

Workstream Report
3rd Party Proposal: Storage Information at LNG Importation Facilities
Modification Reference Number 0104

Version 1.1

This Workstream Report is presented for the UNC Modification Panel's consideration. The Modification Proposal was first discussed at the Transmission Workstream on Thursday 7th September 2006. The Panel, when it met on 19th September 2006, gave an extension of 3 months for the preparation of a report. On 26th September the Proposer submitted revised wording seeking to ensure that the intent of the Proposal would be delivered if it were implemented.

The consensus of the Transmission Workstream on 7th October 2006 was that, subject to two items of clarification, this Proposal is sufficiently developed and should be issued for consultation.

1. The Modification Proposal

The Proposal was as follows:

"This proposal seeks publication, on National Grid's website by 16:00 D+1, of the aggregate physical gas-in-storage levels (in kWh) of LNG Importation Facilities as being the stock held at 05:59 on the previous day. This information could be published through a workaround until an enduring system solution is developed.

It is very important that this data is published to the wider market, as improvements in transparency will assist in a number of ways, specifically, by allowing market participants to make more appropriate purchasing decisions based on fuller market information; by facilitating improvements in security of supply; and as a result of these outcomes, reducing the ultimate cost of gas to all consumers.

Information is vital for the effective functioning of an open and competitive market given the potential for continuing tight supply/demand conditions this coming winter. Consumers will also want to be as aware as possible of market conditions to determine if they can or wish to sell back gas/interrupt as part of demand side response, thereby enhancing security of supply.

The asymmetric nature of the data made available from LNG Importation Facilities means that market transparency is clouded. Importation Operators, through their contractual arrangements with shippers, should therefore, seek to meet the minimum requirements of the Guidelines for Good Practice for System Storage Operators for information provision (which includes published numerical data on gas in store).

Furthermore, in approving energywatch's modification proposal UNC006, the Authority stated that "In order for the market to operate efficiently, it is important that the arrangements in place are as transparent as possible. At the moment, some parties (notably producers) have access to information, which other parties (notably downstream suppliers, traders and customers) do not have. By allowing all parties access to near to real time sub-terminal information this should permit the market to operate more efficiently." (page 8). The provision of storage information at LNG Importation Facilities is no different in this respect and should improve transparency in the market, as supported by the Authority in the Proposal 006 decision."

2. Extent to which implementation of the proposed modification would better facilitate the relevant objectives

Some Workstream attendees (7th September 2006) believed that implementation would not yield any useful information, which would change customer behaviour. Since they anticipated no beneficial behavioural impact, they did not believe implementation could better facilitate the achievement of the Relevant Objectives. Other attendees believed implementation would improve the information available to the market and so implementation would lead to better informed decisions being taken and hence could better facilitate achievement of the relevant objectives. Potential impacts are:

A11.1 (a) the efficient and economical operation of the pipe-line system:

The Proposer suggested that implementation would provide Shippers with the appropriate level of information to enable them to better forecast demand and thus make appropriate trading decisions to balance their portfolio, with associated physical actions resulting in improved balance of the system as a whole.

A11.1 (c) the efficient discharge of the licensee's obligations under this licence:

With respect to security of supply, the Proposer suggested that implementation would assist Shippers in better forecasting demand, enabling them to make more efficient purchasing decisions, consequently reducing price volatility and facilitating security of supply.

Some Workstream attendees argued that changes to the commercial regime, including this Proposal, would increase the likelihood that deliveries of LNG would be sent to locations other than GB, and would reduce willingness to invest in facilities to enable the importation of gas to this country. Hence implementation could be expected to lead to higher gas prices and reduced security of supply.

A11.1 (d) the securing of effective competition (i) between relevant shippers and (ii) between relevant suppliers:

The Proposer suggested that implementation would provide a level playing field where all Shippers and Suppliers would have access to the same information, provided through an established, consistent and transparent basis. However, if implementation discouraged gas from being imported into the GB market, leading to higher gas prices, this would be counter to facilitating effective competition between Shippers and between Suppliers.

