

Gemini Change Freeze

Action from Xoserve Change Authorisation Board (COB):

COB 1001: *Gemini and iGMS - National Grid NTS to work with Xoserve to understand impact of UKLP consequential change on the Gemini system, in order to determine whether an implementation may be possible post 01October 2015 but prior to 01 April 2016, during the standard winter change freeze period, in the event that there is a delay to the implementation of UKLP.*

Response:

Historical evidence demonstrates that the winter months (1st October to 31st March) present a period of heightened operational criticality and increased reliance upon our supporting systems. Although the high demand and capacity constraints experienced during colder months present the major form of operational risk, the transition to Autumn and Spring also presents increased risk in relation to the management of fluctuating day-on-day demand, making forecasting much more challenging and subject to change. We typically plan for implementation of system change to be outside of this period of heightened activity and risk, to avoid any increased unnecessary pressure on our safety critical processes.

The changes to Gemini required by the UK Link Programme have a relatively minor impact on National Grid operational processes. Most specifically they affect our obligation to publish a timely NDM forecast and associated shipper allocation. But we must also take into account the fact that any implementation activity on the Gemini system would inevitably require support and engagement from NGT operational teams.

We currently understand that the implementation of this change, if deferred into the winter period, would be 'set live' by a minor configuration change in Gemini. Xoserve expect to accommodate this outage in the regular housekeeping window, and no changes to NG systems or interfaces are required as a result of the Gemini consequential change. There may however be changes to interfaces with NG Financial systems resulting from the wider UK Link programme and this would have to be assessed independently once the impacts have been fully confirmed.

National Grid's support of a decision to implement this delivery during the winter months would be taken based on a confirmed implementation plan, reassurances about levels of post implementation support and an established contingency (i.e. roll back) to cater for unexpected events. It would take into account any known constraints relating to planned operational activity, and as such a blanket approach to 'acceptable months' cannot be taken.

That being said, the Gemini changes associated with this delivery programme primarily relate to the commercial activity of the shipping community. Any decision on a planned implementation during the winter period must in the first place be endorsed by industry participants.

Finally, it must be noted that prior to any implementation, an additional layer of risk assessment must be built into any go/no go decision making for implementations scheduled between 1st October and 31st March. They would consider prevailing circumstances and be subject to senior authorisation thereafter. This authorisation would be based on evidence that the need outweighs the operational risks, and all planned implementations must recognise the increasing likelihood of delayed implementation for reasons of safety and security of supply during this timeframe.