

Report

Report of the meeting for toll Service Providers as part of the RDW Temporary toll programme.

Date of discussion
March 15, 2023

Place of discussion
BCN, Utrecht

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Annex(es)
Presentation service providers March 15, 2023

On March 15 2023, RDW organised a meeting in the context of the EETS domain statement for temporary toll collection. The reasons for this meeting are to enter into timely discussions with the market of possible toll providers and to be transparent in what RDW is doing in the context of the introduction of this new toll system. In doing so, the RDW wants to inform these parties about temporary toll in the Netherlands and how it will be set up. This meeting is a follow-up to the first meeting organised by the Ministry of I and W on November 2 2022. During the meeting on 15th of March 2023, an explanation of the temporary toll system was given, including a more in-depth discussion based on the questions raised in the previous meeting. Below are questions raised by those present on March 15th in response to the RDW's Presentation of Service Providers and their answers.

Disclaimer

This report of the meeting for toll service providers within the framework of the RDW Temporary toll Programme has been prepared in the Dutch language. The Dutch report and an English translation thereof are available via TenderNed. In case of conflicts between the Dutch report and the English translation of the report, the wording in the Dutch report prevails.

Introduction

The slides of the presentation and a report of the meeting held on March 15 will be made available online via TenderNed in Dutch and English.

RDW itself has an initial question for the parties present, on the message of toll-free. RWS (Rijkswaterstaat) may decide to close one or more road sections of the BBV (Blankenburg connection) and thus make them toll-free because of an emergency. In that case, RWS will always announce this publicly. The question is whether parties are interested in receiving that message from the toll charger? Those present replied that they were indeed interested in this report.

Accreditation

In terms of accreditation, what are the must haves and how does the toll charger handle them?

Answer: the toll service providers should achieve a minimum set of speed, timeliness and quality in terms of message exchange. Customer contact cannot really be tested, that comes into play when going live. Compensation to the toll service provider will be linked to the 'must haves'.

Following the 'steps in admission process': is there a prescribed format of required reporting?

Answer: No format is provided at this time. The toll charger would like to see technical requirements and issues that can be demonstrated by testing reflected in a test report. Hence, a performance discount is related to a number of requirements. For example: the status of the service agreement should be sent 'near real time'.

What does sent mean; means that the service agreement has been concluded?

Answer: the service agreement has been confirmed by the toll charger through a return notification to the toll service provider. It is therefore a double notification, technical and functional.

What is an annual assurance statement?

Answer: meant here is the ISAE 3402 type 2 statement. Type 2 means that the statement reports on a period of time.

Suppose a toll service provider performs better than expected, is a positive incentive provided?

Answer: no, no positive incentive is provided.

Cooperating in inspection, does this mean cooperating in an audit?

Answer: These are at least announced and unannounced inspections.

How is the classification determined?

Answer: the roadside supplier determines the class (light/heavy) using open data from the RDW. Foreign license plates are classified on the basis of physical characteristics, based on various criteria. There is a minimum margin of error in that.

RDW asks: to what extent does the explanation generate interest in participating as an ETS provider?

Answer: the technical requirements as presented here are not an obstacle. There are no surprises among them. Please specify various things further. No showstoppers heard, the concept seems attractive.

Communications

Suppose a holder makes a complaint to the toll service provider, when that complaint is not for the toll service provider, who handles the complaint?

Answer: The toll service provider has the customer contact with its own customers, even if it is a complaint that can be resolved by the toll charger.

A change in toll rates should be notified in a timely manner, what is timely?

Answer: The toll charger asks toll service providers to inform its holders no later than 10 working days before the start of the new tariff. Additional communication is allowed, e.g. a few days prior to the effective date of the new tariff.

How should communication to holders take place?

Answer: the way toll service providers communicate with their holders is at the discretion of the toll service providers.

In response to communication: what is meant by a subscription? Does a subscription mean paying a monthly fee?

Answer: By subscription, we mean a service agreement with a toll service provider. It is up to the toll service provider to decide how the contract is concluded with customers.

In which languages should a toll service provider offer communication?

Answer: The toll charger sets requirements for its own communication, including a customer service in Dutch and English, and a website in more languages. It is up to the toll service providers themselves to decide in which languages they want to communicate with their customers. For example, the toll charger does impose such requirements on the HDA (main service provider).

What are the expected numbers of passages of Dutch and foreign vehicles? This is to know in which foreign languages a toll service provider should communicate?

Answer: Earlier, the expected numbers of passages used by the Ministry of I and W as a basis for the business case were published (see the slides shared via TenderNed following the meeting on November 2nd last). In addition, customer surveys have been done. The toll charger will come back to whether these customer surveys can be shared.

There are 3 moments of communication: before, during and after passage. Who does communication before, during and after passage?

Answer: the toll charger ensures at least 3 communication moments to all its customers, toll service providers also communicate with their own customers.

Will the toll charger actively alert its customers the option of paying afterwards?

Answer: the toll charger informs its customers about all payment options. More general information such as 'you are now driving on a toll road' will be displayed on roadside signs.

