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Poģtne storitve - Kakovost storitve - Vodilo za uvajanje EN 14534, Merjenje ļ asa prenosa od sprejema do vroļ itve za masovno poģto

Postal services - Quality of service - Guide for the implementation of EN 14534 Measurement of the transit time of end-to-end services for bulk mail

Postalische Dienstleistungen - Dienstqualität - Leitfaden für die Anwendung von EN 14534 Laufzeitmessung end-to-end für Massensendungen

Services postaux - Qualité de service - Guide pour la mise en oeuvre de l'EN 14534 Mesure de la qualité de service de bout en bout pour le courrier en nombre

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDIZATION
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DE NORMALISATION
EUROPÄISCHES KOMITEE FÜR NORMUNG

Management Centre: rue de Stassart, 36 B-1050 Brussels

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Foreword

This Technical Report (CEN/TR 15369:2006) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 331 “Postal services”, the secretariat of which is held by NEN.

Introduction

This Technical Report is supplementary to EN 14534 *Postal services - Quality of service - Measurement of transit time of end-to-end services for bulk mail*. It provides information to be considered when implementing the EN 14534. It has been developed to guide postal operators and regulators as to the use, benefits and restrictions of EN 14534. The first part of this report contains general information to guide regulators and operators in their decision on how and when to implement the standard. The second part of the report contains detailed information on how to interpret specific clauses in EN 14534 and should be read in parallel with the standard.

In addition to referencing this Technical Report, those seeking to implement the standard are advised to consult requirements and guidance from the national regulators and legislation that apply in their jurisdictions.

EN 14534 provides a defined set of minimum requirements to satisfy the information interests of the national regulatory authorities, postal customers and postal service providers for quality of service measurement, and to allow postal service providers to comply with the requirements of the 1997 Postal Directive of the European Commission.

1 Scope

This Technical Report is an implementation guide to EN 14534 for use by postal operators, regulators and those responsible for commissioning, carrying out, or auditing the measurement of postal service quality. It gives information, which will facilitate the implementation of EN 14534. It gives an overview of the processes required and factors to consider when measuring quality of service. It provides guidance on alternative approaches allowed in the standard including how to select and calculate alternative or additional discriminant factors and methods for weighting of strata. It describes a process for implementation of the measurement system, and provides examples and clarification on specific requirements of EN 14534. It gives information on how to interpret the test results obtained by measurement according to the standard.

This Technical Report does not alter in any way the requirements of EN 14534. It is concerned with technical issues in the implementation of the measurement system. The Technical Report provides guidance but it does not specify how the regulators shall enforce and monitor the use of the standard since this is the responsibility of the European Commission and the national regulatory authorities themselves.

2 Purpose and use of postal quality of service standards

2.1 General

EN 14534 *Postal services - Quality of service - Measurement of transit time of end-to-end services for bulk mail* has been developed in order to provide a standardised method that can be used throughout Europe for measuring the transit time of end-to-end mail services and to assist postal service providers in complying with the requirements of the 1997 Postal Directive of the European Commission.

For the implementation of EN 14534 and to guide the user of this and other quality of service standards the following facts and precautions may be considered.

EN 14534 contains a number of requirements, which may be agreed with or should be approved by national postal regulators.

EN 14534 specifies technical requirements for the measurement including the preparation of reports on the results of measurement. However EN 14534 does not state how and when results should be shared with postal customers and users, who will order measurement to take place, and who will pay for the measurement; these subjects are outside the standard and will be determined by legal and regulatory requirements.

2.2 Benefits of the quality of service standards

The standardised quality of service measuring methods provides a uniform way for measuring the end-to-end transit time of postal items. Postal regulators can refer to the standard when requiring information about quality of service for postal operators. For any minimum service levels required by the European Commission or by national Directives for operators in the universal service, requirements can be made that the service be measured according to EN 14534.

Standardised measurement methods may help to keep the cost of measuring down. They could also make it easier to find contractors familiar with the methods and to evaluate the work of contractors for measuring and auditing. The standardised measuring methods may also eliminate debates and uncertainties about results from varying measuring methods.

Using standardised measuring methods will assure that the measurement will be done in an objective and equal way for all operators in accordance with the requirements of the 1997 Postal Directive of the European Commission.

The use of standards will ensure that reliable and correct information can be collected which can be presented to regulators and the public in an understandable way. It also allows the regulator to collect this information.

