

June 2008

Professor Sir John O'Reilly

NICC Chairman

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Dear Colleague,

### **Membership of NICC Standards Limited (UK Interoperability Standards Organisation)**

On behalf of the NICC Board, it is my pleasure to invite you to become a member of the new NICC organisation, NICC Standards Limited. As a regulatory committee reporting to Ofcom, NICC has been the forum for setting standards for technical interconnect and interoperability issues for UK networks since the introduction of competition in the UK communications sector. NICC has an excellent track record of delivering the interoperability standards required by the UK without which many commercial and regulatory developments would not have been possible. I have been the independent Chairman of NICC since 1995 and over that time, NICC has continually evolved to address industry requirements. The creation of the new organisation is the next step in the evolution of NICC, marking the point when NICC ceases to be a regulatory committee and Industry formally takes ownership of the interoperability standards development process.

The NICC Board and I strongly urge your organisation to take up NICC membership and actively participate in developing the NICC standards required to support interoperability between public communications network and services in the UK.

For your reference, I have given a brief overview of NICC, its past achievements and have summarised below the benefits to you of membership of NICC Standards Limited. Another document enclosed with this letter sets out the new arrangements for NICC in more detail.

### ***NICC Overview***

Under the new arrangements, NICC will become an independent organisation owned and run by its members. I am particularly pleased that the Institution of Engineering and Technology is keen to take an active role in the standards development process and have agreed to host NICC, taking on its secretariat functions. We hope to exploit the resources and the expertise of the IET to improve the level of support that NICC provides to working groups.

The new arrangements build on the successful model employed by NICC to date. NICC will therefore continue to rely on its members to define its work programme and to contribute the resources to develop standards. NICC itself has neither technical staff nor contracts with consultants to undertake technical work. To ensure that its work fulfils the sometimes diverse requirements and priorities of its members:

- NICC will only adopt a new work item if it is supported by at least 3 NICC members, in addition to the member proposing the work item. The proposing member and supporters are expected to actively contribute and drive the work forward to completion.
- Co-ordination is maintained with the UK commercial forums (such as NGNuk, UKPorting and Consult21) and with Ofcom to ensure that the work of NICC is closely aligned with the commercial and regulatory requirements.

NICC avoids defining 'UK specials' wherever possible by adopting the appropriate international or recognised industry standards and profiling them for application in the UK environment.

### ***Current Work***

NICC is just completing its second release (Green Release) of NGN interoperability standards which includes the standards for the Centralised Number Database that Ofcom in their recent Number Portability statement mandates all Communications Providers will use. In addition, NICC is developing a suite of B2B (business-to-business) specifications.

NICC has been canvassing its members together with bodies such as NGNuk and Consult21 to determine what NGN standards activities should be addressed next. Annex 2 lists the potential work items that have been identified. If your organisation is not already involved in this activity, I would urge you to join NICC and participate in this process.

### ***Benefits of Membership***

By taking up membership of NICC Standards Limited your company can:

- shape and steer the direction of the NICC work to support your company's requirements and the needs of the UK communications sector;
- scope and help formulate the interconnect and interoperability standards required for the UK; membership of NICC will allow your company to influence the content of NICC standards and provide you with early visibility;
- have visibility of activities in other bodies (e.g. NGNuk, Consult21, UKPorting) of which you may not be a member; and
- allow your experts to interact and develop with the top technical talent in industry by actively participating in working groups in an environment of creative synergy and learning opportunities.

I enclose an application form (Annex 3) and we look forward to welcoming you as a member.

Yours faithfully



Professor Sir John O'Reilly

NICC Chairman

Attached:

Annex 1: NICC Future NGN Work

Annex 2: NICC Past Achievements

Enclosed:

Annex 3: Application form for membership of NICC Standards Limited

## NICC Future NGN Work

NICC is consulting its members and liaising with the UK commercial forum to determine what NGN standards it should be working on next (these would form the NICC NGN Orange Release). The items listed below have been identified for potential inclusion. For each item, the requirements and expected deliverables have been scoped and now NICC is asking its members to indicate which items they support in order to determine that there is sufficient support to allow the item to progress and to determine priority (support is required from at least 4 organisations in order for the item to be progressed). This task is expected to be completed in July and work on the high priority items will then commence. NICC would encourage you to become a member and indicate your support for those items of interest to you and to actively contribute to the work.

