

COTS PROJECT: SERVICE PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

INTRODUCTION

This short note is intended to provide some input to the COTS project on the key aspects of any wholesale ALA / bitstream proposition (whether over FTTP or FTTC) in order that the proposition is attractive to ISPs for them to onsell to their customers. The underlying theme of our requirements is that we want a COTS-based NGA wholesale product aligned with BT's NGA wholesale offering; as such the majority of the requirements below mirror our requirements from BT.

It covers all the main aspects of the offer including

- Product - features of the product
- Process - systems and processes for ordering, faulting etc
- Commercial - pricing, SLG, contractual

In each areas we cover both what the proposition needs to include / be and also discuss need for consistency.

Our view on the aspects of the proposition is driven by various needs

- Need to be able to innovate and differentiate our own service rather than simply resell a 'one-size fits all' wholesale product
- Ability to offer a high quality service / customer experience
- Ability to cost efficiently build / design our own network
- Need to be able to offer a consistent product in different regions - large differences make advertising more difficult and add huge customer service training costs
- Need to minimise system and process development costs
- Need to minimise one-off costs to negotiate each arrangement

PRODUCT

Wires-only.

- Where standards support, the product should support a model whereby the CP's electronics terminate the copper or fibre drop.
- This should be compliant with a core requirement to provide a service which abstracts the underlying technology
- In a transition phase prior to standards for wires-only, CPE should avoid embedding features and services outside of the core ALA-provider domain

Voice. In the transition period leading to wires-only operation, the ALA provider must

- Provide a modem or ONT which includes an integrated ATA

- Allow downstream providers to control that ATA using their own voice switches, i.e. an Open ATA approach
- Access to the Open ATA should be via VLAN compliant with TR-101 and its successors such as TR-156.
- Provide cost-effective battery backup option paired with the ALA-provider CPE, to allow CPs to meet PATS compliance requirements

Interconnect

- Providers should have the option of flexible interconnect points with the ALA providers' networks
- This flexibility should include handover at the local BT exchange, or a centralised handover point which caters for multiple ALA providers

Technology

- Access standards (in FTTC/DSL): range of access products including VDSL, voice, EFM
- QoS: Standards-based options for surety of delivery for CP traffic, as a minimum reflecting the 802.1p-based Ethernet QoS.
- OSI model: Handover should be at the Ethernet, not IP layer, with VLANs as the mode of security and line identification.
- Security: The service should ensure that a CP EU's traffic should not be visible by any other EU or CP (excepting multicast or other explicit exceptions)

Installation

- CPs should have the option to perform installation work on behalf of the ALA provider, where the commercial case for doing so is warranted
- Given that this will typically be agreed between ALA-provider and ALA-user, the requirement here is to ensure this option is not foreclosed

Assurance / line management

- Visibility of physical health and performance of individual customers lines
- The parameters available for CPs to validate and check should include;
 - For DSL: DSL layer characteristics such as attenuation, noise margin, trained speed; both realtime and historical logs
 - DSL-based NGA: Option for each CP to use its own DLM systems to set and modify line parameters or (if truly not possible) to advise the ALA-provider of the profiles it wishes to be able to choose from
 - Fibre-based NGA: Visibility of optical budget

Service development: agreed approach to service development e.g. how new products released (and processes too)

PROCESS

- Line checking (MLC) - should include the same inputs as that used by Openreach and return the same data to CPs (i.e. same fields returned such as capacitance, length)
- Appointment booking (if not wires-only) - match the Openreach planned appointment slots of 2 hours and CPs have access to a “live appointment book”.
- Provisioning - consistency of rejection codes from the NGA provider as those provided by Openreach.
- Same message sets being returned to the CP as those returned by Openreach (e.g. KCI 1 / 2 / 3).
- XML interfaces for all provisioning / assurance requests - to be as close to the OR specification as possible.
- Portal ordering supported in addition to XML.
- Same assurance services - standard fault fix (e.g. fault identified and accepted by OR) and “Visit assurance” (e.g. fault not identified by Openreach but engineer is sent to investigate customer issues).
- Assurance - at least as good SLAs as those being offered by OR. These need to address several areas
 - System availability e.g. SMC availability, MLC availability
 - Time to action (e.g. repair / provision) including whether clock hours or working hours
 - Different assurance options e.g. business grade
 - Whether there is any guaranteed speed / what happens if certain quality is not delivered
 - Escalation routes, expedite approach
- This is required in order to be able to manage a consistent customer experience across multiple suppliers / platforms. Need
- Migrations between CPs should follow the same process as OR products, using the same order inputs e.g. new provide, migration (bulk, single), cessation
- In case of broadband only migrations provide MAC code (as required under GC22)
- Billing formats need to match to OR's (as much as possible) in order to be able to easily reconcile charges and onward bill to customers.

COMMERCIAL

Prices

- Price structure. Needs to cover all aspects e.g. access path, backhaul / VLAN, interconnection / handover and needs to have consistent structure. Must also cover all migration types and other charges such as abortive visit
- The ALA provider should price broadband rental per line, not per speed, hence avoiding price tiers. The ALA provider should reflect cost causation in its pricing structure when considering interface or throughput charging

- Price levels
 - Needless to say, price level is critical since may be selling at consistent / single retail price (for similar performance products)
 - Difficult to be precise about exact need for consistency but even small differences will be difficult to handle within a single retail price
- Approach to changing prices

Service level guarantees

- Service level guarantees (SLG - payment for none-performance). Need high level of consistency in, for example:
 - What targets
 - Allowable exceptions
 - Quantum of SLG
 - Process for payment (automatic)

Other

- Boilerplate clauses e.g. law, courts, termination, dispute resolution, indemnities, novations, amendment, review, Data Protection, confidentiality. Would want one consistent set. No need to renegotiate every time
- Need some security in terms of viability of provider and what happens in the case of e.g. liquidation
- No retailing. Prefer wholesale providers to not retail

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