ATC Substitution Protocol Guidelines

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ATC

The Technical Committee of Petroleum Additive Manufacturers in Europe (ATC) was established in 1974 for member companies to discuss topics of a technical and statutory nature that are of concern to our industry. ATC works to develop common industry approaches based on scientific and technical principles, to the benefit of end consumers and environmental protection in response to health, safety and regulatory legislation. ATC provides its members with a platform to build and share high-level technical expertise and to cooperate with relevant stakeholders active in the development of petroleum additive specifications and testing. Our members continuously innovate to find ways to improve the performance of lubricants and fuels, whilst ensuring that their products are safe when used as intended.

ATC Substitution Protocol Framework

1. Purpose and Scope

This framework provides a structured approach for developing bespoke substitution protocols in response to extraordinary events that disrupt the availability of substances or components in commercial additive packages. These events are referred to as '*Trigger Conditions'* throughout this document.

It aims to maintain product quality and customer choice, ensure alignment with the principles of existing industry standards such as the ATC Code of Practice (CoP) and European Engine Lubricant Quality Management System (EELQMS), and enable timely and cost-effective responses to unforeseen disruptions.

The framework is not a protocol itself, but a guideline that defines how specific protocols should be initiated, developed, governed, and terminated. It is designed to be generic and inclusive, without limiting the type of substitution it may support. While the framework is permanent, application of specific protocols developed under it must be time-limited and subject to regular review. Their development and invocation are triggered upon ATC consensus that extraordinary industry-wide events—per ATC-defined acceptance conditions (*Trigger Conditions*)—have occurred and require collective action.

The framework also mandates early and proactive engagement with stakeholders such as ATIEL and ACEA to ensure broad acceptance and alignment.

2. Trigger Conditions

Trigger Conditions refer to an industry-wide situation of material unavailability that is beyond the control of additive marketers and involves failure to perform contractual obligations. The Trigger Condition must make it impossible for those marketers to continue selling their products, resulting in a significant disruption in the availability of suitable finished lubricant products in the market.

The material unavailability must be caused by any event that is beyond the control of the additive marketers, such as, but not necessarily limited to, supply chain disruption, legal or regulatory action, pandemic, or sanctions. The consequences of the event must be unmanageable within the CoP without causing significant disruption to the market.

Trigger Conditions do not apply to situations referred to as commercial hardship, where the affected marketers have failed to obtain supplies of suitable material due to negligence, failure to apply good business practices, or where, for example, market economics make it harder or more expensive, but not impossible, to procure the necessary material.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 Framework-Level Principles

These principles define the nature and role of the Framework Protocol as a permanent reference model:

- The framework is permanent and inclusive, designed to support all types of substitution scenarios.
- It complements existing industry systems such as the ATC Code of Practice (CoP) and EELQMS.
- It mandates early and proactive engagement with external stakeholders such as ATIEL and ACEA to ensure broad acceptance and alignment.

3.2 Protocol-Level Principles

These principles apply to the development and implementation of specific substitution protocols under the framework:

- **Objective** - Specific protocols should be acceptable to key stakeholders, such as ATIEL or ACEA.
- **Defined Scope and Duration** - Protocols should be narrow in scope, tailored to the nature of the disruption, and time-limited. The applicability must be subject to regular review and revocation.
- **Preservation of Quality and Choice** - Substitution actions must maintain lubricant quality and customer choice. Where performance deterioration is unavoidable, the minimum acceptable performance must be agreed with all relevant stakeholders.
- **Transparency and Fairness** - Protocols must be developed and implemented transparently. The process must be clear, unambiguous, and free from competitive distortion as per ATC Document 126.
- **Technical Rigour and Traceability** - Protocols must be grounded in sound technical reasoning and the principles of the Codes of Practices. Examples that should be considered include the ATC Code of Practice Section H, the ACC Code of Practice Appendix H and Appendix I, as well as Fundamental Formulating Knowledge. Protocols must require support by appropriate documentation to uphold traceability standards and ensure accountability and auditability.

