

Biscuit User Guide

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Document Control

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Related Documents

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1. Introduction

The name 'Biscuit' is an acronym, derived from:

**Basic
Inter
Supplier
Communication
Using
Internet
Technology**

The Biscuit Project was created in February 1998 to devise standardised protocols for electronic communication between domestic gas suppliers. This methodology for electronic communication was set-up primarily to support a number of competition-related procedures.

The Biscuit Working Group (BWG) consists of 22 members, of which 16 Suppliers adopt the Biscuit processes.

Note: Biscuit processes apply only to the domestic market and are entirely voluntary.

1.1 Scope and Purpose of the 'User Guide'

The 'Biscuit User Guide' is designed to provide 'New Entrants' to the 'Biscuit Suite of Products' with a reference document and guidance. It defines at a high level the processes and procedures contained within the Biscuit Products. This document also covers the uses of the SPAA Website (where Biscuit information is maintained) and the relationship between Biscuit and the other Gas Products. It is intended to be used as an introductory guide and a reference document.

1.2 Expected Users

The expected users of this guide are 'New Entrants' to the 'Biscuit Suite of Products'.

1.3 Glossary

- Biscuit – (Basic Inter Supplier Communication Using Internet Technology) Project created to enable communication between domestic Gas suppliers.
- Organisational ID – This is a three-letter code provided by Transco. Transco refer to this code as Shipper Short Code. The Organisational Id or Shipper Short Code is used on various Biscuit process naming conventions.
- The SAR Process Flow – Process flow which defines standard record layout for sending 'agreed read' data
- The RET Process Flow – Process flow for defining standard record layout for sending 'Returner data'.

- The SID Process Flow- Process flow for defining standard record layout and data field formats for sending 'Supplier Id requests'.

2. Biscuit Products Suite

The Suite of Biscuit Products includes:

- The CSV File Transfer Specification
- The Data Catalogue
- The Process Documentation

2.1 CSV File Transfer Specification Documentation

This document specifies the general physical structure of flows such as standard headers and trailers and e-mail and file naming conventions. Other defined items include handshaking procedures and file and / or record rejections.

2.2 Data Catalogue

This defines a set of data items. Also contained within the data catalogue are file acceptance codes, file rejection codes, record acceptance codes, record rejection codes and meter read rejection codes.

2.3 Process Documentation

The Biscuit suite of process documentation comprises *three* processes¹. These are:

- **The SAR Process Flow – SPAA Schedule 11**
- **The RET Process Flow – SPAA Schedule 10**
- **The SID Process Flow – SPAA Schedule 17**

There is a separate document for each of these processes.

Each of the specific process documents contains a description of the process along with a definition of the flow that supports the process, this includes the flow structure and data items (including whether they are mandatory, optional or conditional).

2.3.1 The SAR Process Flow (The Standard Agreed Read Record Procedure)

This Process Flow defines the standard record layout and standard data field formats for sending **agreed read** data.

The SAR flow can be used by the Initiating Supplier, returned by the Responding Supplier or exchanged between the suppliers.

¹ There are six Biscuit Processes – of which three are currently in use. The complete list of Biscuit processes are the MPN (MPRN Request) Process Flow, MRR (Meter Read Referral) Process Flow, OBJ (Objection Request) Process Flow, SID Process Flow, RET Process Flow and the SAR process Flow.

2.3.2 The RET Process Flow (Returner Transfer Procedure)

This process defines the standard record layout and standard data field formats for sending “**Returner**” data (also known as “Erroneous Transfers”).

2.3.3 The SID Process Flow (Supplier ID Request)

This Process Flow defines the standard record layout and standard data field formats for sending a **Supplier ID request** to Transco. Typically the request will be for the ID of a supplier who is currently supplying gas to the site, or who last supplied gas to the site prior to its transfer to the requesting supplier.

Compliance with the Biscuit Suite of Products and consequently the efficiency of the processes within the Industry is dependent on best practice. As a result it is important to note that information may not always be received in the standard or expected format. However it is recommended that in such cases where all the relevant information is present, companies should endeavour to process the flow.

It should also be noted that the onus is on the *initiating* supplier to ensure that any flows they send are compliant with the Biscuit Documentation and standards.

Although at the time of writing the Biscuit defined procedures have no governance, this situation may change in the future.

2.4 Accessing the Process Flows

The definitions for the SAR Process Flow, the RET Process Flow and the SID Process flow can be found on the SPAA website under ‘SPAA and Schedules’. (for website address see section 3).

3. Website

Biscuit information is available on the SPAA website – www.spaa.co.uk

3.1 Process for gaining the Website Password.

ElectraLink currently provides a username and password for access to the SPAA Website. The username and password is created and allocated on an individual basis. In order to obtain a username and password or information regarding your access details contact the SPAA Helpdesk. The SPAA Helpdesk will provide you with your existing log in details or create a new one if necessary.