3. The implications of implementing the Modification Proposal on security of supply, operation of the Total System and industry fragmentation

The Proposer suggested that implementation would result in improved balance of the system as a whole through provision of information to shippers "to enable them to better forecast demand and thus make the appropriate trading decisions to balance their portfolio, with associated physical actions."

4. The implications for Transporters and each Transporter of implementing the Modification Proposal, including

a) implications for operation of the System:

The requirement for Residual System Balancing by the System Operator might be reduced if Users were able to balance their portfolios more accurately.

b) development and capital cost and operating cost implications:

No cost estimates are available at present.

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

No change to recovery of costs is proposed.

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

No such consequences have been identified

5. The consequence of implementing the Modification Proposal on the level of contractual risk of each Transporter under the Code as modified by the Modification Proposal

National Grid NTS would need to ensure that it had procured any necessary rights on gas-in-storage information it already receives to permit the proposed information release.

The Proposer clarified at the Workstream that it was not the intention of this Proposal that National Grid NTS would procure any additional rights to receive information in respect of LNG Importation Terminals. It was noted, for example, that National Grid NTS currently receive stock information in respect of the Isle of Grain LNG Importation Terminal and it would expect such gas-in-storage levels to form the aggregate that would be reported at D+1.

6. The high level indication of the areas of the UK Link System likely to be affected, together with the development implications and other implications for the UK Link Systems and related computer systems of each Transporter and Users

An impact assessment identifying the areas the UK Link and other Transporter systems potentially affected has not yet been completed. Users may also choose to amend their systems in order to utilise the additional information.

7. The implications of implementing the Modification Proposal for Users, including administrative and operational costs and level of contractual risk

Users may be able to better assess the quantity of gas held in store at LNG Importation Facilities.

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

Parties involved in the importation of gas through LNG Importation Facilities would need to consider the need to change their arrangements for information generation and release in order to facilitate compliance with the UNC.

The Proposer suggested that implementation may assist Consumers in being “as aware as possible of market conditions to determine if they can or wish to sell back gas/interrupt as part of demand side response.”

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

Some consequences on these contractual relationships are anticipated in order that the information may be provided to National Grid NTS for release to Users.

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

Advantages:

- Improved information available to market participants to make appropriate purchasing decisions in a potentially tight supply/demand conditions, thereby facilitating improved aggregate system balancing and security of supply
- Creates level playing field for market participants in terms of information availability thereby assisting a more efficient market to reduce the ultimate cost of gas to all consumers.

Disadvantages

- Fails to recognise distinction between storage and LNG Importation
- Increases Transporter and LNG Importation Terminal Operator costs to generate, aggregate and publish the required information
- Provides additional information which is not relevant and has the potential to mislead the market
- Discriminates against Importation Facilities by requiring publication of information not provided with respect to other entry points
- Discourages importers from bringing gas to the GB market

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

No written representations have been received.

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

Implementation is not required to facilitate such compliance.

13. The extent to which the implementation is required having regard to any proposed change in the methodology established under paragraph 5 of Condition A4 or the statement furnished by each Transporter under paragraph 1 of Condition 4 of the Transporter's Licence

Implementation is not required having regard to any proposed change in the methodology established under paragraph 5 of Condition A4 or the statement furnished by each Transporter under paragraph 1 of Condition 4 of the Transporter's Licence.

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

National Grid NTS would need to procure changes to its website.

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

The Proposer originally sought implementation in October 2006 suggesting this would assist in maximising its impact prior to winter 2006/07. It is assumed that the Proposer would wish for this Proposal to be implemented as soon as possible.

16. Implications of implementing this Modification Proposal upon existing Code Standards of Service

No such implications have been identified.

17. Workstream regarding implementation of this Modification Proposal

The Workstream recommenced that, subject to two items of clarification, this Proposal is sufficiently developed and should be issued for consultation.

19. Text

The Proposer did not provide suggested text but identified that the Transportation Principal Document Section V Annex V1 "Table of Market Data" would require amendment.