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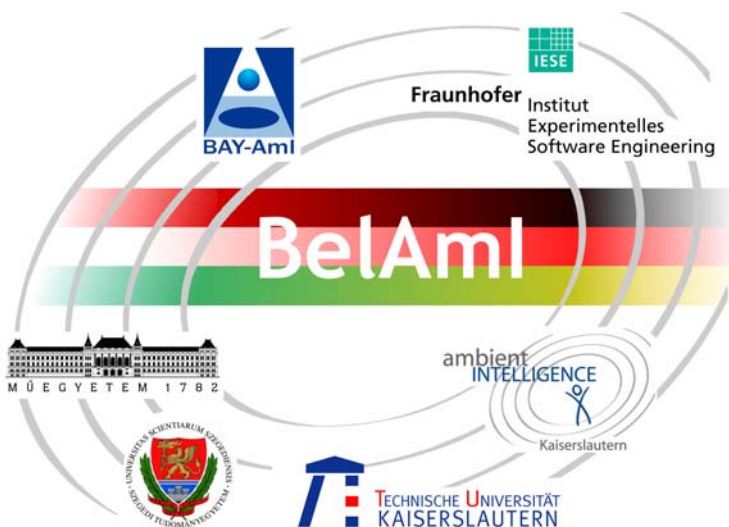
TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT
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AmlCom - Formally specified service platform for ambient intelligence networks

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Abstract

Intelligent environments are based on services that are deployed on hardware nodes that communicate among each other. Generic and light-weight communication middleware for service interaction is the basis of the ubiquitous idea. In this report, AmlCom, a new light-weight communication middleware for dynamic ambient applications is presented. This middleware is already in use on several nodes within a prototypical assisted living environment.

Keywords: Ambient intelligence, network, communication, ad-hoc, distributed services

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1 Introduction

Ambient intelligence environments consist of different type of nodes, which communicate through wired networks or by wireless mobile ad-hoc networks that come into existence by the mere presence of nodes that form a self-organizing network. They support distributed user applications in various areas of ambient intelligence, including professional work, leisure activities, public health, and transportation. For these user applications, it is essential to provide their distributed services independently from the current network architecture and without reconfiguration of the network.

This report presents *AmICom*, the tailored lightweight communication middleware for ambient intelligence networks, which is based on distributed services. Each application in the network may register services, which are then available to all nodes in the network. Thereby, all other applications can subscribe to this service to form a multicast communication group.

Applications interchange messages by use of the *AmICom*, which allows an abstraction from the distributed system, by delivering valid messages to applications on the local node or to application on other nodes in the network. A message is valid, if the destination address of the message corresponds to the name the application has registered.

2 Requirements

2.1 Basic Functionality

- **AmlCom instance:**
AmlCom is instantiated once on each node and will be provided as an executable that run on linux and Windows platforms. Multiple applications can use the communication service of the AmlCom.
- **Service for applications:**
A class for Java and Windows is provided, which allows the interaction with the running AmlCom instance on the local node.
- **Application registration by name:**
Each application registers itself at the local AmlCom, by providing a unique name.
bool AmlCom::Register(String name)
AmlCom keeps a register of applications present on the node. This registration is a requirement for further communication with the AmlCom. The function returns false if the connection to the local AmlCom instance failed.
- **Application subscribe by name:**
Each application may subscribe a service in the network by use of its unique name.
bool AmlCom::Subscribe(String name)
The subscription triggers a communication between this AmiCom instance and any other instance in the network, which provides a service with this name. Additionally to the dissolving of name clashes, a connection between both AmiCom nodes is established and observed. The function returns false if the connection to the local AmlCom instance failed or a service with this name is not available.
- **Sending unicast messages:**
Sends a message to another local or remote application:
bool AmlCom::Send(String destination-name, byte[] data, int size)
The provided destination-name must corresponds to the name, an application has registered, in order to receive that message.
- **Receiving messages:**
Messages transmitted over the network are queued in the AmlCom, if an application with a corresponding name has been registered before. The registered application can gather a message, in order of reception from this queue.
struct message_data AmlCom::GetData()
- returns null if buffer is empty

2.2 Future functionality

Convenience methods for simple data types

To access ints, floats, chars and strings in data packets, we will provide some convenience methods for data transformation. Here, the description of data types using ASN.1 and the Encoding/Decoding using BER, DER or PER is proposed.

Multi-NIC support (work in progress)

Enable the multi-hop communication in ad-hoc networks will be provided by support of multiple hardware interfaces and appropriate routing protocols

2.3 Optional functionality (extensions)

Possible further extensions are listed below. The realisation of further extensions of the AMICOM depends on complexity, effort and available resources. Each extension requires further requirement analysis and agreements.

- Service availability check (work in progress)
Applications may register a periodically check of the availability of a particular application at their AmICoM. Monitored applications are requested to answer to certain refresh messages. If this fails or any other loss of interaction in the distributed system is detected, other applications may be notified.
- Check for name clashes (work in progress)
As communication is done via names, these have to be unique. To avoid application name clashes at runtime (user errors), AmICoM probes at registration time if the given name is already present and refuses registration in this case. This would exclude the possible extension "Group management"
- Group management
Applications registering with equal names, form a group of communicating applications. A message with the destination-name of the

group will be delivered to all members of the group. This extension would exclude the possible extension “Check for name clashes”

- Observation of data messages
The transmission of messages may be observed in order to check the successful delivery to one application in the network. Otherwise the transmission will continuously be repeated.
- Fragmentation and reassembly of data (work in progress)
For a better support of large data packages from the application (e.g. video frames or large XML descriptions), the data must be segmented in multiple fragments. The size of the data must accomplish the requirements of the used communication technology.

