

PSC Meeting
24 September 1997
Previous Minutes



RESTRICTED - COMMERCIAL/MANAGEMENT/POLICY

BA/POCL Programme Delivery Authority

Minutes of the Programme Steering Committee Meeting
15 July 1997

Present

Stuart Sweetman	-	POCL	(Chair)
Peter Mathison	-	BA	
Alec Wylie	-	SSA(NI)	
Keith Todd	-	ICL	
Paul Rich	-	POCL	
George McCorkell	-	BA	
John Bennett	-	ICL Pathway	
Peter Crahan	-	BA/POCL PDA	
Jim McManus	-	POCL	
Sue Daniel	-	BA/POCL PDA	(Secretary)

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 8 May were agreed.

1.2 The status of the Action Points was noted. Action point 2 would be covered under Agenda Item 4.

2. Programme Director's Report

2.1 Mr Crahan presented a general update on Programme progress plus a status report of current planning activity.

2.2 Progress

2.2.1 OBCS and IGL

2.2.2 The OBCS system was working well overall, with a few conventional incidents. There had been implementation difficulties and the new target was to achieve 140 by the end of June with a further 17 in July and 14 in August. Lessons learned to factor into subsequent roll-outs had been:

- earlier site surveys;
- POCL support on site to sanction changes.

POCL had implemented a number of organisational and support changes to address the installation problems.

2.2.3 Non ISDN outlets remained an issue and on present evidence from BT it was anticipated that 5% of offices would be affected. ICL Pathway had reported that the technical solution would take until the end of the year to resolve.

2.2.4 Future Role of the PDA

2.2.5 Activity toward the future structure had been taken forward via two work streams. The first stream involved priority teams set up, with co-operation and input from ICL Pathway, to develop critical end products (e.g to assure business and technical design). The second was a project mobilised to address overall organisation structure and resourcing.

2.2.6 The decision had been made to migrate responsibility for post office roll-out to POCL and to this end the following key decisions had been made:

- Horizon implementation would be managed as a project, with a Project Board, project disciplines and focus;
- the appointment of a National Implementation Manager (NIM) reporting directly to the Network Manager and 7 Regional Implementation Managers (RIMs) who would remain as part of the Regional Team with a direct line to the National Implementation Manager;
- the user communication responsibilities within PDA to be absorbed within the POCL Network function.

2.2.7 Work was now proceeding on the detail of the migration. The provision of a team of 400 POCL staff to support implementation would be a stretching resource requirement for POCL and a considerable task to undertake. Lessons could be learned from the BA experience of OPSTRAT and POCL would be taking up the BA offer for the POCL Regional Implementation Managers to meet for discussions with their counterparts in the BA who had been responsible for the successful implementation of OPSTRAT.

2.2.7 Areas to be taken forward in the future would include Contract Management and Service Management and a paper would be prepared to broker with sponsors in the near future.

Action: Mr. Crahan to present the detail of the future structure of the PDA to the next meeting.

2.3 Status of planning activities

2.3.1 Mr Crahan reminded the meeting of the background to the current planning activities as follows:

- the PDA had been working with sponsors and ICL Pathway since May toward an agreed target date of 18 August for Congo 4 (Pathway Release 1c) following slippage identified from the intended delivery date of 30 June;
- emerging plans were in the process of being approved by sponsors;
- these plans had been overtaken following a presentation by ICL Pathway on 3 July at which they had advised the PDA that they could not meet the 18 August date and proposed the 13 October for delivery of Congo 4 with subsequent consequentials on future releases.

2.3.2 To date the PDA had not had visibility of the detail below the high level plan supporting delivery on 13 October but it was hoped that this would be rectified at a meeting taking place today with ICL Pathway. It was the PDA's intention to:

- analyse the detail of the proposals for 13 October 1997 Congo 4 release to confirm achievability;
- on the basis of 13 October being confirmed as achievable, take a joint approach via workshops to clarify/verify options for future releases;
- present to sponsors and Ministers once a deliverable plan is available.

2.3.3 To this end the PDA Board had agreed that ICL Pathway should:

- Commit to sharing the findings of their internal review/audit;
- give further details of their proposed managerial/structural changes;
- work with the PDA on the way forward, providing the lower level of detail supporting their plans;
- take a realistic position on the resultant, inevitably difficult, commercial negotiations.

2.3.4 In discussion the following points were made:

2.3.5 A critical path issue was end to end security testing for Congo 4 which required and was getting serious attention from the PDA.

2.3.6 ICL Pathway was confident that the 13 October date was deliverable, and from the planning seen and progress made they were assured that it was a soundly based plan. The detail upon which the plan was based would be shared and be open to challenge. ICL Pathway welcomed challenge as a means of identifying any potential gaps which may have been overlooked.

2.3.7 CAPS was able to deliver for the BPS release and the move to the October date would not be a problem.

2.3.8 POCL immediate dependencies would not be affected by the move to October but the slide would have a major impact on what POCL was hoping to achieve from other systems post Live Trial. POCL would be working with the PDA and ICL Pathway to achieve a solution.

2.3.9 ICL Pathway wanted to decouple from CAPS releases, thereby relaxing interdependencies and providing the option to remove interface testing. This would mean that CAPS would not be held up by ICL Pathway and ICL Pathway would not be put on a critical path.

2.3.10 PDA expected to have the Congo 4 plan confirmed within one week and subsequent options for future releases available two weeks later. It would be the end of August before all the information

would be available to present to sponsors and then to Ministers.

2.3.11 It would be essential to commence commercial negotiations as soon as possible to enable figures to be factored into updating the Business Case.

2.3.12 Sponsors reiterated their disappointment at the inability of ICL Pathway to meet the 18 August date and expressed their concerns about continual Programme slippage. They were, however, encouraged that none of the parties had an entrenched position and sensible approaches to the issue were being taken by all sides.

