

Modification Report
Provision of information relating to the SO commodity charge
Modification Reference Number 0576
Version 5.0

This Modification Report is made pursuant to Rule 8.9 of the Modification Rules and follows the format required under Rule 8.9.3.

1. The Modification Proposal

"The Proposal is to enable shippers and customers to manage the risks associated with volatility in the level of the SO commodity charge, Transco should be obliged to publish sufficient information to allow shippers and customers to forecast the level of charges based on the outturn costs relative to forecast costs used when setting the SO commodity charge.

Transco sets the SO commodity charge at the start of the charging year by as the sum of all of the target level of costs under its SO incentive schemes. It is AEP's understanding that the current SO commodity charge is calculated by first summing the target level of costs for: SO internal costs; SO system balancing incentives; and the NTS exit capacity incentive. The target levels of costs are set out in Ofgem's December 2001 document "Transco NTS SO Incentives 2002-7: Final Proposals" document. Transco then subtracts its estimate of revenue it will receive over the year from users paying the SO optional commodity tariff and the St Fergus compression charge to determine target cost recovery.

This target level of cost recovery is then divided by Transco's forecast of system throughput for the year to determine the SO commodity charge.

Transco should therefore be obliged to publish:

- Transco's forecast of annual system throughput and monthly system throughput for the next charging year at the start of each charging year;
- actual system throughput on a weekly basis;
- Transco's forecast of annual and monthly target costs under the relevant SO incentive schemes (system balancing, SO internal costs and exit capacity) at the start of the charging year;
- the sum of outturn costs under the relevant SO incentive schemes (system balancing, SO internal costs and exit capacity) on a weekly basis; and
- disaggregated outturn costs for each of the relevant SO incentive schemes (system balancing, SO internal costs and exit capacity) on a quarterly basis.

Transco should be required to publish all of the information listed at the frequencies indicated on the Transco Information Exchange at <http://info.transco.uk.com/>"

2. Transco's Opinion

Transco does not support implementation of this Modification Proposal and does not believe that publishing the requested information would significantly increase Users' ability to accurately predict the path of the SO Commodity Charge. In addition, Transco would emphasise that the majority of the requested information is not available.

The Proposal does not accurately describe either Transco's obligations nor its approach to setting the SO Commodity Charge. Transco is aware of concerns about the potential volatility of transportation charges in general and the SO Commodity Charge in particular. Transco does not set charges for a charging year but, consistent with its Licence obligations, seeks to make adjustments to charges only when it is clear that to do so otherwise would lead to collected revenue exceeding the maximum allowed revenue calculated in accordance with the relevant price control formula. As would be expected, Transco also sets charges with a view to collecting the revenue allowed by each price control formula. But when doing this, Transco considers more than one year in the interests of achieving price stability within the obligations set out in its Gas Transporters Licence.

Following Ofgem's decision to veto the proposal to introduce a TO Commodity Charge (PC75), Transco intends to consult on options for setting transportation charges in future. This will provide an opportunity for all interested parties to contribute to consideration of the potential benefits of increased certainty regarding the future level of transportation charges and, if it is concluded that this is desirable, the means by which it might be delivered.

In respect of this Modification Proposal, Transco would point out that, in respect of the requested information:

- Throughput information is already published on a daily basis;
- Targets under the relevant SO incentive schemes were set by Ofgem on the basis of a formula year, and a monthly split of the target is not available; and
- The sum of outturn costs under the relevant SO incentive schemes are not produced on a weekly or quarterly basis and hence are not available. For example, SO internal costs include recharges from a number of Transco departments, and these are not available on a weekly basis. Exit capacity costs are also a significant part of the requested costs which, rather than accruing on a daily basis, are calculated on the basis of a snapshot at one point in time.

Transco therefore considers that the implementation of the proposal would generate substantial requirements for systems, business process changes and cumulative within year estimates of target (which are currently not available) and actual performance that are currently not available. Given the very limited, if any, benefits that might accrue to Users, Transco therefore does not recommend implementation of the proposal.

