AS4 Usage Profile Questions and Answers

Versions of the Usage Profile:

> **What versions of the Usage Profile are there?**

- At any point in time there is a single current approved version of the Usage Profile, published at the ENTSOG Web site: https://www.entsog.eu/interoperability-and-data-exchange-nc#as4-documents-for-implementation
- The Usage Profile is being maintained actively. New versions may be released to fix any errors or omissions in the profile found after publication, to make changes based on implementation experience, or to provide functional enhancements
- The current version of the Usage Profile is Version 3.6, which was delivered in March 2018 and published on 2019.06.06. This version replaces all earlier versions.
- In addition to the current approved Usage Profile, ENTSOG may publish unapproved draft future versions of the usage profile, in order to provide early feedback.

> **Which version of the Usage Profile should I use?**

- As of today, you should use version 3.6 of the ENTSOG AS4 usage profile.
- AS4 is highly configurable and configurations can be restricted to particular (sets of) communication partners. So you can start using a newer version of the Usage Profile with new AS4 partner connections without having to simultaneously change existing partner connections that still use an older version.
- For existing implementations, the last but one version of the profile could stay in place for 12 months.
- Newer versions of profiles correct errors or omissions in the current approved version and may include solutions to interoperability and other issues you may encounter in your AS4 implementation.

> **Is the ENTSOG AS4 profile stable?**

- The current version, 3.6, was created in March 2018. There are no open issues with the specification document.

> **Can I still use version 2 of the Usage Profile?**
  - Version 3.0 made some incompatible changes that are required for use with many AS4 products. Use of earlier versions may create interoperability problems when setting up new connections.

> **What are the major differences between version 3.0 and 3.6 of the Usage Profile?**
  - All changes are logged in the version log of the Usage Profile.
  - Version 3.5 relaxed the requirement of presence of the EDIGASDocumentType part property.
  - Version 3.6 changed many recommendations (SHOULD) to mandatory (MUST). This facilitates implementation and configuring new communication partners.

> **How does ENTSOG AS4 relate to other AS4 Usage Profiles?**
  - The technical profiling (selection of conformance profiles, exchange patterns, signing, encryption, and compression algorithms) developed for ENTSOG is adopted by CEF eDelivery. Products compliant with CEF eDelivery are generally easy to adapt for use with ENTSOG and vice versa.
  - ENTSOG AS4 is also very similar to the NEDU AS4 profile for the Dutch energy market.

> **Are any changes planned to the ENTSOG AS4 profile?**
  - The AS4 profile uses security algorithms. Like any secure protocol, the algorithms used are reviewed periodically to determine if the specification needs to be updated to remain secure.
  - Initial investigations are on-going to update the message signature and message encryption to more modern algorithms.
  - ENTSOG will work with stakeholders to prepare, plan and execute the introduction of future versions of the ENTSOG AS4 profile.

AS4 Header:

> **Is support required for message properties?**

- Yes, as stated in section 2.2.3.1 of the Usage Profile and according to AS4, any ebHandler compliant product supports this requirement.
- Having said this, the current version of the Usage Profile does not define any message properties. (It does define a part property, *EDIGASDocumentType*).

> **How do I configure Service, Action and Role?**
- Detailed information is provided in version 3.5 of the Usage Profile, section 2.3.1.2.
- That section also references the ENTSOG Mapping Table, which gives an overview of values to use for particular exchange. This table published at https://www.entsog.eu/interoperability-and-data-exchange-nc#as4-documents-for-implementation

Agreements:

> **What information is included in an agreement?**
- An agreement denotes a set of Pmodes. In the Usage Profile, all Pmodes in an agreement have the same signing and encryption certificates for the involved parties.

> **What naming convention applies to agreement identifiers?**
- Version 3 added a naming convention that combines the party identifiers and a version number. This is a change to version 2 requested by users.

> **How many agreements exist between two partners?**
- At least one and two overlapping agreements during renewal period.

> **What happens upon certificate renewal?**
- A new agreement is created that is identical to the old one, except for the certificates used.

> **Are there constraints on combinations of Party Identifiers, Agreements and Certificates?**

- Agreement identifiers are unique per pair of parties.
- Per agreement there is one pair of signing/encryption certificates per partner. So for each message from P1 to P2, the agreement determines the certificate of P1 that P1 uses to sign the message, the certificate of P2 that P1 encrypts the message with, and the certificate of P2 that P2 will use to sign the AS4 receipt for the message.

> **Which certificate is used in case of impersonation?**
  - The one configured for the agreement and associated Pmodes.

Agreement Update:

> **Is support for Agreement Update required?**
  - Yes, this requirement was introduced with the publication version 3 of the profile.