2.3.13 The meeting agreed to the approach to the re-planning activities and consequent timetable as proposed by Mr Crahan and decided it was appropriate to address the potential for fast-tracking the commercial negotiations informally outwith the meeting.

Action John Bennett, George McCorkell, Alec Wylie and Paul Rich to take forward the commercial issues relating to the re-plan.

2.4 Communication issues

2.4.1 The meeting addressed the communication issues raised by the proposed re-plan and in discussion the following points were made:

2.4.2 The move of Congo 4 delivery to 13 October impacted directly on those people expecting involvement in implementation activity in preparation for 18 August and beyond. The meeting agreed that, following receipt of the formal recognition from ICL Pathway that they would not be delivering Release 1c on 18 August, those directly impacted would need to be informed.

2.4.3 POCL also had a requirement to re-set objectives and advise all staff and agents of the revised position. Their intention was to use The Courier and the Sub-Postmaster to communicate the message to a potential audience of 40,000. It was essential that POCL controlled the message published in the Sub-Postmaster negating any risk of the NFSP creating their own headline.

2.4.4 BA expressed their concern about the danger of the communication becoming public knowledge, making what was already going to be a very difficult private decision for Ministers into one that would be impossible to make in public. For that reason the BA requested that POCL did everything possible to limit communications, minimising the risk of the information becoming public and open to mis-interpretation.

2.4.5 Currently BA were only in a position to state that currently there were some issues which were subject to review, but work was continuing on the project. They were unable to give official DSS commitment at this stage as that would be effectively taking the decision away from Ministers.

2.4.6 The meeting agreed the practical way forward to be:

- the preparation of a shared high level defensive briefing for sponsor and supplier press offices;
- to stand down those people directly impacted by the non delivery on the planned 18 August date;
- POCL to share their message with PDA, BA and ICL Pathway prior to inclusion in the Courier and the Sub-Postmaster publications.

Action: Peter Crahan to work with PDA Communications to prepare a high level defensive press briefing. To be available to press offices prior to the POCL communication being published.

3. ICL Pathway Report

3.1 Mr Bennett reported that, following a Programme Audit, ICL Pathway had made some management changes. Mike Coombs had been appointed as permanent Programme Director and he was currently looking at how resources should be redirected. He would be in a position to present this work to the next PDA Board in August. Another ICL Director had been appointed to the Programme for a three month period to provide assistance on all technical integrity issues.

3.2 The main issues receiving ICL Pathway's priority attention were:

- Ensuring the soundness of Release 1c and future releases;
- Resolution of the non-ISDN issue;
- more robust configuration management;

3.3 There remained an affordability gap between ICL Pathway and the PDA in relation to Customer Education. There was a distinction between:

- providing only one communication when the Benefit Payment card comes into use. This one communication would collectively cover all benefits regardless upon when a particular benefit came on stream; or
- communicating a message each time a new benefit is taken onto card.

3.4 Everyone agreed that the best method of communication would be a letter to each individual customer as each benefit migrated onto card, but the issue was who would pay for this.

4. Independent Programme Review

4.1 Mr Crahan advised the meeting that the outline terms of reference for the review had been agreed by POCL and BA and had initially been agreed by Mr Bennett on behalf of ICL Pathway. However this agreement had been retracted by Mr Todd pending discussion of his particular concerns with the PSC

4.2 Mr Todd explained that the first priority for ICL Pathway was the Programme and every effort was being channelled into achieving delivery of Congo 4 (Release 1c) by 13 October. He was concerned that the Independent Programme Review, coming at this time, would be adding one more layer of pressure so soon after the ICL internal review.

4.3 Following discussion with sponsor senior managers, Mr Todd was now in a position to support the principle of an

independent review, with ICL Pathway resourcing a third share of the costs, subject to the following caveats:

- the review would be conducted within the principles of Programme First. Nothing should be allowed to detract from achieving the 13 October date for delivery. The timing of the review was critical;
- ICL Pathway reserved the right to ring fence resources whose work was critical for 13 October not releasing them for interviews which would result in time lost;
- the full report, including all drafts, be shared with the full PSC;
- ICL Pathway to be involved in the selection process for appointing the company/individual to conduct the review.

4.4 Mr Crahan assured the meeting that the review was expected to be an efficient and effective three week activity. It would not be an in depth excavation of the past but rather would draw upon the work done to look ahead to the future. It would be a way of assuring the principle that all individual plans and processes were facing up to responsibilities and that they tied into all other plans. By looking forward the review provided potential for risk exposure, ensuring that these were addressed and managed early. The ICL Pathway resource issue had been recognised and would be managed through with Mr Bennett.

4.5 The timing issue was recognised by all to be critical. It was agreed that it was essential to have firm plans in place for Congo 4 and timings for approval of plans for future releases before implementing the review. However it was expected that robustness of plans and timings would be sufficiently assured within 2/3 weeks in order to instigate procurement of the company to conduct the review.

4.6 In discussing the selection process it was pointed out that the company/individual contracted must have both Project Management and Technical expertise. All parties accepted that the selection criteria would be based on the capability of the individual/company to provide the expertise required. The meeting agreed that Mr Wylie

would co-ordinate the procurement process. He would contact each party for to confirm a shortlist of companies/individuals and to agree terms of reference, process and funding.

Action: Mr Wylie to co-ordinate the procurement of a company/individual to conduct the Independent Programme Review.

5. Date and time of the next meeting

5.1 The meeting congratulated the secretariat for the work undertaken to formalise the meetings process. It agreed to the principle of de-coupling the PSC meetings from the PDA Board meetings and decided to maintain the next PSC meeting at Longbenton on 24 September 1997