Contact Details for the SPAA Helpdesk are provided at the end of the document and are also available on the SPAA website.

The SPAA website contains the most up-to-date information on Biscuit and should be the first point of reference when requiring Biscuit related information.

Items on the website include:

- a. Terms of Reference
- b. Biscuit Contacts
- c. Biscuit Data Catalogue
- d. CSV Transfer Specification
- e. Biscuit Process Flows
- f. Change Request Documentation
- g. Dates of Meetings
- h. Meeting Minutes

3.2 Guide to Navigation of the SPAA Website

The SPAA home page contains a login prompt for your username and password. You will need to login before you can access any Biscuit information. If you are having problems logging in please contact the SPAA Helpdesk (contact information at the end of the document).

The following is a guide to where different documents are located:

- **Terms of Reference** – the 'Committees and Groups' link on the main menu will take you to all SPAA meetings. Select 'Biscuit Meeting' to view the ToR.
- **Biscuit Contacts** – the 'Operational Contacts' link will take you to the Biscuit Contacts and a list of Supplier Id numbers
- **CSV File Transfer Specification** – the 'SPAA and Schedules' link will take you to the CSV File Transfer specification document
- **Data Catalogue** – the 'SPAA and Schedules' link will take you to the Data Catalogue
- **Biscuit Process Flows** – the 'SPAA and Schedules' link will take you to a list of the most recent Biscuit process flows including:

SAR, SID,RET
- **Change Requests** – the 'SPAA Change Packs' link takes you to a list of all the implemented change requests documents
- **Meetings – the 'Meetings'** link will take you to a list of all scheduled Biscuit meetings. By clicking on a specific Biscuit Meeting you can access all the associated documentation for the meeting such as minutes and the agenda.

4. Organisation Id

The Biscuit Organisation ID is required on various process naming conventions (such as e-mail naming conventions and file naming conventions).

The Biscuit ID's list is currently provided and maintained by SPAA Limited. Biscuit ID's tend to reflect the Shipper Short Code provided by Transco.

A full list can be found on the SPAA website under 'Operational Contacts'..

Alternatively the current list can be obtained by contacting the SPAA Helpdesk.

5. Contact Details

The contact details are split into two sections.

- List of Contacts
- Operational list of contacts for Biscuit Flows

5.1 List of Contacts

This section is used to provide a contact individual within each relevant organisation. These individuals should be used as the first point of contact for general Biscuit queries regarding the specific organisation. They are also the organisation representative on the Biscuit Working Group (BWG).

5.2 Operational List of Contacts for Biscuit Flows

This section is used to define the individual within each organisation to contact regarding queries specifically on Biscuit flows and provides the e-mail addresses for sending and receiving Biscuit Flows.

5.3 Generic E-mail Addresses

Each company should provide an e-mail address for receipt and for sending out e-mails (containing flows). It has been suggested that this should be a generic address rather than a specific e-mail address. The advantages of using a generic address are twofold:

- Firstly this would enable those companies that have firewalls to program the systems to accept the addresses, and
- Secondly the use of generic addresses also minimises disruption when an individual leaves.

Companies should ensure that this generic address is available to all Biscuit members via the 'Operational List of Contacts for Biscuit Flows' list on the website.

It should be noted that it is the individual Companies responsibility to ensure that the information on the lists is maintained and is correct and up to date. Currently any amendments should be sent to the SPAA Helpdesk.

An Erroneous Transfer and Standard Agreed Read contact matrix is also available on the SPAA website under 'Operational Contact List'.

6. Working Group Meetings

6.1 Introduction to Working Group Meetings

The purpose of these meetings is to discuss operational issues with regard to Biscuit. All companies who are involved with Biscuit are encouraged to send representatives to the meetings.

6.2 Benefits of attending the Biscuit Meetings

A recent survey completed by participant suppliers highlighted a number of benefits to attending the meetings. A selection of the responses has been enclosed:

- To meet representatives from other organisations with a view to improving working relationships
- Being aware of supplier issues/concerns
- Enabling Suppliers to support one another during times of Industry change
- Gaining ideas and thoughts, and sharing ideas with other Suppliers
- Keeping up to date with the latest Biscuit issues, changes and problems
- Encouraging issues to be raised for discussion with other users / Suppliers
- Inputting into shaping the future of Biscuit by proposing and discussing changes
- Seeing issues facing other users
- Learning from practical experience of other Suppliers.

6.3 Biscuit Working Group Details

The Biscuit Working Group Meetings are held as necessary. The location and time of the meeting is sent out with the Agenda for the meeting - this is normally circulated to the individuals on the contact list a week before the meeting.

