

GAMES CONSOLES VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT (GCVA) TENTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, 28 July 2020, 16h00-18h00
Conference call

PARTICIPANTS

BEIS (UK)

1. Adrian Barker
2. Lucy Birt

ECOS

3. Ernestas Oldyrevas

European Commission (EC)

4. Cesar Santos

Independent inspector (Intertek)

5. Jane Lee

Microsoft

6. Ted Eckert
7. Adriana Mattei, Zetacast, consultant to Microsoft
8. Lauren del Gallego

Nintendo

9. Julie Cheung-Rueckert
10. Eiichiro Morisaki
11. Calum Robertson
12. Emil Schweiger

NRDC

13. Noah Horowitz

Oekopol

14. Dirk Jepsen

Sony

15. Josh Aslan
16. Zara Churton
17. Lenka Jancova, Interel Group, consultant to Sony
18. Kieren Mayers

VA Administrator (Cambre Associates)

19. François Barry
20. Feriel Saouli

AGENDA

1. Welcome and introductions
2. 9th Steering Committee meeting (31 March 2020)
 - Approval of minutes
 - Review of actions
3. ACR Presentation by the Independent Inspector
4. Update from Signatories
 - Feedback from stakeholders
 - 2020 SRI Review Proposal – Energy Efficiency
 - 2020 SRI Review Proposal – Material Efficiency
 - Timeline
5. Update from the European Commission
6. AOB and date of next Steering Committee meeting
7. End of meeting

MEETING MINUTES

This Steering Committee meeting was held online via webconference, due to meeting/travel restrictions related to Covid-19.

1. Welcome and introductions

Ted Eckert (Microsoft) opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. Feriel Saouli (Cambre Associates, VA Administrator) then reviewed the agenda. No additional items were brought forward.

2. 9th Steering Committee meeting (31 March 2020) approval of minutes and review of actions

Feriel Saouli (Cambre Associates, VA Administrator) recounted that the minutes were circulated, approved, and uploaded on the Games Consoles (GC) [website¹](#). She also noted that all the actions agreed at the 9th Steering Committee meeting had been completed.

3. ACR presentation by the Independent Inspector

Jane Lee (Intertek, Independent Inspector) gave a presentation about the SRI 2019 Annual Compliance Report (ACR). Both the ACR and her presentation can be found on the GC [website²](#).

- After completing the compliance verification process (incl. some compliance verification investigation undertaken in October 2019, and subsequent product improvements), the Independent Inspector determined that the Signatories **continue to be compliant with all SRI requirements**.

¹ <http://efficientgaming.eu/docs/>

² <http://efficientgaming.eu/docs/>

- The SRI version applicable to reporting period 1 January-31 December 2019 is: [SRI version 2.6.3](#)³.
- The three Signatories represented 100% of the EU market.
- Four games consoles fell within the scope of the SRI: Microsoft Xbox One S, Microsoft Xbox One X, Sony PlayStation 4 (22 series) and Sony PlayStation 4 Pro (72 series). Nintendo did not have a console falling within the scope for this reporting period but is still a Signatory to the SRI.

Jane Lee (Intertek, Independent Inspector) concluded her presentation with some recommendations related to the reporting process, data handling and product compliance review associated with the role of the Independent Inspector for the production of the ACR (as shown in slides 30-31). She noted that the recommendations have been considered by the Signatories and the Independent Inspector since the ACR publication in May 2020.

In particular, Jane Lee (Intertek, Independent Inspector) believed that a deficiency of the SRI annual reporting process resides in the fact that there is no explicit requirement for a basic ‘functionality check’ by the Independent Inspector to check that the content of the PCR is valid i.e. that the online links work. Kieren Mayers (Sony) was however of the view that checking whether a link works or not is not core to what the SRI is aiming to achieve, namely to reduce the environmental impact of games consoles and to achieve energy savings and material efficiency.

4. Update from Signatories

Feedback from stakeholders

Ted Eckert (Microsoft) kicked off the discussion by explaining that the Signatories have been working on the 2020 SRI Review Proposal, considering the input received from the EU Commission’s Independent Consultant’s 2019 Study on Consoles, Member States and NGOs. He added that several points raised by stakeholders have already been implemented in [SRI v3.0](#)⁴ (adopted at the 9th Steering Committee in March 2020), as shown in slides 9-10 of the [Steering Committee meeting presentation](#)⁵.

Ted Eckert (Microsoft) mentioned that further points relating to the future of the SRI would be included in the 2020 SRI Review Proposal:

- Definition for 8K-capable consoles (recap for the stakeholders, definitions were already included in SRI v3.0).
- Adjustment of power caps for applicable active modes.
- Clarification of the low power modes.
- Re-evaluation of energy savings.
- Methodology regarding the availability of key components for professional repairers and identification of proprietary components.