3. Extent to which the proposed modification would better facilitate the relevant objectives

The proposer suggests that implementing this Modification Proposal will better facilitate competition between shippers and suppliers.

4. The implications for Transco of implementing the Modification Proposal, including

a) implications for the operation of the System:

No direct implications are anticipated.

b) development and capital cost and operating cost implications:

Changes to Transco's existing systems would be required to facilitate the provision of this information resulting in estimated development costs of the order of £100k. Some additional operating costs due directly to the information release would also be expected.

c) extent to which it is appropriate for Transco to recover the costs, and proposal for the most appropriate way for Transco to recover the costs:

Any additional System Operator costs incurred as a result of implementing this proposal would be accounted for under the proposed internal cost incentive scheme, as set out in Ofgem's final proposals for the System Operator incentives, and hence be largely recovered from Users.

d) analysis of the consequences (if any) this proposal would have on price regulation:

The proposal is not considered to have any consequences in respect of price regulation.

5. The consequence of implementing the Modification Proposal on the level of contractual risk to Transco under the Network Code as modified by the Modification Proposal

No such consequences are anticipated.

6. The development implications and other implications for computer systems of Transco and related computer systems of Users

Changes to Transco systems are required to facilitate the provision of this information.

7. The implications of implementing the Modification Proposal for Users

Users would be provided with information that might allow them to better forecast changes to the level of the SO Commodity charge.

8. The implications of implementing the Modification Proposal for Terminal Operators, Consumers, Connected System Operators, Suppliers, producers and, any

Non-Network Code Party

Transco believes that there would be no direct effect on the above parties.

9. Consequences on the legislative and regulatory obligations and contractual relationships of Transco and each User and Non-Network Code Party of implementing the Modification Proposal

No changes to contractual relationships are anticipated.

10. Analysis of any advantages or disadvantages of implementation of the Modification Proposal

Advantages:

- The provision of information might improve the ability of Users to predict more accurately SO commodity charge levels.

Disadvantages

- Increased administrative complexity and operating costs for Transco
- Much of the requested information is not available as specified in the Modification Proposal and hence the published information could be regarded as misleading.

11. Summary of the Representations (to the extent that the import of those representations are not reflected elsewhere in the Modification Report)

Seven representations were received:

British Gas Trading Ltd. (BGT)
TotalFinaElf Gas & Power Ltd. (TFE)
Shell Gas Direct (Shell)
SSE Energy Supply Ltd. (SSE)
AEP Energy Services (AEP)
LE Group (LE)
TXU Europe Energy (TXU)

Five respondents (BGT, TFE, SSE, AEP, LE) support the proposal.

One respondent (TXU) supports the proposal in the absence of a Transco alternative

One respondent (Shell) does not support the proposal.

1. Risk

TXU, AEP and LE commented that provision of information, allowing Users to form an opinion on the likely direction and magnitude of movement in the SO commodity charges, would allow them to better manage risk. If a method of managing risk is not introduced then it is likely that such risk will be factored into end consumer prices. It was argued that the ability to better forecast SO commodity charges would better facilitate competition between shippers and suppliers.

Transco Response

Transco accept that increased certainty regarding future charge levels is of potential benefit. However, Transco believes that providing the information sought in this proposal would not necessarily increase certainty. In practice Transco expects to continue to make only occasional changes to the level of the SO Commodity Charge, and will follow the required notice periods. In addition, following Ofgem's decision to veto the proposal to introduce a TO Commodity Charge (PC75), Transco proposes to consult on options for setting transportation charges in future. This will provide an opportunity for all interested parties to contribute to consideration of the potential benefits of increased certainty regarding the future level of transportation charges and, if it is concluded that this is desirable, the means by which it may be delivered.