> **What is the impact of AU on the AS4 component?**
  - No direct impact, it can be handled outside the AS4 component.
  - AU can be handled automatically, semi-automatically or manually.
  - AU is independent of the details of AS4 profiling. It is really adding a new type of functionality that is separate from messaging.

AS4 Error Handling:

> **Which Error codes are to be used in the ENTSOG Usage Profile?**
  - The regular ebMS3 / AS4 error codes are used. No additional codes are defined in the Usage Profile.

> **Do AS4 errors have to be signed?**
  - They should be, but they can't always be.

Duplicate Elimination:

> **Why is it needed?**
  - To handle the "lost receipt" situation, prevent messages from being delivered more than once.

> **What is the detection window?**
  - At least as long as the retry interval.
  - In ENTSOG AS4, for gas business processes, a maximum of an hour suffices, after which the message is in error.

Encryption:

> **Why is there a reference to symmetric keys for key transport?**
  - The partner's encryption certificate is used to encrypt a symmetric key that is used to encrypt the data.

> **Is there a recommendation for key transport algorithms?**
  - Yes, but they are mandated in the profile.

> **Are the algorithms from the AS4 Usage Profile supported in all products?**
  - No, some products on the market do not implement all mandatory algorithms.
  - Therefore, in your agreements with suppliers, make sure that the supplier does not just provide an AS4 solution, but a solution that conforms to the ENTSOG AS4 solution.

> **What is the MIME type of an encrypted compressed payload?**
  - Application/octet-stream.

> **Are receipts and errors encrypted?**
  - No, it is superfluous and likely to cause interoperability issues

> **Is the empty SOAP Body to be encrypted?**
  - No, but it is to be signed.

Networking:

> **Is support for IPv6 required?**

- A product must be able to serve as a dual-stack networking client, i.e. to connect to a counterparty AS4 gateway that is only accessible on IPv6, only on IPv4, or on IPv4 and IPv6.
- Parties can deploy their AS4 gateway as IPv4 and/or IPv6 servers.
- If all of your current counterparties use IPv4, you may postpone implementing IPv6 until your first new IPv6 only partner.

Payload Processing:

> **Is a Gateway required to do schema validation?**
  - No, the gateway may just pass on the content to a business application that does the validation.
  - To be able to validate the schema, message metadata including sender and receiver party ID and EDIGASDocumentType should be passed on along with the payload.

> **What does the PayloadInfo element look like?**
  - It contains an *href* to a MIME attachment.
  - It has two properties related to AS4 compression and one to encode the EDIGAS document type.
  - The following is an example for a DELORD.

```
<eb3:PayloadInfo
  xmlns:eb3="http://docs.oasis-open.org/ebxml-msg/ebms/v3.0/ns/core/200704/">
  <eb3:PartInfo>          href="cid:a1d7fdf5-d67e-403a-ad92-3b9deff25d43@tso.eu"
      <eb3:PartProperties>
    <eb3:Property      name="CompressionType">application/gzip</eb3:Property>
    <eb3:Property            name="MimeType">application/xml</eb3:Property>
    <eb3:Property          name="EDIGASDocumentType">ANC</eb3:Property>
   </eb3:PartProperties>
  </eb3:PartInfo>
</eb3:PayloadInfo>
```

Token References:

> **Which token reference mechanism in WS-Security is to be used?**
  - Since version 3.6 of the Usage Profile, BinarySecurityToken is mandate. This is because experience shows it is the most interoperable option.

Transport Layer Security:

> **Does the profile require support for client authentication?**
  - Some organisations require client authentication for inbound communication and therefore the product should support this feature.
  - In other situations it is not recommended as the profile supports already authentication based on X.509 message signing.
  - No support is required for the AS4 alternative pull authorisation feature, because ENTSOG AS4 does not use AS4 pulling.

> **Which cipher suites are to be used?**
  - The ENTSOG profile (section 2.2.6) specifies a number of cipher suites to be used.

AS4 Deployment Issues and Future Profile Updates:

> **Which algorithm is to be used for XML Encryption?**
  - The algorithm to be used according to the Usage Profile is *http://www.w3.org/2009/xmlenc11#aes128-gcm*.
  - An earlier version of this FAQ recommended http://www.w3.org/2001/04/xmlenc#aes128-cbc, in situations where products do not support AES128 GCM. However, products that are available and used by TSOs support AES128-GCM, so there is really no good reason not to use it.

AS4 Solution Providers:

> **Which solution providers implement ENTSOG AS4?**
  - There are many solution providers for AS4.
  - ENTSOG AS4 is widely known, so you can ask a solution provider if it provides support for it.

- The European Commission does conformance testing for the (closely related) eDelivery AS4 profile.
- They also test specifically for ENTSOG Usage Profile conformance.
- Information is available at https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/eDelivery+AS4+conformant+solutions.