3 AmlCom Middleware

The AmlCom middleware is specified using the formal specification language SDL-96. The transpiler ConTraST automatically generates an implementation in C++. Together with the corresponding runtime environment and a set of generic communication modules an executable for multiple platforms can be generated.

3.1 Architecture

Figure 1 shows the general architecture of each node in the ambient environment. Depending on the available hardware resources, there are possibly several applications, which may register or subscribe to a particular service in the network.

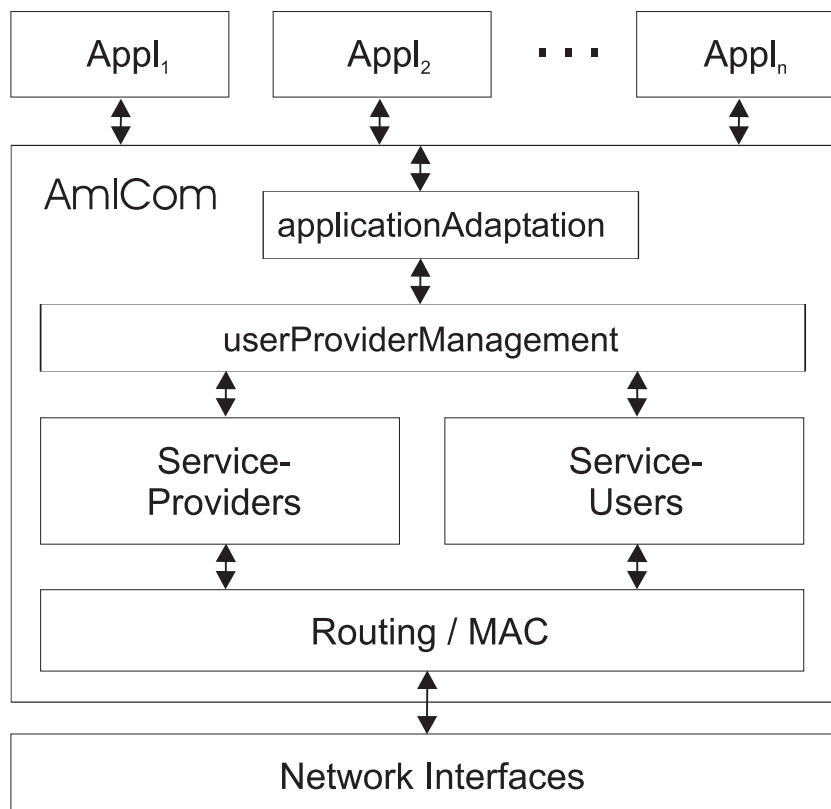


Figure 1:

AmlCom architecture

For each request with a new service name, a *ServiceProvider* or a *ServiceUser* is created, representing a communication endpoint for the application. The communication between a *ServiceProvider* and all of its subscribed *ServiceUsers* is observed in order to detect the loss of communication or the failure of a node in the network. In case that the failure cannot be recovered, the subscribed applications are notified.

3.2 Services

One objective of AmlCom is to keep the programming interface as simple as possible to facilitate the familiarization with the interface, increase the acceptance and allow the portage to multiple hardware platforms. The API to the AmlCom middleware is realised by C functions or as methods of a class in all object-oriented languages:

- bool: REGISTER(string: name)
- bool: UNREGISTER(string: name)
- bool: SUBSCRIBE(string: name)
- bool: UNSUBSCRIBE(string: name)
- bool: SEND(string: name, bytes: data)
- bool: RECEIVE(string: name, bytes: data)

Figure 2 shows a typical scenario for the use of the AmlCom API. The REGISTER call (respectively UNREGISTER) allows an application to register a service in the Aml network with a given name. Each application interested in this particular service may subscribe to this service with a SUBSCRIBE(name). AmlCom observes these operations and gives a feedback, whether the request could be fully performed. The REGISTER may fail if a service with this name is already been registered in the network. The SUBSCRIBE fails, when the requested service is currently not available.

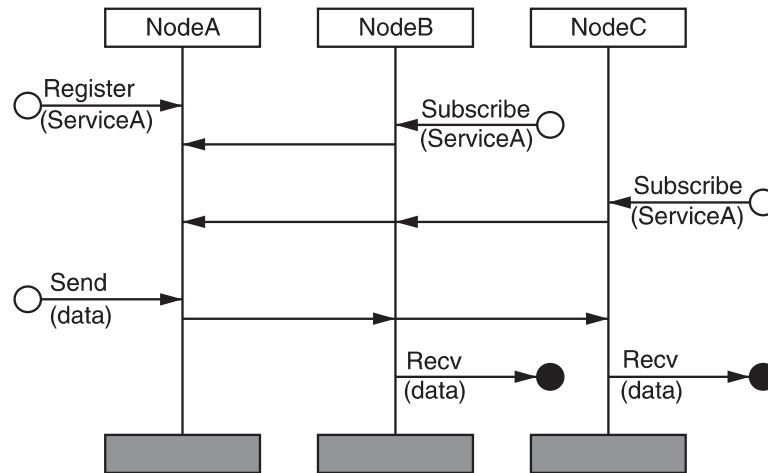


Figure 2: Communication scenario

All applications that have registered or subscribed may SEND messages that are transmitted to all other associated application with this service. These messages can be consumed by a RECEIVE call. Additionally, the registration of callback functions is possible, allowing an immediate reception of messages and the asynchronous notification of service failure.