2. Monitoring of Transco Performance

SSE assume that Transco will be putting into place mechanisms to track and monitor its performance under the SO incentive schemes in order that it might comply with its licence obligations.

Transco Response

In terms of complying with Licence obligations, Transco would emphasise that its obligation is, when setting charges, to use best endeavours to ensure that it does recover more revenue than permitted by the relevant price control formula within a given formula year.

3. Data Provision

SSE suggest that three groups of data could be provided on a cumulative and weekly basis;

- Forecast system throughput vs actual and the forecast outturn for the year;
- Forecast performance under each component of the SO incentive scheme vs actual and the forecast outturn for the year; and
- Actual revenue received from SO commodity charges vs forecast and the forecast outturn.

Transco's Response

While noting SSEs views on potential information which might be released, Transco would observe that, in accordance with Modification Rules, the Proposal should be considered for implementation in the form in which it was raised rather than being developed.

4. Weekly Reporting

AEP suggest that if data is not available on a weekly basis then the best available estimates could be published and reconciled to actual data as it

becomes available. BGT suggest that there is scope for regular reporting but potentially not as described within the mod.

Transcos Response

Transco accepts that it would be possible to provide estimates as described, but is not clear why such estimated data, which may only be confirmed after the end of a formula year, would be helpful in projecting the likely level of the SO Commodity Charge while Transco continues its present approach of avoiding frequent changes to the level of charges.

12. The extent to which the implementation is required to enable Transco to facilitate compliance with safety or other legislation

Transco does not believe that implementation of this Modification Proposal would affect compliance with safety or other legislation.

13. The extent to which the implementation is required having regard to any proposed change in the methodology established under Standard Condition 4(5) or the statement furnished by Transco under Standard Condition 4(1) of the Licence

Not applicable.

14. Programme of works required as a consequence of implementing the Modification Proposal

A programme of works would need to be developed should the Modification Proposal be implemented.

15. Proposed implementation timetable (including timetable for any necessary information systems changes)

If Ofgem directs implementation of this proposal it is proposed it would take effect from 1 December 2002.

16. Recommendation concerning the implementation of the Modification Proposal

Transco's view is that the proposal should not be implemented.

17. Restrictive Trade Practices Act

If implemented this proposal will constitute an amendment to the Network Code. Accordingly the proposal is subject to the Suspense Clause set out in the attached Annex.

18. Transco's Proposal

This revised Modification Report contains Transco's proposal not to modify the Network Code but has been prepared following direction from the Gas & Electricity Markets Authority.

19. Text

SECTION V: GENERAL

Paragraph 5 Information and Confidentiality

Add new paragraph 5.10:

"V.5.10 System Operator Commodity Charge Information

V5.10.1 Transco shall arrange for the information referred to in Annex V-2 (‘SO Commodity Charge Information’) to be published in the manner and frequency specified in that annex.

V5.10.2 Where Transco is not reasonably able to publish SO Incentive Data in the manner and frequency set out in Annex V-2, the requirements of paragraph V5.10.1 shall not apply, and Transco shall publish the SO Incentive Data as soon as is reasonably practicable."

"Add new Annex V-2:

Annex V-2	SO Commodity Charge Information			
SO Commodity Charge Information description	Licence definition	period	reporting deadline	location
forecast of annual System throughput for Formula Year t	N/A	Formula Year	On 1 April or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter in Formula Year t-1	http://info.transco.uk.com
forecast of monthly System throughput for Formula Year t	N/A	Formula Year	On 1 April or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter in Formula Year t-1	http://info.transco.uk.com
actual weekly System throughput	N/A	Formula Year to date	9 Days after week end	http://info.transco.uk.com
annual target cost for each of the Relevant SO Incentive Schemes for Formula Year t	NTS SO exit capacity incentive targets (ExCITt) & (ExITt), system reserve incentive target (SRITt), gas cost incentive target (GCITt), internal cost incentive target (ICITt).	Formula Year	On 1 April or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter in Formula Year t-1	http://info.transco.uk.com
forecast monthly target cost for each of the Relevant SO Incentive Schemes for Formula Year t	N/A	Formula Year	On 1 April or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter in Formula Year t-1	http://info.transco.uk.com
sum of weekly outturn costs for the Relevant SO Incentive Schemes	The exit performance measure (ExCPt), The NTS SO system balancing costs (SBICt), The internal cost performance measure (ICCpt)	Formula Year to date	62 Days after week end	http://info.transco.uk.com
quarterly outturn costs for each of the Relevant SO Incentive Schemes	The exit performance measure (ExCPt), The NTS SO system balancing costs (SBICt), The internal cost performance measure (ICCpt)	Formula Year to date	62 Days after quarter end	http://info.transco.uk.com

