

SWG INFORMATION PAPER: MULTI-PARTY PROTOCOL

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to gather feedback from Systems Working Group (SWG) representatives on the multi-party protocol proposed to be supported by the SMP hub and the challenges faced when assessment of the technical viability was conducted by the SWG Focus group.

The notified party process is out of scope of this paper as it is not a true one to many process and is mandated by the procedures. The notified party process has been finalised and sent for drafting into the Technical Delivery Specification procedure.

BACKGROUND

The SWG focus group met to work out a multi-party protocol that supports existing market protocol requirements.

The group worked through the current protocol to enable the use of multi-party transactions however found significant challenges when looking at options to modify the existing protocol and when assessing a new protocol. When assessing these options it was identified that significant change in all market participant systems would be required to support a true multi-party protocol.

The group also noted that there are currently no requirement for a multi-party protocol that exist in the B2B draft procedures currently under consultation.

DISCUSSION

The outcome of the workshops and therefore the point of discussion for the SWG was that a true multi-party protocol could not be adopted on the existing protocol. The group recognised that a true multi-party protocol cannot be backward compatible and interoperable without significantly changing the existing protocol and therefore imposing changes to all market participants.

Principally a true multiparty protocol will result in significant schema changes to headers and all transactions supported in the procedures. This will result in significant system changes for all participants' core and gateway systems irrespective of if they wish to utilize this capability leading to mandatory adoption of the new protocol. Further to this the current FTP mechanism will be unable to support this protocol.

The group has worked out a possible approach for a tactical multi-party protocol. This solution is viewed by the group as a tactical solution and not a long term multi-party protocol.

The **Power of Choice Information Paper on B2B/Shared Market Protocol design requirements** sent to the IEC has conflicting requirements now that the technical assessment has been conducted on the multi-party protocol.

Specifically:

With the current FTP interfacing methods maintained, only those wishing to use enhanced capabilities, or otherwise required by the rules to use those capabilities, need to develop new interfaces. This avoids unnecessary costs for parties who do not have a requirement to alter established interfaces with B2B.

Conflicts with:

The current B2B procedures and e-hub supports straightforward one-to-one messages between a retailer and a distributor and vice versa. The changing dynamics of the market will require the procedures and the e-hub to consider transactions that involve more than just one sender and one receiver. Examples include:

- A meter change at a customer's site which requires notifications to be sent to third parties, at least including the distributor, to provide notice of a planned interruption of the supply and of the completed metering works, in addition to the request to perform a service and the service response.
- A new connection, or an abolishment of the supply to a customer's site, where both the distributor and the metering services provider could both be asked to perform a service (i.e. there is more than one request for action), with notifications of completion being sent to more than one party also.