3.3 Platforms & Languages

The AmlCom currently support the following platforms:

- Windows (Windows 2000 and newer)
- Linux (Kernel 2.4 and newer)

The AmlCom API used by the application developer is available for:

- C
- C++
- Java

4 Behaviour and service description

Name: AmICom

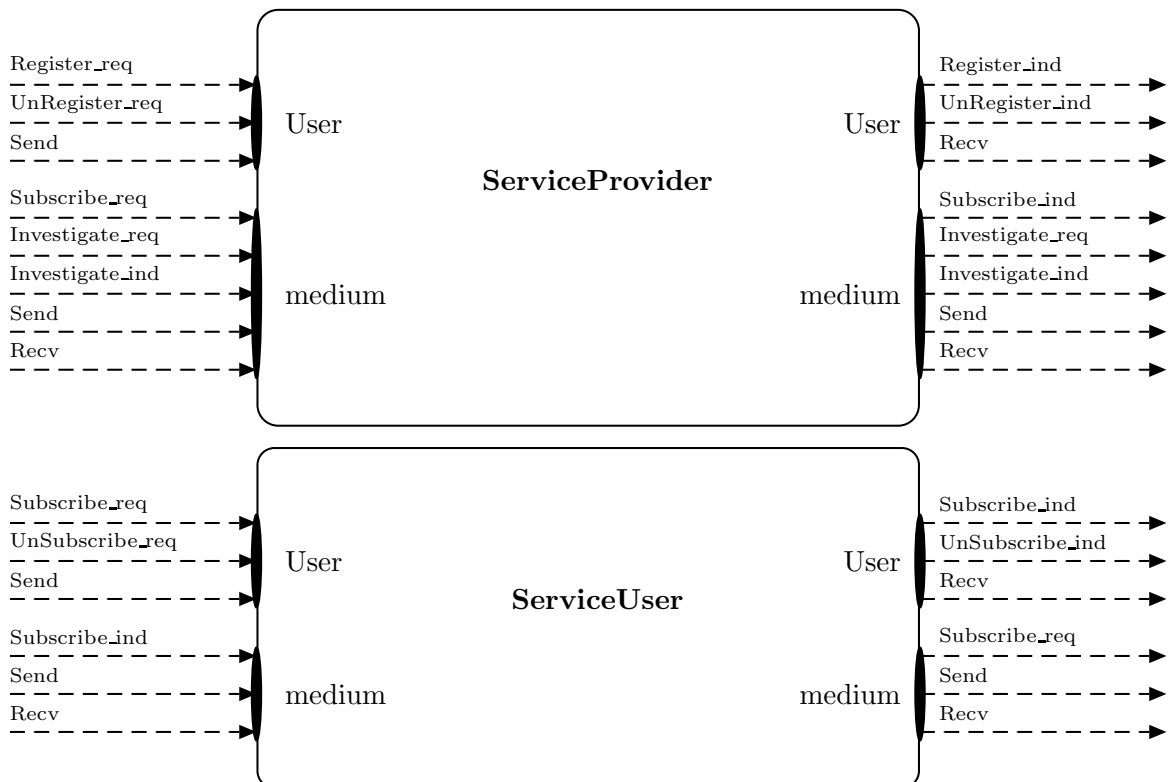
Version: 1.0

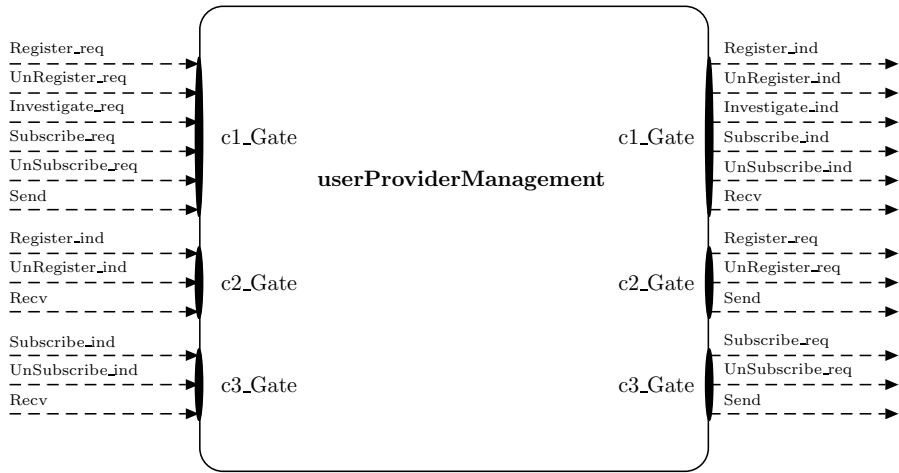
Author: Ingmar Fliege

Intent

These micro protocols specify the distributed asymmetric service platform: AmICom

