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*Bringing Technology to Post Offices and Benefit Payments***CONGO 4 FALLBACK OPTION OUTLINE RELEASE SPECIFICATION**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

On 2 May 97 Congo Release 2 went live. This release provides up to 190 post offices with OBCS functionality using Order Book stop list data supplied from PRCS and is supported by Pathway Release 1b. On 2 June 97 Congo Release 3 went live. This is an upgrade of CAPS from release 2.0 to 2.1. This is supported by Pathway Release 1a and impacts the 10 initial go-live (IGL) post offices where Child Benefit Payments are made by card.

Both these two Releases will be superseded by Congo Release 4. Congo Release 4 will provide Child Benefit card payment functionality (BPS) and OBCS functionality to both the 10 IGL outlets and also those post offices previously supported by Congo 2. All of these post offices will be supported by the new Pathway Release 1c.

Pathway have experienced problems in developing Release 1c which has led to a re-planning exercise with Pathway proposing a later go-live date for Congo 4 (Pathway 1c) of 13 October 97. As part of the re-planning exercise, in response to the effect on CAPS PDR load requirements of this later go-live date for Congo 4 (Pathway 1c) and the delayed implementation of subsequent Congo and Nile Releases, Pathway have amended the scope of Release 1c to include the functionality required to support the CAPS development of both a multi-service and multi-ACC environment.

It is important that Pathway provide a new release on the 13 October 97 as proposed, so that confidence in the Programme is not undermined and to allow CAPS to commence their PDR Load migration activity. In considering this, Pathway have proposed that a contingency plan be in place, should further slippage be experienced preventing the go-live of Congo 4 (Pathway 1c) on 13 October 97. This contingency plan involves the Fallback Release option of providing the full 1c product as planned on the 13 October 97, but with acceptable faults. These faults would subsequently be fixed to agreed timescales.

1.2 Purpose

This is a discussion paper describing the Congo 4 Fallback Release Option. It is intended to prompt further detailed analysis by the involved groups within the sponsor organisations, the Suppliers and PDA to enable the Fallback Release to be successfully implemented, should it be invoked.

Working agreement to this contingency option has already been obtained from Sponsor Organisations and Suppliers (Paul Rich for POCL, George McCorkell for DSS, John Bennett for Pathway).

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1.3 Scope

This paper:

- Details the objectives of the Fallback Release;
- Provides a detailed description of the:
 - testing approach for the Fallback Release;
 - assurance approach, the method by which the fallback release is defined and assured;
 - checkpoints and criteria to be employed in deciding whether or not to invoke the contingency Fallback Release.
 - RAB process for the Fallback Release;
 - implementation & migration issues surrounding a Fallback Release;
 - support management procedures for the Fallback Release;

This paper does not provide:-

- Agreement on the acceptability of a Fallback release. (This is the responsibility of Service Delivery in their assurance role.)
- Authority to proceed with the implementation of a Fallback release rather than a full Congo 4 Release
- Proposals for any re-planning exercises that may be required should a Fallback Release be implemented

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2. OBJECTIVE OF THE FALLBACK RELEASE

The objective of the Fallback Release is to maintain the CAPS PD/r migration timetable.

The Fallback Release provides the option of delivering a pre-release of Pathway Release 1c to the 10 IGL offices only. This involves the delivery of the full set of planned functionality which contains an acceptable level of faults together with the provision of supporting workarounds such that a viable release (for the 10 IGL offices) is implemented.

The Fallback Release must therefore exhibit the following characteristics:

- 1) The ability to maintain the CAPS PD/r migration timetable through support of the CAPS multi-service operation (to be implemented with CAPS Release 2.2 (Congo 4.1));
- 2) Functionality that equals or exceeds that exhibited in IGL thereby maintaining the payment of Child Benefit by card to the 1400 customers already using this service.

These requirements determine the minimum level of functionality that must be delivered. This functionality is defined in more detail in the Minimum Acceptable Contents Description paper (see attachment 1).

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4. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

4.1 Testing Approach

The fallback release is a contingency option; the testing approach will be geared towards the implementation of the full Pathway 1c (Congo 4) Release on 13 October using the sequence of tests already planned. All of the currently planned tests must be completed before either a full or fallback release could go ahead.

As a result of the decisions taken at each checkpoint the emphasis, and the priority, placed on the correction of errors will reflect whether a full or fallback release looks the most viable option.

During this period the PDA testing and assurance areas will continue to be closely involved so that the fallback release, if required, will evolve dynamically by ensuring that the priority is given to error correction for those areas which meet the fallback criteria without compromising the aim to deliver the full 1c on 13 October.

4.2 Assurance Approach

The assurance process must ensure that the key criteria for a fallback release are satisfied:

- support to CAPS PD/r load by implementing the multi service/ multi ACC capability;
- the provision of BPS functionality that acceptably replaces IGL/1a;
- no degradation in security or accounting and reconciliation in comparison with IGL/1a;
- the maintenance of the existing level of customer service in the 10 IGL offices.

The assurance process takes place as part of the testing activity and is managed by the Service Development Team within the PDA. Assurance involves three areas:-

- Security;
- Technical;
- Business.

Assurance determines the viability of the release from a business perspective to ensure that the overall requirements from the release are met.