Where:

t	means the relevant Formula Year;
t-1	means the Formula Year prior to the relevant Formula Year;
week	means the seven day period from 06:00 hours on a Monday until 06:00 hours on the following Monday;
throughput	means (actual inputs to the System + sum of UDQOs) / 2
Relevant SO Incentive Schemes	means exit capacity investment incentive, system balancing incentive and internal cost incentive schemes as defined by the Licence;
Licence	means the Transco Licence;
Formula Year	means a period of twelve months commencing on 1 April at 06:00 hours.”.

Signed for and on behalf of Transco.

Signature:

Tim Davis
Head of Regulation NT&T

Date:

Gas and Electricity Markets Authority Response:

In accordance with Condition 9 of the Standard Conditions of the Gas Transporters' Licences dated 21st February 1996 I hereby direct Transco that the above proposal (as contained in Modification Report Reference **0576**, version **5.0** dated **22/11/2002**) be made as a modification to the Network Code.

Signed for and on Behalf of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority.

Signature:

The Network Code is hereby modified with effect from, in accordance with the proposal as set out in this Modification Report, version **5.0**.

Signature:

Process Manager - Network Code
Transco

Date:

Annex

1. Any provision contained in this Agreement or in any arrangement of which this Agreement forms part by virtue of which The Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1976 ("the RTPA"), had it not been repealed, would apply to this Agreement or such arrangement shall not come into effect:
 - (i) if a copy of the Agreement is not provided to the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority ("the Authority") within 28 days of the date on which the Agreement is made; or
 - (ii) if, within 28 days of the provision of the copy, the Authority gives notice in writing, to the party providing it, that he does not approve the Agreement because it does not satisfy the criterion specified in paragraphs 1(6) or 2(3) of the Schedule to The Restrictive Trade Practices (Gas Conveyance and Storage) Order 1996 ("the Order") as appropriate

provided that if the Authority does not so approve the Agreement then Clause 3 shall apply.

2. If the Authority does so approve this Agreement in accordance with the terms of the Order (whether such approval is actual or deemed by effluxion of time) any provision contained in this Agreement or in any arrangement of which this Agreement forms part by virtue of which the RTPA, had it not been repealed, would apply this Agreement or such arrangement shall come into full force and effect on the date of such approval.
3. If the Authority does not approve this Agreement in accordance with the terms of the Order the parties agree to use their best endeavours to discuss with Ofgem any provision (or provisions) contained in this Agreement by virtue of which the RTPA, had it not been repealed, would apply to this Agreement or any arrangement of which this Agreement forms part with a view to modifying such provision (or provisions) as may be necessary to ensure that the Authority would not exercise his right to give notice pursuant to paragraph 1(5)(d)(ii) or 2(2)(b)(ii) of the Order in respect of the Agreement as amended. Such modification having been made, the parties shall provide a copy of the Agreement as modified to the Authority pursuant to Clause 1(i) above for approval in accordance with the terms of the Order.
4. For the purposes of this Clause, "Agreement" includes a variation of or an amendment to an agreement to which any provision of paragraphs 1(1) to (4) in the Schedule to the Order applies.