end and from a horizon scanning perspective we see merit in this programme taking account of the need for enhanced operational control capability as this need applies to specific workstream activities and also from a strategic perspective. To address this additional consideration we encourage a co-ordinated liaison with the ENA-Strategic Telecommunications Group as the expert industry group.

Consideration of Enhanced OT Developments for Specific Workstreams

WS1B Product P6 – Operational DER visibility and monitoring

We welcome the plan to establish greater visibility and monitoring of Distributed Energy Resources and also encourage enhanced control of these assets as an enabler of the transition to 'Net Zero.' In addition, NG and SPEN have been working to establish a methodology / approach for Electricity System Restoration utilising DER and there would seem merit to include such capability in this product once the technical capability and approach has been proven[1] to minimise the costs and disruption associated with such an enhancement.

WS1B Product P7 – Operational Data Sharing

In light of the expectations from the DNOs, as outlined in their draft ED2 submissions, that they will have a greater need for visibility and control of increasing numbers of network assets going forwards it would seem sensible to consider within this work item how the available data will change over time, what data will be common and what will be discrete to individual DNOs, and how the project will adjust over time to the increasing breadth and depth of detail that will be forthcoming.

WS1B Product P3 (2020) – Real Time Data Exchange

With the increasing emphasis on Real Time visibility and control of assets there may be merit in exploring whether this workstream warranted increased focus to address the expansion in Operational control data that will result.

WS3 Product P1 – Distribution System Operation (DSO) Implementation Plan

As part of the transition to DSO the DNO's are recognising the need to have greater visibility and control of network assets in the LV layer to address increasing demands being imposed by low carbon technologies, e.g. Heat Pumps and Electric Vehicles, and minimise the need for 'dumb' network reinforcement. To address this, the DNOs' ED2 draft business plans are contemplating the need for enhanced operational control capability

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[1] Key documents | National Grid ESO

and it would seem sensible to include such developments within the context of this initiative potentially through establishing a liaison with the ENA – Strategic Telecommunications Group.

WS4 – Whole Energy Systems

In light of the emphasis placed by Ofgem on the role of 'Digitalising the system[2]' in facilitating the 'Net Zero' transition it would seem sensible to explore from the 'Whole Systems Energy' perspective the optimum approach to enabling enhanced operational control capability to support robust and resilient energy supply in an increasingly complex supply and demand context where balancing will become subject to local interventions.

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[2] Chapter 4, Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan 2021, pg 67, July 2021,
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1003778/smart-systems-and-flexibility-plan-2021.pdf