2.3 Limitations of EN 14534

EN 14534 considers only the measurement of transit time (expressed as the percentage of mail delivered within *J* + *n* day's end-to-end) and does not consider other aspects of service performance. For example, the date of deposit is defined by the last collection of the day but the standard does not measure whether the timing of the last collection of the day meets customers' requirement, nor how the times compare for different service providers. Similarly EN 14534 considers the date of delivery but does not take into account the time of day when the item was delivered, whether or not there are more than one delivery each day, the condition of items when delivered or the queuing time at post offices etc.

The method for end-to-end measuring specified in EN 14534 is not designed to provide for detailed results for the measuring parts of the distribution chain, when more than one operator is involved in the collection, processing and delivery of mail.

Although the EN 14534 specifies a method that will be used by many postal operators, it shall be noted that the overall transit time quality of service result does not measure the postal operator's overall performance in a way that provides direct comparison of postal service operators.

2.4 Interpretation of results

Results from the quality of service measuring cannot always be used for direct comparison of the overall quality of service. Neither can the results be used to compare the service of each operator in multiple operator environments.

Direct comparison of two operators can be difficult to make. Frequently one is interested in comparing two operators covering the same geographical area, i.e. the quality that a customer receives when using one or other of the operators for collecting and distributing mail within an area. To do this, it is necessary to compare the transit time of the operators over similar studies of domains. The two overall figures of the operators' on-time performance may be misleading. Considerations in case of multiple operators are described in 4.2.

When interpreting the results from the measurement it is important also to consider the stratification and national and other peculiarities that apply in each specific case.

2.5 Use of survey results for quality improvement

EN 14534 sets out minimum requirements in order to produce one overall figure. It is recognised that operators or other bodies may wish to go beyond these minimum requirements in order to produce information to identify and correct specific areas of poor performance. The survey design can be expanded to collect this information.

EN 14534 provides minimum requirements and allows measurement systems to be enhanced. It should be noted that other methods are available to find problematic areas and that the standard may not be the only method to use for this purpose.

EN 14534 allows the use of test items containing electronic chips or other advanced technology so that each test item can be monitored at pre-defined points or throughout its whole journey to allow for more detailed diagnostic analysis of the transit time. If these are used, the organisation operating the measuring system shall take steps to ensure that the diagnostic system does not introduce biases in the end-to-end measurement system.

When using the results of end-to-end measurements according to EN 14534 for quality improvements in a multiple operator environment additional considerations regarding causes of delays and their allocations to operators are to be made in order to see how each part of the process affect the total end-to-end quality of service.

3 Considerations before implementing the EN 14534

3.1 Regulations

The standard itself is not meant to specify how the regulators shall enforce and monitor the use of EN 14534.

This is to be done through the European and national regulatory work. In particular it does not specify how results shall be published by the regulator.

3.2 Measuring body (Contractors for survey operation)

EN 14534 states that measurement shall be carried out by an independent performance-monitoring organisation. This is defined as a body charged with the monitoring of the quality of service which is "external to, and having no links of ownership or control with the postal service provider thus monitored". The independent performance-monitoring organisation is responsible for undertaking the survey. Usually this performance-monitoring organisation will act as a contractor for a sponsoring organisation which may be, for example, the postal service provider itself or a national regulatory authority.

The independent performance monitoring organisation provides a guarantee that results of the measurement have not been wrongly influenced by the postal service provider. Factors normally taken into account in choosing a performance monitoring organisation include the capability - with strong emphasis of panel management skills -, experience and reputation of the organisation as well as any legal or regulatory requirements and, of course, cost. To cover all these points it is common to go through a formal tender process. Organisations which may have undertaken quality of service measurement include e.g. research institutes, consultancies, market research companies, universities and government organisations.

The performance monitoring organisation is required to ensure that the panel of senders and receivers is independent of postal operators and to manage the panel according to the International Chamber of Commerce/ESOMAR International Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice. This is intended to ensure that the postal operator cannot influence either the behaviour or reporting of the panellists, or the quality of service provided specifically to them. These codes of practice also require among other things that the identity of the panellists is not revealed to anyone outside the monitoring organisation, except with the prior permission of those panellists (see the comments on 5.1 in Clause 5 in this Technical Report).

3.3 Real mail information

The purpose of real mail studies is to collect information on the flows and other characteristics of mail. Management systems or surveys specifically designed for the purpose may be used. In a multiple operator environment there may be no real mail information available for all parts of the chain. In this case the standard cannot be used.

It may not be necessary to wait for all real mail information before starting to use the standard as weighting can be applied after the event.

5.5 of EN 14534:2003 "Real mail studies" lays down that the frequency of real mail studies shall be determined in accordance with the national regulatory authority and shall be performed at a minimum once every third year. For smaller mail flows, measured according to the extended measuring time as described in the Annex G in the EN 14534 Amd 1 and the collection of real mail information may take up to 3 years.