4. Protocol Development Process

The development of a specific substitution protocol under this framework follows a structured, consensus-driven process designed to ensure transparency, technical rigor, and stakeholder

alignment. The process is initiated only when extraordinary, industry-wide events have occurred and require collective action.

- **Step 1: Trigger Condition Claim** - Any ATC member may submit a request that such an extraordinary situation has occurred. This request may be made anonymously to the ATC Secretary General or publicly to the ATC Secretary General or to ATC-RSG. Anonymity of the requestor is maintained throughout the process if requested.
- **Step 2: ATC Consensus** - ATC-RSG evaluates the request and determines whether the event meets the trigger conditions. A recommendation is made to ATC-Main, which must reach consensus that the situation qualifies as extraordinary and cannot be addressed through existing mechanisms (e.g., standard CoP procedures).
- **Step 3: Invocation** - Upon ATC-Main consensus, a bespoke substitution protocol should be defined. The protocol must be tailored to the specific nature of the disruption and developed in accordance with the principles outlined in this document.
- **Step 4: Protocol Design** - A designated ATC sub-team setup by ATC RSG drafts the specific protocol. This includes defining scope, duration, substitution criteria, appropriate minimum testing requirements, documentation standards, and stakeholder communication plans. The protocol must align with CoP and EELQMS principles.
- **Step 5**: **Pre-Approval** – ATC-RSG reviews the protocol proposal and endorse sharing for consultation with external stakeholders.
- **Step 6: Stakeholder Engagement** - Before implementation, the protocol is shared with relevant external stakeholders such as ATIEL or ACEA. The protocol may be revised based on feedback from external stakeholders (revisiting Step 4).
- **Step 7**: **Protocol Approval** - Approval of final protocol must follow requirements of ATC Document 126 and the ATC Articles of Association, in particular approval by ATC-Main
- **Step 8: Implementation** - Once approved, the protocol can be used by any affected party under the conditions outlined in the protocol itself. Usage is voluntary and not notifiable to ATC. Protocol users are responsible for ensuring that relevant oil marketers raise no objection to additive package modifications made in accordance with the specific protocol.
- **Step 9: Review and termination** – The applicability of the protocol is subject to periodic review. Based on evolving conditions, ATC-RSG must recommend extending, revising, or revoking the protocol application. Upon revocation, an orderly transition to standard procedures is required. ATC-RSG must recommend appropriate transition periods. All decisions must be confirmed by ATC-Main. Revisions or revocations must be communicated to relevant stakeholders in good time.

5. Governance and Roles

Effective governance is essential to ensure that the framework and any specific substitution protocols developed under it are applied consistently, transparently, and with appropriate oversight.

- **ATC-Main** - Holds final decision-making authority. ATC-Main must approve the development and implementation of specific protocols and validate any revisions or revocations.

- **ATC-RSG** - Acts as the initial evaluator of trigger condition notifications. ATC-RSG reviews submitted requests, assesses whether the event meets criteria, and makes recommendations to ATC-Main. It also oversees periodic reviews of active protocols and proposes extensions, revisions, or termination actions.
  ATC-RSG is responsible for approval of external communications.
- **ATC Secretary General** - Serves as the primary point of contact for trigger condition requests and ensures procedural integrity. ATC Secretary General is responsible for maintaining anonymity of requestors when requested and coordinating communication between ATC-RSG and ATC-Main.
- **ATC Sub-Team (Protocol Drafting Group)** - Formed ad hoc upon ATC Main approval of extraordinary situation and development of bespoke protocol. This group is responsible for drafting the specific substitution protocol, in line with the guidance in this framework document, including scope, duration, criteria, appropriate minimum testing requirements, documentation standards, and stakeholder communication plans. The sub-team should ensure alignment with CoP and EELQMS principles and facilitate appropriate engagement with external stakeholders adhering to ATC Document 126.