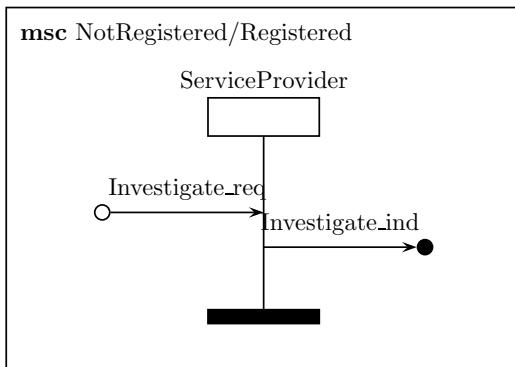
Interface signature





4.1 Interface behaviour

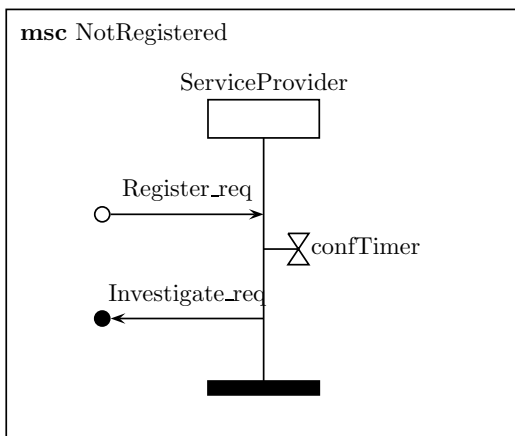
Scenario 1



Description:

The signal *Investigate_req* indicates a query for a service with the given name in the network. The signal *Investigate_ind* is the reply for the query. Since the name corresponds to one that was searched, the *Investigate_ind* is sent.

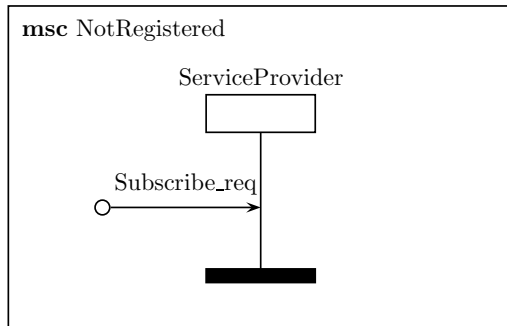
Scenario 2



Description:

The signal *Register_req* initiates the registration of a new service in the network. The timer *confTimer* is set for a duration of CONFTIMEOUT time units. Next, the signal *Investigate_req* searches for a service in the network, which has already registered a service with this name.

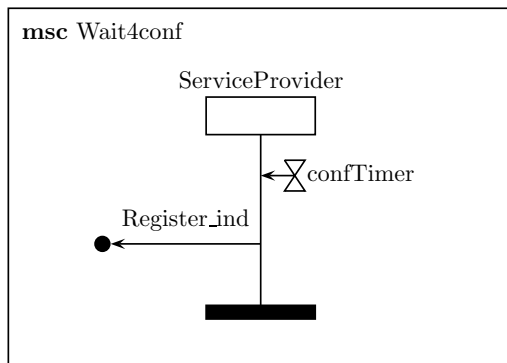
Scenario 3



Description:

The signal *Subscribe_req* initiates a subscription to a service with the given name. No further operations are performed.

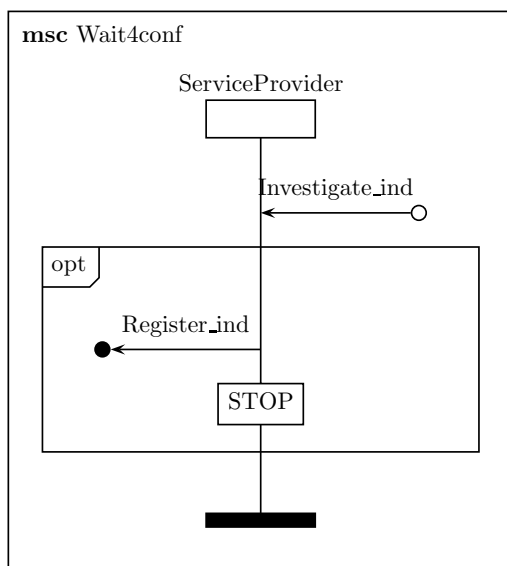
Scenario 4



Description:

The timer *confTimer* signals, that there is no other service in the network registered by this service name. The signal *Register_ind* indicates the successful registration of a new service in the network.

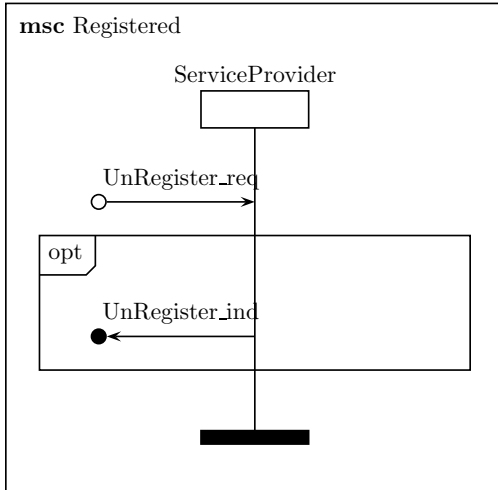
Scenario 5



Description:

The signal *Investigate_ind* is consumed and triggers the following actions: If this service name is already registered by another instance of this protocol, the signal *Register_ind* is sent and the process stops.