Are toll service providers already allowed to acquire customers in the period May to August 2024?

Answer: yes, you can/may. It may be wise to make the reservation of accreditation, but that is up to the toll service providers themselves. The toll charger is launching its own brand, copyright RDW. The toll brand can also be used by toll service providers for general information about tolling. Toll service providers should be able to provide basic information on tolling. Toll charger is preparing a lexicon and will compile a toolkit. Request to use this, but it is not mandatory.

RDW calls on toll service providers to jointly streamline communication. Toll charger is happy to enter into further discussions with toll service providers on how to deal with press. The commitment is to coordinate with each other to avoid conflicting communications.

The EETS domain statement contains a limited number of requirements on communication:

1. the toll service provider shall make public the policy it applies in concluding service agreements with holders by electronic means by publishing it on its website.
2. toll service provider does not give or give the impression of giving a discount on the toll to be paid.
3. the invoice sent by the toll service provider to its customers should clearly distinguish the cost of the toll service provider services and the toll charged.

In response to communication: what exactly does toll charger understand by peak?

Answer: about 70,000 passages per day are expected from BBV opening. Right after BBV opening, for many people, the first reminder will be a first introduction to this new toll system as information has not reached people. That may cause a peak in customer queries towards the toll charger and towards toll service providers.

If the BBV is not available, it is beyond the control of the toll service provider. Communication is then important. Who will communicate what?

Answer: if the BBV is not available, the government will communicate, usually through the usual channels used by Rijkswaterstaat.

Suppose there is a calamity in the BBV, it must be clear that the toll service provider cannot do anything about it. Then it should be clear how the communication goes, who does what?

Answer: passages in the BBV may be declared toll-free retroactively. How to deal with the consequences are still being worked out.

On whose account will that happen?

Answer: Toll charger will come back to this.

What does the enforcement policy look like, how will toll charger collect fines?

Answer: The enforcement policy is still being developed. A payment reminder will cost nothing in the first year, after the first year a limited amount will be charged when a reminder is issued. After the reminder period has expired, a fine is imposed.

See English cases, Eurovignet. There, the approach was chosen: no leniency arrangement, no discount, but immediately collect all fines to let people get used to it quickly. Works in England, so why not opt this in the Netherlands?

Answer: The toll charger will be able to report more on the enforcement policy in the 2nd half 2023.

Can the closure of accounts with service providers be encouraged, for example by offering a free passage when an account is closed?

Answer: a toll service provider cannot offer a passage free of charge; it is up to the toll service provider to decide on any reduction on costs of its service.

It is a trend for people to lease a car abroad and commit offences with that car in the Netherlands. How do we deal with this?

Answer: the toll service providers decide which customers they enter into service agreements with. The leasing company will be the holder and therefore the customer. Toll service providers have the freedom to refuse/dissolve a service agreement.

Easter/Pentecost are peak times when these kinds of issues occur.

Answer: it is precisely for these kinds of issues that coordination between all parties is desired, to coordinate with each other and strengthen each other. Such issues will also be discussed at the branch day in September.

Potential toll service providers are also invited to this branch day.

Other matters

Request for timely sharing of information so that toll service providers and holders are not surprised.

Response: communication does not stop after opening BBV. RDW wants to cooperate with toll service providers on communication even after opening BBV.

RDW asks whether the presentation meets expectations. Are there any questions?

Response: this meeting was again very useful. Happy to discuss the questions raised next time.

Response: would like more detail on the specific details around the steps in the accreditation process and more detailed admission requirements.

RDW asks the question: a meeting before or after the summer?

Response: the sooner the requirements are known, the better, also with regard to management requirements (such as reporting obligations). Would like a meeting before summer.

There is a need for more grip on the system: the numbers of passages and the exact requirements for service providers. We want to work with committed data before we can say we are getting in. It's important to be clear as possible. Where does a toll service provider's responsibility begin and end? What data is requested from toll service providers; how binding is it, what does it look like? At what point can the toll charger exchange binding data, what are the committed dates? Indeed, on entry, toll service providers should invest based on thorough consideration.

What are the exact requirements in terms of organisation, technology, communication? If we get in, we expect a specific picture on the basis of which we can make a decision to join.

Response: the toll charger has estimates, but they are forecasts. The volume risk is transferred to the toll service providers. See also page 3 of this report.

Suppose there are far fewer passages than the forecast, will the rates be increased or duration extended? And conversely, if there are far more passages than the forecast, will the rates be reduced or duration shortened?

Response: the duration of tolling in the BBV is linked to the time period for recovering the investment in the tunnel.

Can figures around the Eurovignette be shared?

Response: Yes, efforts will be made to share these before the summer.

In what way and when is the EETS domain statement, and/or the model contract prior to its publication, shared?

Response: this will be discussed in more detail in the next meeting.

In conclusion, it is indicated by the participants: satisfied with this presentation. There is an understanding that tolls are a political decision, but the toll service providers have commercial choices to make. After all, it is a risk trade-off. This is why, among other things, the specific requirements around admission testing (accreditation) are necessary.

