

Title:

Forename:

[Confidential]

Surname:

[Confidential]

Representing:

Organisation

Organisation (if applicable):

[Confidential]

Email:

[Confidential]

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep name confidential

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Ofcom should only publish this response after the consultation has ended:

Yes

Comments:

General Comment about the pre statement for paragraph 1.8

1.8 We beleive the existing regulatory priorities for NGNs continue to be appropriate

We support this view, The provision of service based on the existing undertaking by BT Openreach (EoI) must be the centre plank of any provision on NGA and NGN offerings. From some of the statements in the document, it would seem that BT is being allowed to provide services that will not be alignment with the general principles as in the Undertaking

Question 1: How do you envisage the model of competition changing over the next 3-5 years, and what sort of input products will be needed to support this competition?:

The Model of competition should evolve to take account of the many players in the communication network space. The evolution should not be at the expense of the basic principle that have been established in the current regulatory environment. Organisations of SMP should not be allowed to use their strengths to tilt the level playing field. Allowing organisation to take advantage of the national recourses that are under their control e.g. ducts and Street furniture (cabinets) whilst limiting potential for innovation by tightly controlling the services offered over that infrastructure will act as a fundamental brake to broadband development in the UK.

Products that support the whole plethora of end users equipment (both home and commercial) should be available to all sections of the Country. An example of this would be a Fibre to the Cabinet solution that allowed the users side to be copper, fibre and or wireless, with the ability to backhaul Ethernet connection to be transported to any SP. This would allow exiting PSTN service to be supported by any SP (a LUU service or SLU service) It is surprising that Ofcom have still not enforced a solution for Service Provider control of individual subscribers voice lines since this permits BT to retain a monopoly of revenue from call termination.

When Ofcom changed the UK regulation to allow BT Openreach to operate active electronics in cabinets they fundamentally broke Equivalence of Input as a regulatory tool. It is not useful to pretend otherwise. In our view Ofcom need to recognise this fundamental gap in regulation and close it. In particular we believe that BT Openreach should be forced to obey EoI within its own product portfolio. Therefore NGA must by its nature be built using sub-loop unbundling products and a fibre backhaul product (ideally dark fibre). These products should be available on the open market at the same price at which BT Openreach consumes them.

Note we expect to see a continuation of a current BT trend to reduce Wholesale to a point where it is a shell company and move assets and staff into either Retail operations or Openreach.

In addition to these observations we believe that Ofcom need to unambiguously recognise that NGA in the UK overwhelmingly means FTTC and VDSL. Even in this consultation Ofcom confuse NGA with meaning Fibre to the home. Ofcom should not uses the additional complexities of fibre the home to excuse NGA solutions using FTTC from providing functionality readily supported over copper that are not so easily supported over fibre. We do not expect FTTH to be significant in the UK unless the financial conditions change radically (for example as in Australia).

Question 2: Do you agree with our analysis of the requirement for xMPF?:

See answer to Q1 above

Question 3: What additional technical standardisation work is required to support NGN deployment?:

NICC should be tasked to continue to provide a set of Standards (based when ever possible on ETSI or ITU documents) that support the evolving access and network service requirements

Question 4: What policy positions do you believe Ofcom ought to adopt in relation to interconnection between IP and TDM networks?:

The current understanding within communication networks is that the existing network should not be unduly burdened with the requirement to provide the interworking functions between old and new network interconnection. This principle should remain until there is a higher % of the new IP networks. This does not prevent IP networks from having direct interconnection, but when an IP network connection needs to interwork with the existing TDM world the IP network should provide the interworking function.

Question 5: Do you have any comments on our analysis of investment uncertainty in relation to BT's 21CN plan?:

The one observation that we would like to make is against a statement made in 2.46, specifically:

?Given the economic climate and the developing plans for fibre deployment in the access network, BT would adopt a shorter planning horizon of 12-18 months, compared with 3-5 years previously. ?

In our opinion such short planning cycles for a network operator are not credible. BT must (in order to function) have a much longer planning horizon than this, although it should also be recognized that plans are unlikely to be absolutely committed much more than 6 months out. We believe what BT are actually saying is that they do not wish to publish their plans to the wider industry beyond 12-18 months, note it is likely to be very difficult for the industry to gear up to any change inside 2-3 years.

Ofcom should therefore decide if they are prepared to accept this position from BT and if so state explicitly that they Ofcom do not require BT to publish plans more than 12-18 months ahead of time.

Question 6: How do you think Ofcom should take forward considerations relating to switching involving next generation access and core networks, and which areas should we focus on?:

See answer to 1 above.

Question 7: Do you agree that the consumer protection principles and our approach to addressing consumer protection issues are still valid?:

Yes ? we note that 21CN Pathfinder has proved that a wide range of legacy telephony and voice band data equipment can be adequately supported by NGNs provided the network operator is prepared to invest in reasonably robust and PSTN quality network equipment (which is produced by a number of vendors) rather than ultra low cost low functionality equipment. Ofcom must be vigilant to ensure the network operators continue to respect this approach and do not force unnecessary terminal migration to individual customers at great cost in order to save themselves a pound or so per customer line.

Question 8: Do you agree with our assessment of how the alarm equipment incompatibility problem should be addressed?:

yes

Question 9: What will be the impact on vulnerable consumers of replacing telecare and other alarm equipment?:

This equipment is usually being used by the less firm and at risk category of users. Replacing the existing equipment (assuming that we know where it all is) is problematic for those users. The existing end user equipment should be supported as long as there is a need. New installations could be by the new generation solutions, but it must be ensured that that these new solution are reliable even when there is a break in the mains supply or the network experiences an overload event.

Question 10: Would it be appropriate to agree a common set of terminal equipment compatibility tests? What would be the most appropriate forum to develop these tests?:

Yes

Question 11: What other steps could be taken to help manufacturers ensure terminal equipment is compatible with the QoS parameters of NGNs?:

Ensure that they understand the requirements and specification that are evolving within NICC

Question 12: Do you have any other comments about compatibility of terminal equipment with NGNs and how they should be addressed?:

No Comment

Question 13: Do you think there is risk of terminal equipment incompatibility that warrants further SIP UNI standardisation? How should this be progressed?:

As far as we are aware there is no SIP UNI standard that is accepted in the industry that would provide a full UK PSTN feature set. The same issue will be encountered in other European Countries and it is our opinion that ETSI TISPAN Working Group would be the

best place for creating such as framework and toolkit for SIP which could then be refined for each national territory. In the case of the UK this should be NICC.

Question 14: Do you have any other comments about compatibility of terminal equipment with NGNs and how they should be addressed?:

See 13 above

Question 15: Will a slower transition from TDM to NGN networks pose a risk to voice quality of service? How should such risks be addressed?:

The risk should be minimal

Question 16: Do you have any comments on the long-term trends in the evolution of networks to next-generation architectures?:

The trend is for NG architectures to evolve to provide large secure/QoS enabled data pipes nearer to the end user premises, with less intervention in the transport network, giving the ability to support the existing requirement for voice and providing the ability to support higher data rates. Thus the answer in Q1 above.