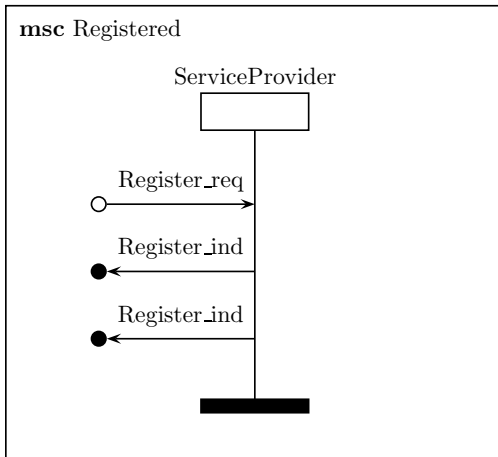
Scenario 6



Description:

A service with a well defined name is registered by the service provider. The signal *UnRegister_req* is consumed and triggers the following actions: If the application is known by this service, the signal *UnRegister_ind* indicates the cancellation of the registered service.

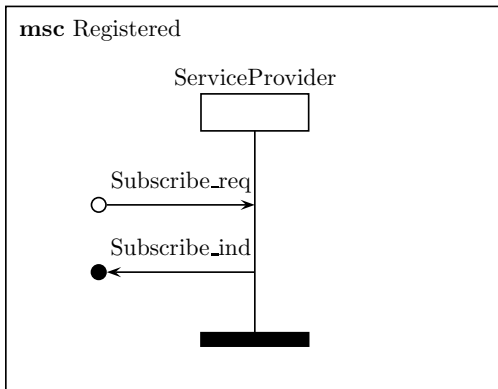
Scenario 7



Description:

A service with a well defined name is registered by the service provider. The signal *Register_req* initiates reregistration of this service (same name) by another application on the current node. The signal *Register_ind* indicates the success of registration to the new application, which has created the request. The signal *Register_ind* indicates the loss of registration to the first application.

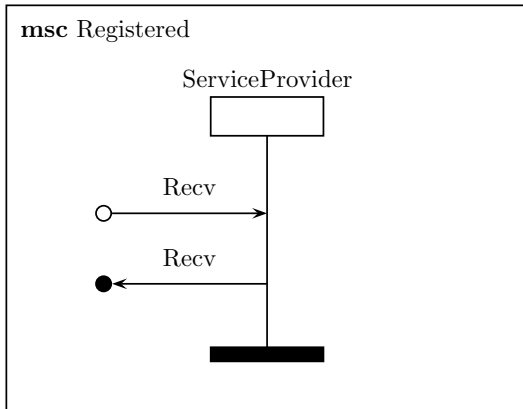
Scenario 8



Description:

A service with a well defined name is registered by the service provider. The signal *Subscribe_req* initiates a subscription to a service with the given name. The signal *Subscribe_ind* confirms that the subscription was successful.

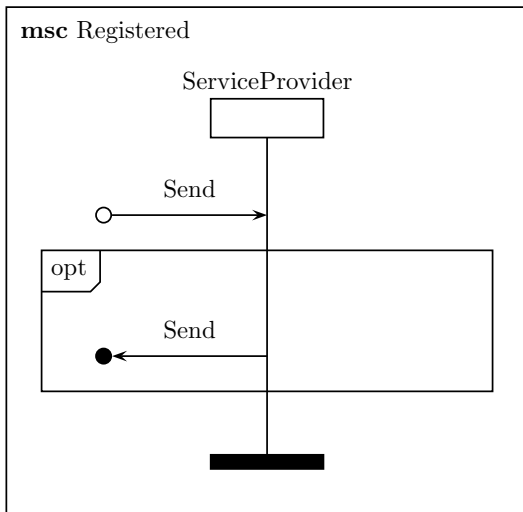
Scenario 9



Description:

A service with a well defined name is registered by the service provider. The signal *Recv* contains data for the application that was send by some service user in the network. The signal *Recv* indicates the reception of new data for the application.

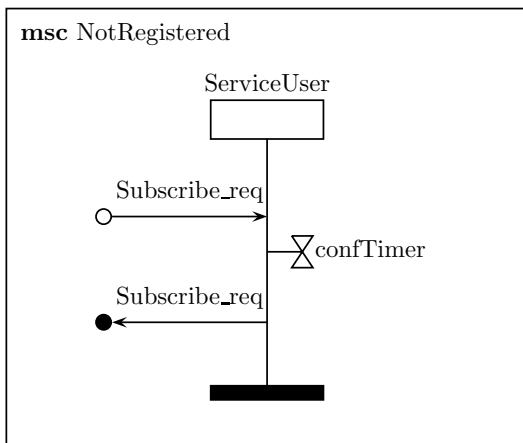
Scenario 10



Description:

A service with a well defined name is registered by the service provider. The signal *Send* contains data from the application that has to be sent to other applications in the network. If the service name corresponds to the name of this service, the signal *Send* transmits the data to all participating services in the network.

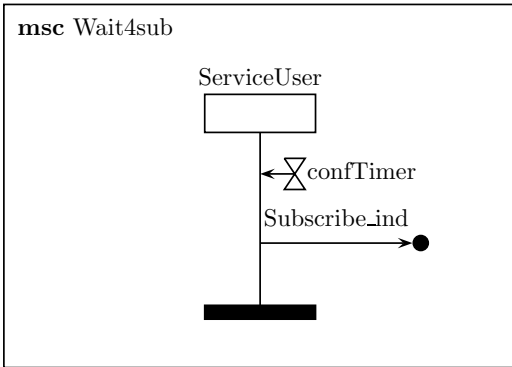
Scenario 1



Description:

No application has subscribed a service in the network. The signal *Subscribe_req* initiates the subscription at a service by name in the network. The timer *confTimer* is set for a duration of CONFTIMEOUT time units. Next, the signal *Subscribe_req* is sent to all service providers in the network in order to subscribe the specified service.