³ [http://efficientgaming.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/2018\(SCM\)/Final_Games_Consoles_SRI_v2.6.3_20181115.pdf](http://efficientgaming.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/2018(SCM)/Final_Games_Consoles_SRI_v2.6.3_20181115.pdf)

⁴ https://efficientgaming.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Games_Consoles_SRI_v3.0_March_2020.pdf

⁵ [https://efficientgaming.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/2020\(SCM\)/GCVA_10th_Steering_Committee_28_July_2020.pdf](https://efficientgaming.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/2020(SCM)/GCVA_10th_Steering_Committee_28_July_2020.pdf)

Some feedback from stakeholders is still under consideration, notably on: low power modes; reporting power consumption of any separately enabled ray tracing; clarifying measurement tolerance on APD time limits within the test procedure; the impact of flame retardants on recyclability of plastic enclosure parts; availability of key components; and editorial clarifications.

2020 SRI Review Proposal – Energy Efficiency

Josh Aslan (Sony), Kieren Mayers (Sony) and Ted Eckert (Microsoft) described the Energy Efficiency related items the Signatories are working on as part of the 2020 SRI Review (as shown in slides 13-26). The Signatories began by giving a recap for the definition of 8K-capable consoles set in SRI v3.0, which includes the Xbox Series X and PS5. In addition, Josh Aslan (Sony) informed the Steering Committee that 8K-capable consoles will not increase the power caps set for UHD gaming capable consoles for navigation and media mode at 2K and 4K resolutions, despite being approximately four times more powerful – the first time the industry has achieved this when launching a new generation.

Josh Aslan (Sony) went on to explain how the SRI has driven energy efficiency in consoles over time and continues to do so (as shown in slides 18-24), with initial estimates for energy savings of 10.3 TWh for PS5. It was noted that Xbox One X energy savings are still being calculated.

Noah Horowitz (NRDC) thanked the Signatories for their ongoing attention to limiting console standby energy use and asked whether they could investigate whether users were actually disabling low power modes, as well as whether they intend to better define what is meant by low power modes and set measurable targets in that regard. Ted Eckert (Microsoft) agreed that reducing standby power does have a significant effect in reducing energy consumption. He said that consoles spend a lot of time in low power mode. This is an area of concern which the Signatories will be working on ahead of the next Consultation Forum on 9 December 2020. In particular, games consoles have very different types of low power modes, so the Signatories are still reviewing how it might be possible to have a harmonised definition.

Kieren Mayers (Sony) clarified that confidential lower power mode data exists, based on which Sony is assessing how to design the low power modes in new consoles, so that it would be particularly interesting to evaluate how the use of the low power modes will change with new consoles. Ted Eckert (Microsoft) added that he was expecting anonymised data to be further analysed over the coming months within the Xbox Group, notably following recent energy saving announcements by Microsoft CEO.

Noah Horowitz (NRDC) appreciated that the Signatories have shown how the energy use has evolved on an EU-wide basis. He however noted that the data seemed to show an increase in energy use, although lower than anticipated due to the increased performance that was made possible with the SRI. Josh Aslan (Sony) clarified that the energy use of consoles **has not increased** since the start of the SRI. Although there has been a rise in energy use from PS1 to PS3 due increased power consumption, the estimated energy use of PS4 is approximately the same as PS3, despite PS4 sales and usage being substantially higher than PS3.

Responding to Ernestas Oldyrevas (ECOS), who was asking whether cloud gaming services could be included in the energy saving estimations, Kieren Mayers (Sony) explained that this

work is underway, however not in the context of the SRI, but in the context of the [United Nations Playing for the Planet Alliance](#)⁶. Kieren added that this is not in the scope of ErP.

Finally, Noah Horowitz (NRDC) mentioned that the GC [website](#)⁷ could be made more user-friendly, notably by reducing the number of clicks needed to access data, such as total annual energy use.

2020 SRI Review Proposal – Material Efficiency

Zara Churton (Sony) and Emil Schweiger (Nintendo) described the Material Efficiency related items the Signatories are working (as shown in slides 28-37). Notably, Zara Churton (Sony) ran the participants through the 3-step process to determine the availability of key components (identification of components, determination of safety or security concerns and determination of key component availability and requirements).

