

How should the minimum technical performance of the USO be specified?

You have already talked about many of the important aspects of the USO such as upload, latency, jitter, contention and capacity.

When setting the USO I think specifying a ratio of download to upload speed is important. Many applications such as cloud storage, video calls (Skype etc) and remote working rely not only a sufficient download speed but also a good upload speed. I would suggest that in any USO there should be an up/down ratio specified. This could be stated as a percentage of the download speed, so for example, a download speed of 10Mbit at a ratio of 20% would be 2Mbit upload.

Also, as far as latency is concerned anything above around 75ms for applications such as gaming and video calling results in less than desirable outcomes, so I would suggest latency is considered a key part of the USO and is set at a suitable level for these types of application. If Satellite is to be considered as a solution for the USO then the fact that latency, data limits and contention are both very poor with this service needs to be taken into account. I would suggest that Satellite is considered a last resort option due to its limitations. Ideally there would be some sort of measure implemented that prevents Satellite being an option unless the cost is unworkable for other methods of broadband to be used first. This measure may be something along the lines of distance from the exchange/cabinet and the size of population served.

How should we ensure the USO is affordable?

For the affordability measure ongoing costs, especially on metered connections, is important. If services such as satellite broadband are going to be considered as solutions to the USO then it's no good just looking at installation costs and basic monthly subscriptions. Looking at the market at the moment, satellite has very low usage caps during normal use. Extra data on top makes the service very expensive. I believe that steps need to be taken to ensure data limits are suitable for 'normal use' and extra data top ups are at reasonable costs for USO services.