7. Change of Supplier Expert Group (COS Expert Group)

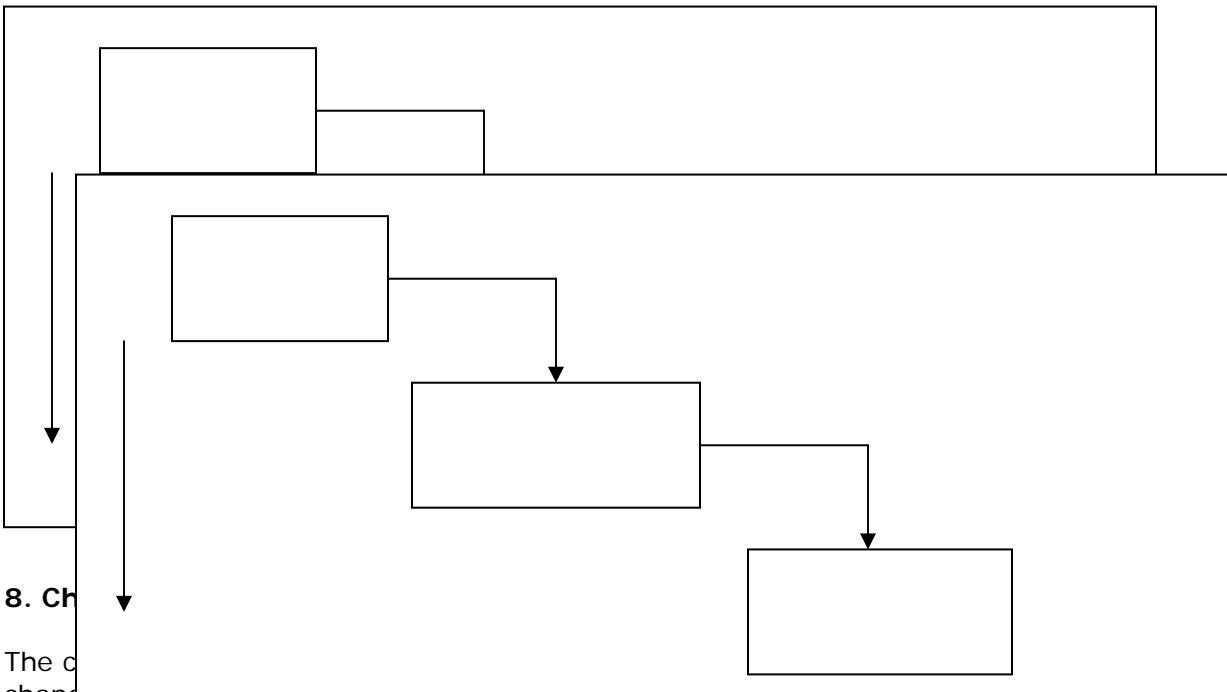
7.1 Introduction to the COS Expert Group

The Domestic Code of Practice (DCoP) was a set of documentation that contained recommended processes and procedures applicable to Suppliers. DCoP documentation was reviewed and migrated into Supply Point Administration Agreement (SPAA) in 2004 (exact dates required) As illustrated below The Biscuit Working Group is a subgroup of the COS Expert Group, as a result of this all amendments to the Biscuit processes need to be ratified by the COS Expert Group.

These procedures clarify issues where there is a need for a common approach within the domestic gas market. Biscuit procedures should be used in conjunction with the SPAA procedures where applicable. In particular it should be noted that the scope of the complete SAR and RET processes bridge both SPAA and Biscuit documentation.

7.2 The relationship between SPAA, the COS Expert Group and Biscuit

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between SPAA; the COS Expert Group and the Biscuit Group.



8. Ch

The changes to processes will be subject to rigorous Group investigation. It is important to note any Biscuit or SPAA Party can initiate a change.

After agreement by the Biscuit Working Group any changes to Biscuit documentation needs to be ratified by the Biscuit Working Group or SPAA Parties depending on the documentation that has been changed.

9. Releases of the Biscuit Products

When updates are required to the Biscuit Products they will normally be implemented in February, June or November. However in exceptional circumstances there can be other releases if agreed by the Biscuit Working Group and SPAA Parties.

10. Testing

The facility exists for testing to ensure both software and processes are Biscuit compliant, for more details contact the SPAA Helpdesk.

11. Advice and Help

The SPAA Helpdesk is available to help with any matter concerning Biscuit. It will either answer your query directly or provide details on how your query can be resolved through a third party.

12. SPAA Helpdesk Contact Details

Website Address: www.spaa.co.uk

Email Address: spaa@electralink.co.uk

Telephone: 020 7462 8717

Mailing Address:

N.B Please mark any post: Biscuit Query

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