COTS Project: Steering Group

Meeting held on 09 November 2009

@ Intellect, Russell Square House, 10-12 Russell Square, WC1B 5EE

BSG
Broadband
Stakeholder
Group

MINUTES (ABRIDGED)

1) Welcome and introduction

The chair Malcolm Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table. MT set out what the meeting was aiming to achieve, with a focus on achieving clarity about the issues COTS is seeking to address, and to understand the requirements from each participant.

2) Structure of steering group and forum

The rationale for the pared down steering group, and the role of the steering group and the wider forum, was discussed. The following comments were made.

- There is a need to ensure that the steering group represents the majority of stakeholder views; currently, large over the top providers are not engaged in the work, but some are members of the BSG Executive and will continue to be informed about the work.
- It will be important to continue to update other interested stakeholders outside of the steering group.
- Secretariat will circulate a list of organisations currently engaged in the COTS Project, in order that gaps can be identified.

Actions arising
- Secretariat to circulate list of those stakeholders who have been engaged in the COTS process.

3) 'Long list' of issues & COTS focus

The group discussed the 'long list' of issues, available on the website. This list identifies the various issues affecting independent local access networks. The following comments were made.

- Funding should be within scope, where the conditions of funding impact on the operation of the network.
- Price modelling, and discussions about pricing generally, will need to be addressed carefully.
- Sustainability may not be a separate issue, as it should be considered as part of the feasibility work and ongoing operation; however, there may be a requirement for provider of last resort provisions to be developed.
- The group was cautioned against assuming that aggregation in some form is the outcome the process is aiming towards.
- The role of wireless was discussed, and it was agreed that progress would be made with the fixed operators currently involved, and that the project could then turn to the wireless industry to understand how to meet their requirements.
- Migrations were identified as a key issue for the COTS project, both in terms of service migrations on a single infrastructure, and migrations from one infrastructure to another.
- COTS should be concerned with the design of the interfaces between infrastructure providers and service providers.

Actions arising
- Secretariat to revise long list to focus on those issues that are within scope, creating the COTS short list

- Secretariat to compile list of activities related to COTS, and identify where issues outside of the scope of COTS are being addressed.

4) ISP requirements

Prior to the meeting, Sky and TalkTalk Group collaborated on an initial requirements document, which detailed the requirements of service provider. At a top level, other operators agreed that these requirements reflected their needs also. As the requirements were discussed, the following comments were made.

- Sky confirmed that 'ability to cost efficiently build and design our own network' meant both for internal systems and actual network.
- Wires-only is an important option for CPs to have access to, and work needed to be undertaken to understand how this could work on independent access networks.
- A discussion was held regarding the future model of service delivery, and whether this would replicate the existing model, or whether multiple service providers would serve a single end user.
- SPs would also be seeking to replicate their existing phone services over fibre.
- Process, even more than products, benefits from scale for an SP; therefore, many of the process requirements would be difficult to negotiate on.
- Pricing would benefit from consistency of component charges across all networks – differences in pricing would impact on the commercial case for offering services on a particular network.
- Where wholesalers do offer retails services, appropriate protections for other service providers would need to be put in place.
- The group discussed the commercial drivers that are incentivising the various players to engage in this project.
- A further discussion was held about the impact of replicating the existing LLU business model on an NGA network.
- The group discussed a need to develop an alternative set of requirements from an infrastructure provider perspective. A gap analysis between the two views could then be drawn up, which would provide the areas that need to be looked at.

Actions arising
- Working group to draft network operator requirements, to report back to forum on 04 December.
- Secretariat to undertake communications exercise with wider forum.

5) Wrap-up and next steps

MT thanked attendees for their attendance and contribution. The next meeting will be of the Forum on Friday 04 December, 10:00 – 13:00, at the Intellect offices.

END