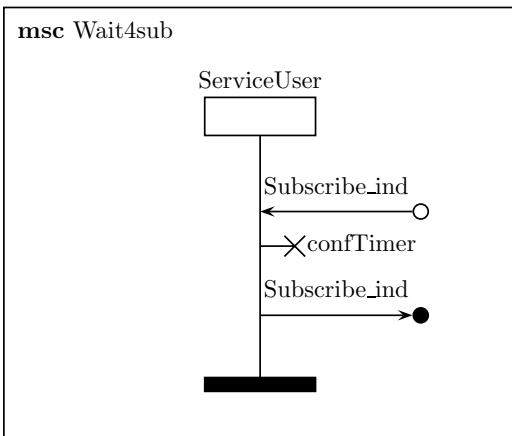
Scenario 2



Description:

The timer *confTimer* indicates that the requested service was not found. The signal *Subscribe_ind* indicates the failure of subscription.

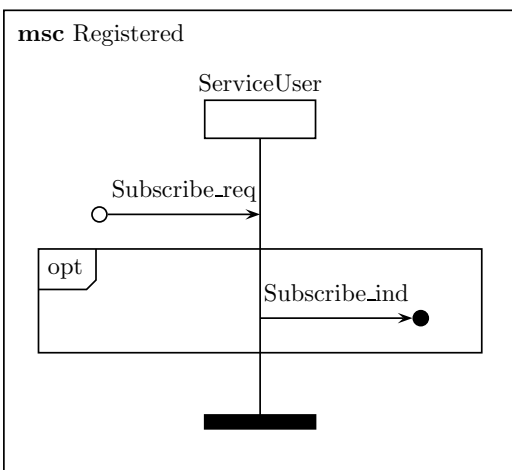
Scenario 3



Description:

The signal *Subscribe_ind* is the confirmation of subscription at the requested service. The timer *confTimer* is reset. Next, the signal *Subscribe_ind* indicates the success of subscription.

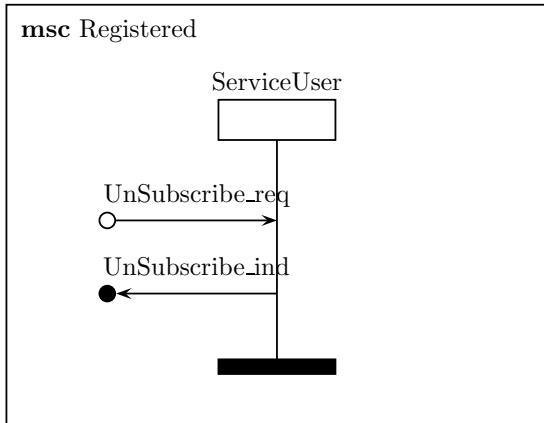
Scenario 4



Description:

A service user has subscribed a service in the network. The signal *Subscribe_req* indicates that another application wishes to subscribe a service which has already been subscribed by another application. If the requested service name corresponds to the service name this instance has subscribed, the signal *Subscribe_ind* confirms the successful registration.

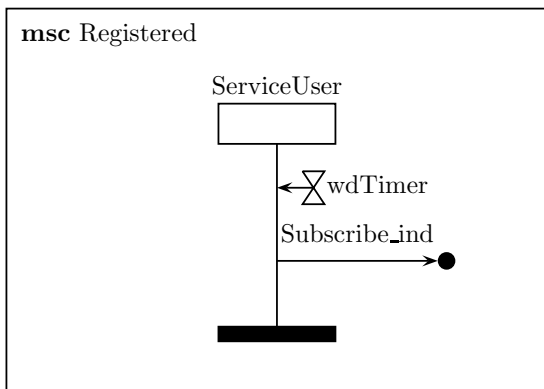
Scenario 5



Description:

A service user has subscribed a service in the network. The signal *UnSubscribe_req* initiates the cancelation of a service. The signal *UnSubscribe_ind* is the confirmation of the unsubscribe operation.

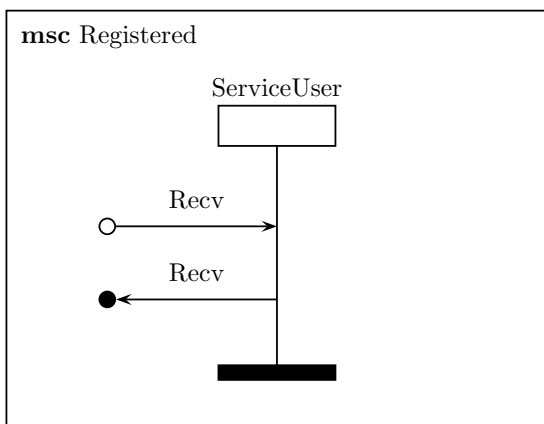
Scenario 6



Description:

A service user has subscribed a service in the network. The timer *wdTimer* is consumed and the signal *Subscribe_ind* is sent.