The reason why real mail studies shall be repeated at intervals is that type of senders, type of mail, distribution channels, volumes of posted mail and other factors may have changed over time.

The review of the real mail studies aims at reflecting changes in the postal environment. Reasons to review and perform new real mail studies may be the following events:

a) General

— substantial increase/decrease of the economy in general; and,

— substantial increase/decrease of the number of (a specific type of) postal items.

b) Operational

— introduction of new postal products with considerable market share;

— introduction of new logistics that affect the acceptance/distribution of mail or the weight/number of strata; and,

— change of tariff structure.

c) Legislative

— decrease of the reserved area; and,

— increase/decrease of the universal service area.

d) Others

— increasing/decreasing market share of other postal operators with branch or regional oriented customers and/or specialised services;

— substantial changes in distribution between rural and urban populations (e.g. drift to the city); and,

— changes in multiple operator environments.

This list is only exemplary. There might be many more reasons based on national peculiarities and/or general effects that may prove the need for the performance of additional real mail studies.

Real mail studies can be expensive which is why EN 14534 allows up to 3 years between studies. Nevertheless there may be situations where real mail studies should be made more often, such as rapidly changing events in the areas a) to d) above. It is also necessary to consider the effect on the measured quality of any changes in the real mail parameters. If a factor is not very discriminant in practice then big changes in the real mail parameter may have little effect and three years would be sufficiently frequent. However, if a factor is very discriminant then small changes in the real mail parameter could have such a big effect on quality of service that more frequent real mail studies are needed.

4 Implementing the standard

4.1 Steps to consider before implementation

In principle the following steps are required in order to implement quality of service measurement in accordance with the EN 14534. Indicative time periods are shown for each stage. GANTT charts showing the different stages are contained in Annex A.

a) Study the EN 14534 and this implementation guide and produce an outline specification for the survey. This specification should identify, in particular, the geographical stratification that will be used and the discriminant parameters that will need to be considered (up to 6 months);

b) Organise real mail studies to collect the information required for the survey. The real mail study shall cover different days of the week and periods of the year (between 6 and 12 months);

c) It is possible to proceed with call for tender processes, the selection of an independent survey operator, and begin contract negotiations before the final results of the real mail studies are known (preliminary estimates can be used instead) (up to12 months, at the same time as b) is performed);

d) Once full results of the real mail studies are available the design of the survey can be finalised and contractual negotiations with the survey operator completed (up to 4 months); and,

e) A period will be necessary for set up and testing of the survey (up to 9 months).

The timetable for activities a) through e) should be planned so as to have them completed at the end of a calendar year.

f) Full survey operation will start at the beginning of a calendar year and is required to last for 12, 24 or 36 months in order to meet the requirements of EN 14534 (12 months); and,

g) Reports shall be available within 3 months of the end of a measurement period of 12 months for large sized cross-border mail flows. For medium sized cross-border mail flows reports shall be available within 3 months of the end of a measurement period of 24 months. For small sized cross-border mail flows reports shall be available within 3 months of the end of a measurement period of 36 months (up to 3 months).

Many universal service providers already have some system in place for measuring end-to-end quality of service.

If there is no existing real mail study in place but a system to measure quality of service already exists, it may be possible to speed up the collection of information on real mail by using existing management information available to the postal service provider. In other words the real mail studies would run in parallel with the quality of service survey, and the results of the quality of service survey would be adjusted retrospectively using weighting at the end of the first year of operation. It could then take 16 to 24 months to the start of the measurement period and a further 15 months before results for the calendar year are available (see Table A.1).

In a number of cases faster implementation may be possible:

— if a system to measure quality of service already exists with a design already based on real mail studies and concepts, with minor modifications required, it should be possible to make the modifications required for compliance with EN 14534 with little delay (6 to 12 months to start of measurement period, see Table A.2); and,

— if a system to measure quality of service already exists with a design already based on real mail studies and concepts, but major modifications are required before the survey is compliant with EN 14534, there may be significant contractual issues with the survey operator. Time will have to be allowed for this, more time being required for a bigger survey (12 to 18 months to start of measurement period, see Table A.3).

Where there is neither systems to measure quality of service nor existing real mail studies in place it could take up to about 30 months to the start of the measurement period and a further 15 months or more before results for the calendar year are available (see Table A.4).

In a multiple operator environment, longer implementation times may be necessary.

4.2 Considerations in case of multiple operators

4.2.1 General

EN 14534 can be used both by universal service providers and by other postal service providers operating in a liberated market for the measurement of the full process of the pipeline end to end.