VAEDT EDI Test Plan

I. General

This document details the certification testing that must take place before a competitive service provider or its agent (CSP) and a local distribution company or its agent (LDC) may exchange information about customers and prior to exchanging production transactions. This document is a more detailed extension of, and supplement to, Section 10 of the Virginia Electronic Data Transfer Working Group Plan (VAEDT Plan). This certification test plan shall not supercede any enacted federal or state legislation, or any Order of the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC).

II. Purpose of Certification Testing

The purpose of certification testing is to ensure that trading partners can exchange information in an efficient electronic manner according to the standards developed by the Virginia Electronic Data Transfer Working Group (VAEDT) and endorsed through the Rules Governing Retail Access to Competitive Energy Services (Retail Access Rules) issued by the SCC in Case No PUE010013 and subsequent orders. It is VAEDT's position that all participants aggressively pursue implementation of all VAEDT approved EDI transactions as quickly as possible.

Entities may initially and mutually agree to use a means other than EDI to transact business. Should trading partners initially agree upon another form of communication different from EDI for any transaction, the following testing certification requirements are not applicable. However, such alternative communication must be demonstrated effective to each trading partner and such agreement provided to the SCC Staff pursuant to Rule 20 VAC 5-312-20 K. The trading partners shall work together and advise Staff of a timeline to implement VAEDT approved EDI transactions. As such EDI transactions are developed between the trading partners, they shall then be subject to the following testing certification requirements.

As restructuring and EDI transactions are implemented in a growing number of jurisdictions, market participants (LDCs and CSPs) may choose to develop their own EDI systems or purchase EDI systems and/or services from service providers (vendors). Such vendors may, upon arrangement with at least one CSP, agree to perform EDI testing[1] on behalf of that CSP with each LDC with which the CSP intends to do business. To the extent such a vendor offers the **identical** full and complete array of services (defined as EDI translation,

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[1] EDI Testing in Virginia is essentially the same as Level 2 Testing in the other FREDI states (PA, MD, NJ, DE, OH, DC).

Customer Information System and the use of that system to produce and accept the EDI transactions) to other suppliers and such full array of services are used by other suppliers, the vendor needs to perform EDI testing only once with each Virginia LDC to be certified in that service territory. When a vendor does not provide full and identical service as defined above to a supplier, the vendor will need to test on behalf of each CSP it represents, with each LDC. If a vendor wishes to use this provision it must certify in writing to the LDC that the systems/services used are identical to those previously certified. In any event, a separate production connectivity test must be performed.[2]

A vendor must have a business relationship with at least one market participant who has initiated the registration process in order to participate in the EDI certification process.

If either the CSP or the LDC changes any of the following products, they will notify their trading partners at least two weeks in advance, and will work with their trading partners to determine appropriate testing.

- VAN
- EDI Provider
- CIS system
- EDI Translation

If a CSP has not had any active customers within a local distribution company's territory for at least 12 months, the LDC has the right to require re-certification of the CSP and notify the CSP and the SCC of this action. This re-certification process may be a full certification process as specified in section III below, or a subset as mutually agreed by the trading partners.

III. Certification

Testing shall be comprised of the following processes: connectivity test, and EDI testing that consists of EDI Translation and end-to-end system testing. Each LDC shall determine the EDI testing requirements between the trading partners and the time period in which to complete. This testing shall consist of a minimum set of scenarios that are detailed in Appendix I.

Prior to testing, both LDCs and CSPs must:

- Read and understand the VAEDT Plan to gain a complete appreciation of the approved Implementation Standards as found on the VAEDT website (www.vaedt.org).
- Complete internal testing

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[2] **Note:** Such provisions may also pertain to vendors providing the same services for multiple local distribution companies.

- Take the necessary precautions to ensure that production and test EDI transactions cannot be mixed. It is recommended that a dedicated test system be in place and that separate EDI mailboxes be used for sending and receiving test transactions.

A.   Testing Prerequisites

Prior to testing, the CSP must be licensed with the SCC and complete registration forms with each utility in whose service territory it is planning to offer services. The LDC shall notify Staff of such registration and provide the CSP name, date of registration, and the EDI contact within the CSP.

B.   Connectivity

Establishing system connectivity between testing partners is essential to conduct EDI testing. The electronic connectivity shall be made through the use of the Value Added Networks (VANs), or as otherwise negotiated between trading partners, to establish a proper communication link between trading partners. A VAN can provide electronic mailboxes, data routing, data archiving and transaction auditing services.

In order to commence connectivity testing, the CSP must exchange trading partner profile information with each affected utility. Such information shall include EDI mailbox, sender/receiver identification, etc.

C.   EDI Testing

In order to commence EDI certification testing, the CSP must have completed the connectivity test and a trading partner certification checklist such as that attached as Appendix II. This includes a description of areas of known non-compliance, manual processes and test exceptions.

EDI testing shall be accomplished between each CSP with its LDC trading partner. The LDC shall determine the precise requirements for this level of testing to ensure complete compatibility with all of its trading partners. However, there shall be a minimum set of test scenarios required of all LDC plans in Virginia as outlined in Appendix I. A functional acknowledgement (997) shall follow all EDI transmissions. Refer to Section 5 of the VAEDT Plan for additional information.

EDI testing shall generally be performed in batches and each CSP shall be assigned to a particular batch. LDCs shall publish their test schedules at least 12 months in advance, and CSPs should review such published testing schedules and choose dates from that schedule. If there are CSPs waiting to be tested, the LDC will conduct testing at least quarterly. A CSP shall notify the LDC at least 30 days prior to when it wants to test. The LDC may waive the 30-day requirement and in any case shall determine and communicate when a new batch shall be formed and testing shall begin. During market opening, Staff may require additional testing batches.

The LDC shall direct the EDI testing and shall determine when certification testing has been satisfactorily completed. To this end, the LDC may establish daily conference calls to ensure that all participants adhere to the requirements and timelines of the test plan. Staff shall be invited to monitor the conference calls to ascertain the various stages of progress. Any CSP that is unable to adhere to the established schedule may, at the LDC's request and with Staff approval, be eliminated from the particular batch and assigned to another in order to maintain the test schedule.

Following completion of the EDI testing, the LDC and CSP shall each inform the Staff that the other has satisfactorily completed the certification testing.

IV.   Summary

Prior to exchanging production EDI transactions the CSP must:

- be licensed by the SCC,
- be registered with the LDC, including EDI certification, and
- have executed all required agreements with the LDC.

V.   Final Authority

The Staff may monitor EDI testing among trading partners and, upon notification of successful completion, shall broadcast certification on the VAEDT listserver. The Staff will arbitrate any non-resolvable dispute that may arise during the testing phase.