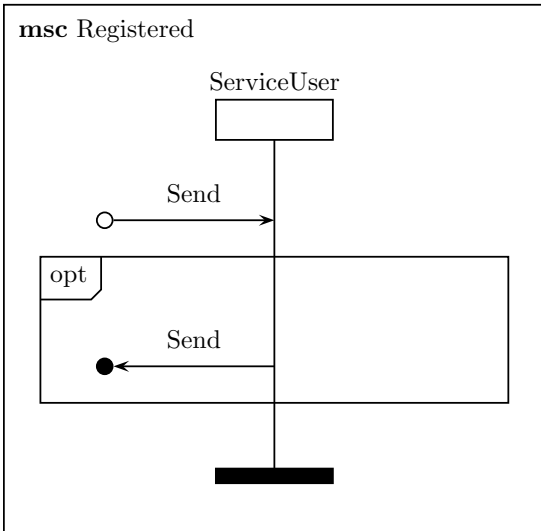
Scenario 7



Description:

A service user has subscribed a service in the network. The signal *Recv* contains data for the application that was sent by some node in the network. The signal *Recv* is sent.

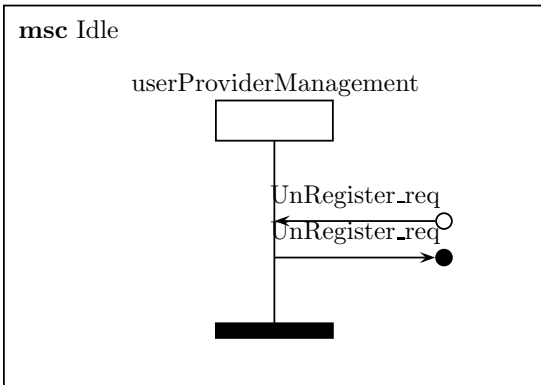
Scenario 8



Description:

A service user has subscribed a service in the network. The signal *Send* contains data from the application that has to be sent to other applications in the network. If the application has registered at the specified service, the signal *Send* transmits the data to all participating services in the network.

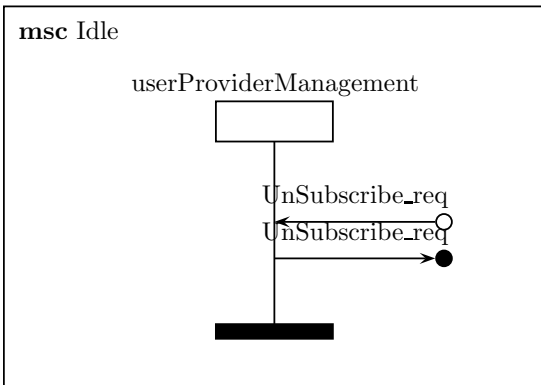
Scenario 1



Description:

The signal *UnRegister_req* initiates the cancellation of a service registration by the application. Otherwise, the signal *UnRegister_req* is sent.

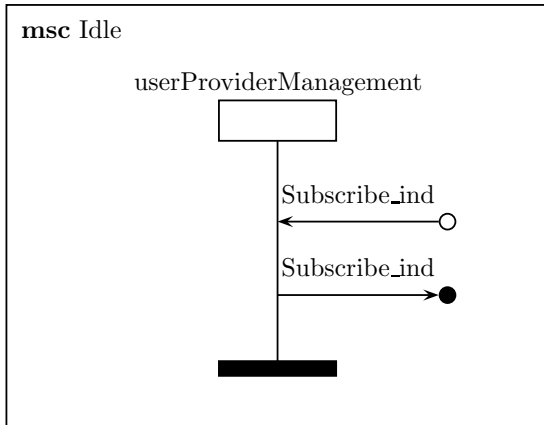
Scenario 2



Description:

The signal *UnSubscribe_req* initiates the cancellation of a service subscription by the application. Otherwise, the signal *UnSubscribe_req* is sent.

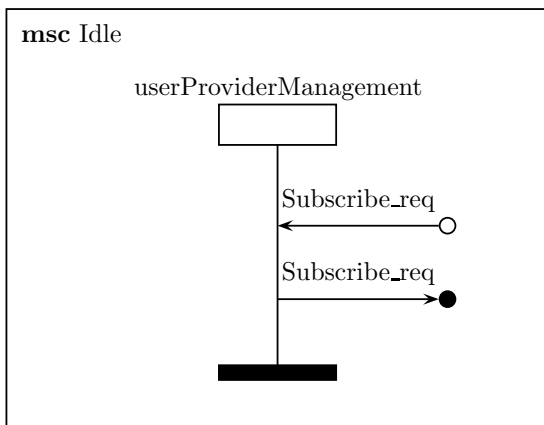
Scenario 3



Description:

The signal *Subscribe_ind* indicate, that the subscription at the service has completed. The signal *Subscribe_ind* is the answer to the application with a return value indicating the success or failure.

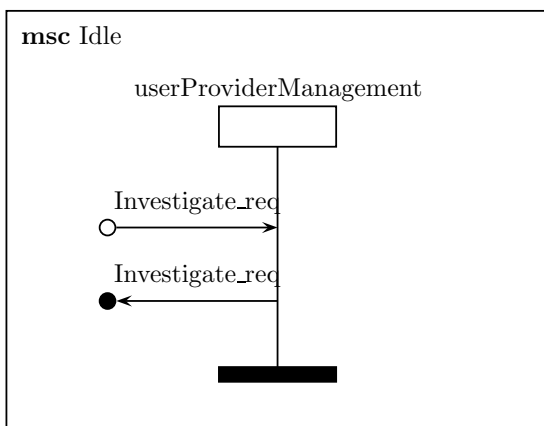
Scenario 4



Description:

The signal *Subscribe_req* initiates the subscription at a service with the given name. The signal *Subscribe_req* instructs the local service user to be responsible for the subscription at a service in the network.

