



Product Service

## Communication Support System Attestation

In this increasingly competitive marketplace it is essential that system suppliers are able to differentiate their products from other solutions that are available, so BABT has introduced a new assessment service for suppliers of Communications Support Systems to mobile and fixed communications providers. This service is available to suppliers of billing, mediation, provisioning and customer support systems.

### The Implications of the Metering and Billing Direction

Over the past 15 years in the telecommunications sector, the UK regulatory standard for metering and billing accuracy has become well established. This standard, developed as OTR 003 and now embedded in the Ofcom Metering and Billing Direction issued under the Communications Act 2003, has become the benchmark for communications providers to demonstrate the accuracy of their metering and billing systems. Consequently, the onus is now on support system vendors to demonstrate that their products have the capability to meet the needs of The Direction when used as an element of the 'Total Metering and Billing System'.

### The Solution

Whilst it is not possible for billing or

mediation systems to have an 'Approval' to the Direction, as this only applies to actual providers of a communication service, BABT has developed a unique assessment approach which can lead to an Attestation of your system. This independent third party Attestation of your system from BABT, the leading Approval body for the Direction, will provide valid evidence that your product, when correctly operated, will meet their needs for accuracy, reliability and timeliness.

### BABT Experience

BABT has seventeen years experience of system development for the Metering and Billing scheme, having been the sole Approval Body to be involved in its operation until recent years.

We have extensive knowledge of the Metering and Billing Direction, which is based on the well-established standard OTR 003. BABT already has assessment experience using the new Direction with nineteen leading communications providers of which fourteen currently hold approvals (at the time of writing). This experience has enabled BABT to develop a good understanding of the system needs of a wide range of communications providers, to meet the requirements of the Metering and Billing Direction.

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#### The Benefits of BABT Attestation

The Attestation process will ensure that:

- your product is differentiated from those of your competitors
- assessment is planned to suit your needs and reach clear conclusions
- opportunities for improvements in system design and documentation are identified
- the integrity and precision of your product's contribution to a system is verified
- your customers' are more confident that your product will meet their needs

#### A Code of Practice - The Basis for Attestation

To provide an Attestation of the performance of any product or process, it is necessary to establish criteria against which performance may be assessed. We have used BABT experience to identify key indicators that the product will be 'fit for purpose', when used to form part of a total metering and billing system. A Code of Practice has been developed against which a system can be assessed to give confidence that, when put into service; it will meet the needs of the Metering and Billing Direction (previously OTR 003). The Code of Practice is based upon criteria which have been selected using BABT's unique practical experience of assessing Communications Providers for Metering and Billing Approval.

#### The Assessment Process

The first stage of the assessment is a preliminary review of the system against the requirements defined in the BABT

Code of Practice, with cross-reference to the Metering and Billing Direction. This will enable any interpretation of context for the criteria that may be necessary to suit the particular product. The assessment approach and timing will then be agreed, together with the extent of your staff involvement and the resources required.

The main assessment of the System will include: review of the System as a supplied product; audit of the design process; performance testing of the System; and verification that it is supplied with adequate information and instructions to ensure its correct deployment and use.

#### The Outcome of Attestation

Within two weeks of the assessment, BABT will issue a report, detailing its findings and stating whether the requirements for Attestation, based upon the Code of Practice, have been met. If so, an Attestation statement will be issued. In addition to reporting on the ability of the System to meet the requirements of the Metering and Billing Direction, the BABT report will also detail any opportunities for improvement identified within the System.

The Attestation will carry the right to print an approved BABT statement on the product and its associated marketing materials together with a BABT logo, subject to their associated conditions of use.



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