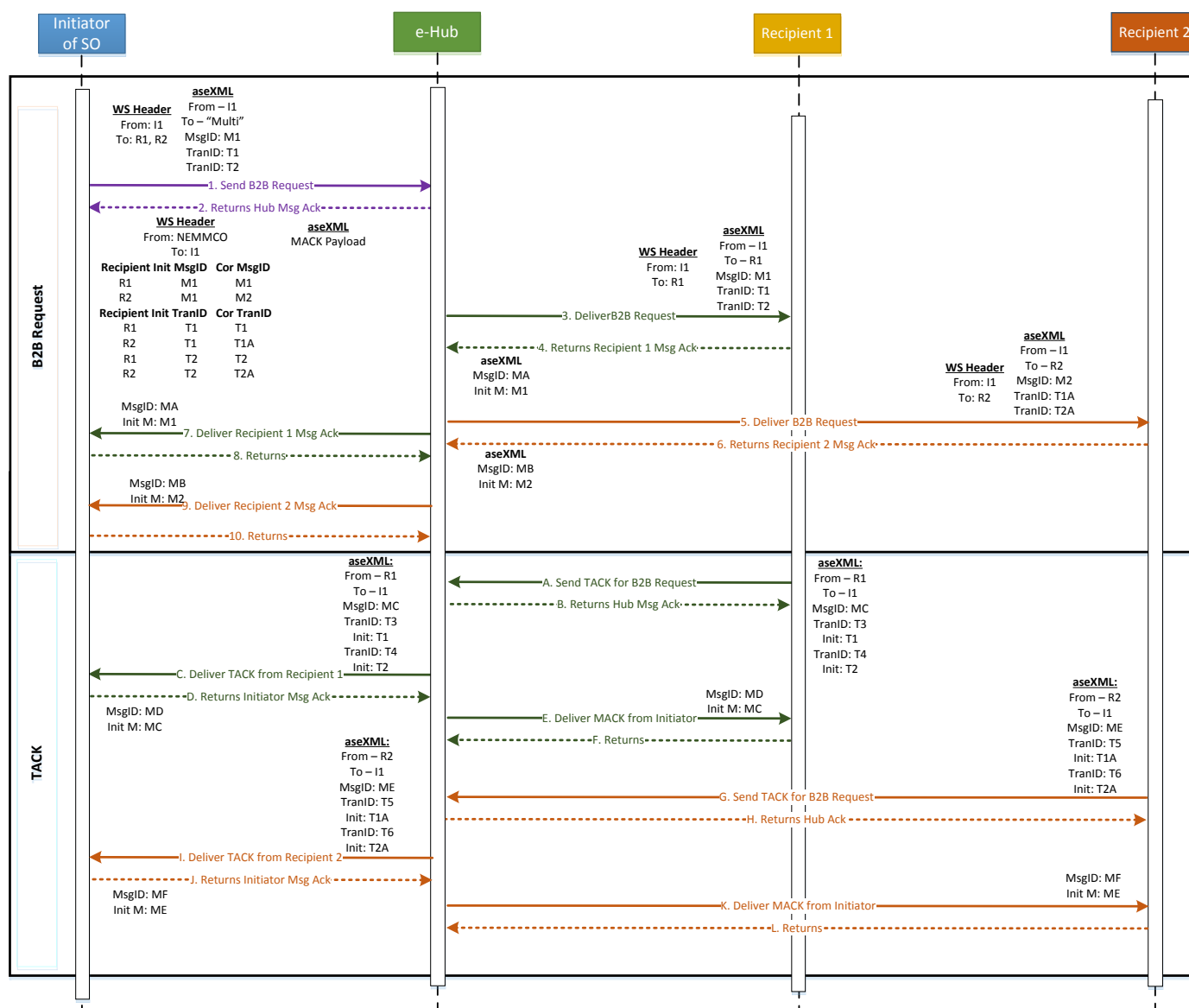
Tactical solution:

The 'tactical' multiparty protocol option identified maintains interoperability and would support a multicast type arrangement. This however requires the Initiator to implement the SMP as well as additional hub integration logic on top of additional capability within the e-hub.

A few questions were asked of the focus group to identify characteristics of this solution:

1. What are the benefits of implementing this tactical solution for POC?
 - enables opt-in for initiators of B2B Requests/Notifications
 - minimises change for participants who do not opt-in
2. Why is this is a tactical and not a strategic option for the industry?
 - a strategic solution would introduce a transaction header including From, To_List, Conversation_ID
 - in a strategic solution recipients would have to participate (no opt-out) at least in order to record and populate the Conversation_Id for related transactions
 - initiator as opt-in party has to manage a set of transaction ids, which in a strategic solution would be managed through the simpler concept of a conversation_id (known to all parties involved in a B2B Request)
3. What are the challenges when implementing this tactical solution?
 - complex transaction id management may result in confusion when trouble shooting delivery issues between various participants
4. What are the key participant system changes?
 - i. Initiator – if opt-in, then gateway and core systems
 - ii. Recipient – none related to the tactical multiparty protocol

Diagram of tactical solution:



Note: In the above diagram, WS header is only indicated where it is different to aseXML header (from & to fields). Where it is not indicated, please assume that WS Header From & To will be the same as aseXML Header From & To

Feedback and recommendations from the SWG Focus group:

The group was asked for feedback and recommendations on the options to adopt a tactical solution or to not proceed with a multi-party protocol at this time.

Recommendation is to **not proceed** with this tactical solution for multiparty protocol because:

- 1) We do not currently have a proposal for an **interoperable** true multi party protocol and as highlighted there is no mandate to force all participants to move to a new protocol.
- 2) Given where we are in the consultation process, the clear position on establishing the SMP, the broader requirement to develop updated drafting for the TDS we don't see that further investment of time in attempting to define this protocol is a prudent use of AEMO and participants time.
- 3) The 'tactical' multiparty protocol option identified which maintains interoperability, would support a multicast type arrangement. Our view is given the tactical nature of this change and the limited potential use this is unwarranted within the scope of Power of Choice.
- 4) With the tactical solution presented it is difficult to identify and quantify any additional business value or benefits of implementing such a solution.
- 5) Within the scope of the existing procedures the only functions which might leverage such a protocol are essentially multicast models from initiators therefore there is no business case for initiators to invest in implementation of this capability

Please send all correspondence to: poc@aemo.com.au