The process for the full release would be that:

- all faults are passed to the appropriate area within Service Development
- the errors are prioritised based on business impact
- these priorities are agreed with Pathway
- fixes are reviewed where appropriate
- workarounds are agreed when considered necessary
- PDA testing are kept up to date
- any change to expected functionality is agreed with sponsors

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To enable Pathway to invoke the fallback release, if required, while continuing to put all their effort into ensuring the full release can be delivered the prioritisation will categorise faults into "full" - critical/ non critical and "fallback" - critical/ non critical. The mechanism for this judgement will be comparing:

| IGL | | Release1c | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Functionality | Faults | Functionality | Faults |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MACD (see attachment) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known deficiencies • Known errors (from help desk) • Business impacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known errors |

The Minimum Acceptable Contents Description (MACD) is designed as a guideline to identify, at a high level, the areas of functionality provided in IGL, and the known deficiencies, and will be used as an aid by Service Development in conjunction with the other factors (including the overall criteria) to set priorities for error correction.

It should be stressed that this process is, by its nature, subjective i.e. deciding if the functionality provided in 1c is more acceptable than that in IGL, but it should also be stressed that the judgements will be made on sound business and technical knowledge allied to a clear understanding of the Pathway system.

The assurance process will also be focused on whether the overall release components as finally delivered can be judged as "fit for purpose" even if the minimum IGL replacement functionality is robust.

4.3 Checkpoints

The decision whether to implement a fallback release will depend on progress made in testing and on the satisfactory resolution of priority faults agreed during the assurance process. Checkpoints will be employed to enable this decision to be made by allowing an accurate evaluation of the status of error correction and progress against plan at pre-determined stages in the testing cycle.

In addition checkpoints will be used to determine the range of offices the release should go to i.e. 10 IGL only or plus the 190 1b outlets.

Each checkpoint will provide an assessment of the stability of the functionality being tested; this analysis will result in three possible outcomes, one of which contains two variants:-

1. If testing is progressing according to plan Pathway Release 1c will go live on 13 October
2. If sufficient progress is NOT being made, against the plan, and testing will not be completed or if there are an unacceptable number of outstanding faults then the release schedule would need to be slipped involving another re-planning exercise

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3. If progress is NOT being made against the plan in terms of error correction but there is an acceptable level of faults measured against the fallback criteria then a fallback release will be implemented on 13 October (provided that this pre-release of 1c is viable as a whole) - the variants concern the number of offices (10 or 200) that it would be considered prudent to release to.

4.3.1.1 Checkpoint Timing

Checkpoints will be fortnightly to assess the functionality with an additional checkpoint to confirm the target number of offices to implement the release in.

| Checkpoint | High Level Description | Date |
|------------|---|--------------|
| 1 | Functionality Analysis | 26 August |
| 2 | Functionality Analysis and Rollout Analysis | 8 September |
| 3 | Rollout Analysis | 15 September |
| 4 | Functionality Analysis | 22 September |

4.4 RAB process

The responsibility of deciding whether the Release should be implemented into the live environment will rest with the Release Authorisation Board (RAB). The RAB for Congo 4 is currently scheduled for the 6th October 97.

The normal process will apply with assurance being required for:

- business content;
- testing;
- operations;
- commercial.

The input to this process will cover whether the level of functionality meets the minimum acceptable contents (see attachment 1), the status of PINICLs and any associated workarounds and the operational and commercial risks and benefits of authorising the Release.

The RAB will be chaired by Peter Crahan with representation from Pathway, Sponsors and relevant areas with the PDA.

4.5 Implementation & Migration

The implementation strategy and current plans will be re-visited should the Fallback Release need to be invoked. The implementation strategy for both the Fallback Release and the provision of fixes for the live faults involved will need to be defined as part of the assurance process together with any impact on future release plans. However, the approach to the implementation of the Fallback Release would not change from that currently planned for the full 1c Release. The main effect on this approach will be on the timing of the various stages through the requirements to:

- Support only the 10 IGL Outlets

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- Provide fixes to the live faults introduced in the Fallback Release so that the 1c functionality is corrected to its full (target) status and can be rolled out to the 190 Congo 2 offices also.

The key steps in the migration process will be as follows:

1. Clear the Pathway 1c data centre down (Wigan Data Centre) following completion of MOT and prepare it for live use, linking it with the existing Pathway 1b data centres to allow splitting of OBCS data received from BA and merging of OBCS data returned to BA.
2. Keep the Pathway 1b data centre running in parallel with the new 1c data centre (Wigan) for the duration of the 1c interim release.
3. Migrate the 10 IGL (1A) offices over the implementation weekend. Dispense with the IGL data centre and start communicating with CAPS (version 2.1) using the new Pathway 1c data centre.

And to complete the process for the Full Pathway 1c Release (Congo 4):

4. Updating the fallback 1c system to target 1c Release status for all 10 IGL outlets;
5. Providing a short period for the target 1c system to bed in;
6. Migrating 1b outlets to 1c as originally planned.

4.6 Support

For the fallback option:-

- The support functions in the service management area will continue at the level specified and agreed for IGL;
- There will be no degradation in the detail supplied in the Weekly Performance Report supplied by ICL Pathway.