Zara Churton (Sony) noted that empirical evidence has shown that no specific components shorten consoles' life-times. When it comes to safety and security concerns, she noted that product security and intellectual property must not be compromised, and, where safety concerns exist, availability of components must be controlled. In particular, Lot 3 excludes components from requirements where 'security' and 'safety concerns' exist. Responding to Ernestas Oldyrevas (ECOS), Emil Schweiger (Nintendo) explained that the Signatories have decided to exclude batteries from the list of available components due to safety and security concerns. In particular, lithium polymer batteries in some consoles must be carefully shipped and handled, which can only be done by authorised repairers, as they are trained and equipped accordingly. He also noted that shipping batteries in low quantities via postal methods (to consumers and independent repairers) is difficult and that presently there is no market need for larger quantities (which would make separate shipping necessary). He went on to add that the list of key components would be reviewed as part of each subsequent SRI review, and reminded participants that the Signatories are compliant with Directive 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators, will comply with the Batteries Directive when it is revised and would stay alert of any upcoming amendments to the legislation.

Emil Schweiger (Nintendo) went on to mention that the Signatories proposed to expand the SRI requirement relating to brominated flame retardants to include halogenated flame retardants. The Signatories will aim to align with the flame-retardant requirements of Lot 3 and 5 once they are finalised. Ernestas Oldyrevas (ECOS) asked why the Signatories are waiting for Lot 3 discussion to be finalised before advancing the discussion for the SRI. Emil Schweiger (Nintendo) explained that games consoles are closer to products in Lot 3 than to those in Lot 5. Besides, stakeholders requested that Signatories align with the various Lots. He added that it is not something that console makers want to spend a couple of years to discuss, but the topic needs further internal discussion, keeping in mind that consoles have a development cycle of 4-5 years. Kieren Mayers (Sony) noted that the Signatories are waiting for the conclusion of the discussion regarding the ISO method in Lot 3, which does not require flame retardants to be eliminated, just reported. The Signatories are confident they can come to an agreement on

⁶ <https://playing4theplanet.org/about/>

⁷ <http://efficientgaming.eu>

halogenated flame retardants within a reasonable timeframe. Meanwhile, Ernestas Oldyrevas (ECOS) asked whether the Signatories could also provide data on any other flame retardants which are used in the casing, to which Emil Schweiger (Nintendo) said they would need first to check internally.

Emil Schweiger (Nintendo) added that although the topic of the usage of recycled plastic material has been evaluated by the Signatories, at present, due to the lack of availability of recycled material in sufficient quality and safety grade, no such material can be made use of. It was also mentioned that the usage of recycled material would cause possible issues regarding the elimination of halogenated flame retardants since it would be hard to ascertain whether such content exists in recycled materials. He noted that the Signatories would continue to monitor the issue and review the possibility of introducing measures regarding recycled plastic content in external enclosures.

Ernestas Oldyrevas (ECOS) mentioned the pending ISO standard for Lot 3 and asked whether there was any willingness from Signatories to move ahead with this before December, as the European transitional methods should be adopted by the time of the games consoles review, it could already be implemented through supply chains. Kieren Mayers (Sony) said the Signatories are considering indeed how to take this forward by the Consultation Forum.

Timeline

Ted Eckert (Microsoft) presented the updated timeline for the 2020 SRI Review (as shown in slide 38). The Signatories intend to have a final version of the SRI Review Proposal ready on October-November 2020, ahead of the 9 December Consultation Forum.

5. Update from the European Commission

Cesar Santos (EC) noted that the Signatories are going in the “*right direction*” with their 2020 SRI Review Proposal, adding that he was pleased with what he heard during the Steering Committee meeting. He then made three additional comments/updates:

- He was pleased and relieved that the Signatories confirmed that 4K power caps would be maintained for 8K-capable consoles, which he recalled was the main stumbling block when meeting with representatives of Member States in the last Consultation Forum on 12 December 2019.
- He encouraged the Signatories to take the lead in bringing their SRI in line with the provisions relating to halogenated flame retardants in the Eco-design Implementing Regulation on electronic displays, without waiting for the Lot 3 discussions to be finalised.
- Finally, he mentioned that the EC intends to propose new legal provisions in October 2020 recommending that product batteries not only be **removable** but also **replaceable**.

6. AOB and date of next Steering Committee meeting

There was no AOB put forward. Feriel Saouli (Cambre Associates, VA Administrator) said that although the SRI calls for 2 Steering Committee meetings to be held every year, Signatories and the Commission agreed that there was no need to hold a 2nd Steering Committee meeting in 2020 (currently off-schedule due to 2nd Steering Committee of 2019 being pushed to March

2020). The date of the 1st Steering Committee meeting for 2021 is still being discussed and will be confirmed in due course.

Actions

- VA Administrator to prepare and share the minutes of the current meeting.

7. End of meeting

Ted Eckert (Microsoft) thanked all participants and closed the meeting at 17h50.