### List of Work Items for potential inclusion in NICC NGN Orange Release

- IMS Interconnect service
- Use of BICC, M2PA protocols for NGN interconnect as alternative to SIP(I) to support PSTN emulation
- Ethernet Interconnect Service (as per NGNuk discussions)
- Presence & Location services
- Instant messaging service
- Management of NGN interconnect traffic from uncontrolled sources (e.g. from Internet)
- Provision of Location information on Emergency Calls for VoIP calls
- Dynamic overload control in NGN
- Service classification and management activity (as discuss in NGNuk) for NGN interconnect
- Support of broadband services on NGN MSIL (Multi-service Interconnect Link)
- Central Number Database issues arising from UKPorting
- SIP user-network interface for PBXs
- Voice Line Control Phase 2 (i.e. support of ISDN/DPNSS)

## NICC Achievements

NICC technical specifications and guidance form some of the key design interconnect and interoperability requirements in today's UK public telecommunication networks. The following list highlights some of NICC's key achievements and deliverables:

- **TDM Interconnect Specifications:** NICC has produced interconnect specifications covering the transmission (ATM, SDH, DWDM) and control protocols (C7 MTP, IUP, SCCP, INAP) used for interconnect TDM networks in the UK today.
- **Calling Line Identity (CLI):** Provision and reliance on CLI is a key element of a number of current telecom services as well as a vital input to services operated by customers/SMEs. Its general acceptance and smooth operation owes much to the work that NICC undertook to resolve the technical and interoperability issues relating to CLI and defining the C7 signalling interconnect accordingly. NICC also work with the regulator to ensure that the CLI technical specification fulfilled the regulator/electronic communication privacy requirements and supported the regulator in defining their Guidelines on CLI.
- **Number Portability:** NICC defined the technical standards that resulted in the introduction of number portability for geographic, non-geographic and mobile numbers at a time that this was largely unheard of globally.
- **DSL Spectrum Management:** The local loop unbundling (LLU) project raised a number of technical issues which NICC was asked to consider. The biggest of these was how to manage crosstalk interference within an access network cable between DSL systems operated by different CPs. This resulted in the specification of the Access Network Frequency Plan (ANFP) for the BT and KCH networks. This project particularly demonstrated NICCs flexibility, speed of response and innovation to respond to commercial requirements when in late 2004 there was a requirement from CPs for the BT ANFP to be updated to support higher bandwidth DSL services and particularly, the use of ADSL2+. By August 2005, the required specification had been formally agreed and published and contained a world-leading innovative process for managing DSL systems in order to maximise the potential capacity of the access network. This innovative solution has now been fully incorporated into international standards and is being considered for adoption in other countries.
- **Location Information for Emergency Calls:** NICC was asked to define an interface specification for the provision of geographic location information to Emergency Call Operators of the origin of 999/112 calls. In the face of no appropriate international standards, NICC undertook the drafting of such an interface specification and via its members, worked with the international standards bodies to gain wider acceptance of this specification. This pioneering UK work has now resulted in the specification being adopted as an ETSI standard.
- **Network Design & Planning Guidance:** Managing end-to-end (terminal equipment – terminal equipment) service quality across multiple, non-homogenous networks is a highly complex issue. NICC has provided the forum for discussion and agreement of design guidelines to achieve the continuing high level of quality of service that UK customers experience on the majority of fixed and mobile voice and data calls today.
- **NICC Model:** The success of NICC has been noticed outside the UK and recognising that the UK has a highly competitive telecommunications market, there has been considerable interest from other countries on how the UK has managed to resolve complex technical issues in this environment. This has led to the 'export' of the NICC model of operation to a number of other countries.