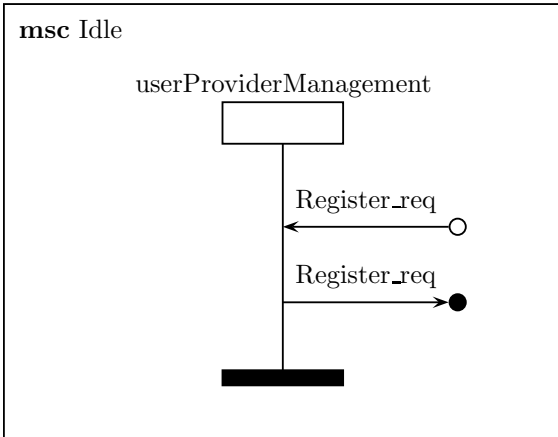
Scenario 5



Description:

The signal *Investigate_req* searches a service by name in the network. The signal *Investigate_req* is sent.

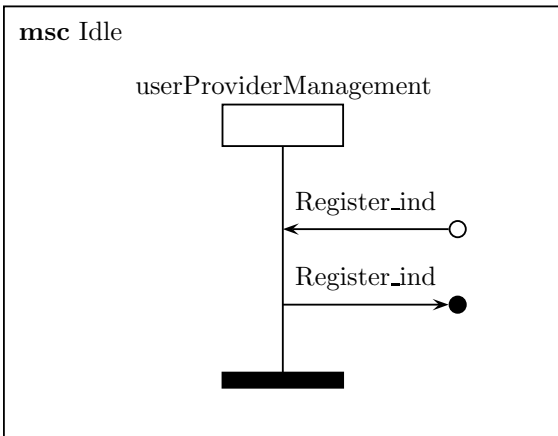
Scenario 6



Description:

The signal *Register_req* initiates the registration of a new service with the given name. The signal *Register_req* instructs the local service provider to be responsible for the service with the given name.

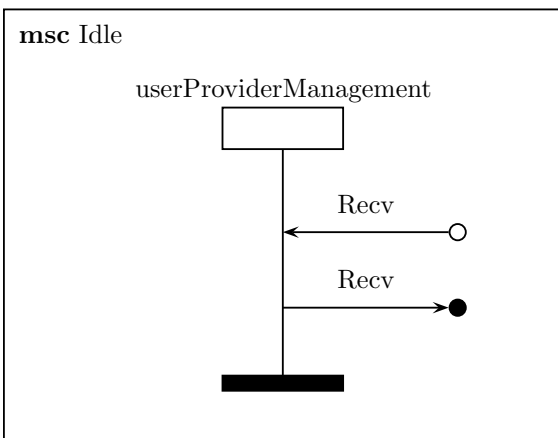
Scenario 7



Description:

The signal *Register_ind* indicate, that a new registration of service has completed. The signal *Register_ind* is the answer to the application with a return value indicating the success or failure.

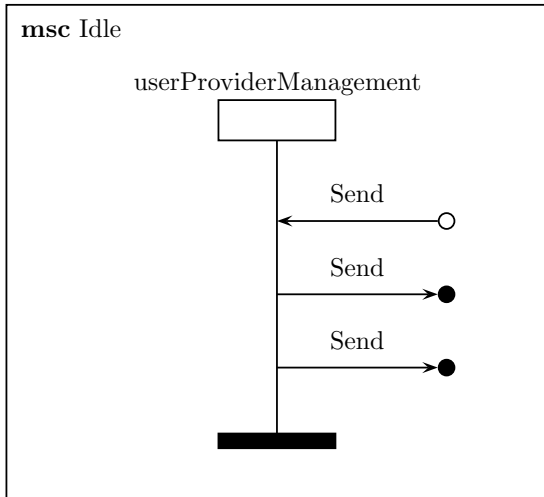
Scenario 8



Description:

The signal *Recv* contains data from some application in the network. The signal *Recv* forward the data to the appropriate application.

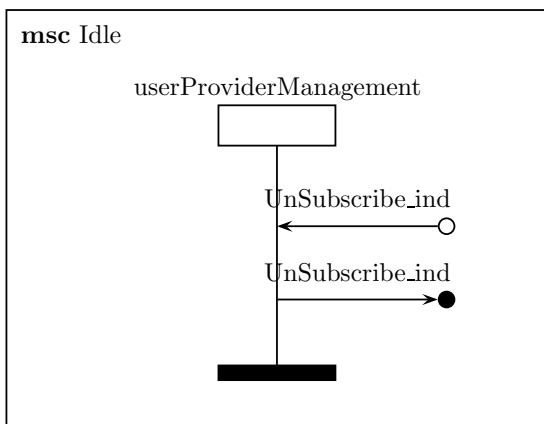
Scenario 9



Description:

The signal *Send* contains data from the application. The signal *Send* instructs the service provider to send the data and the signal *Send* instructs the service user to send the data.

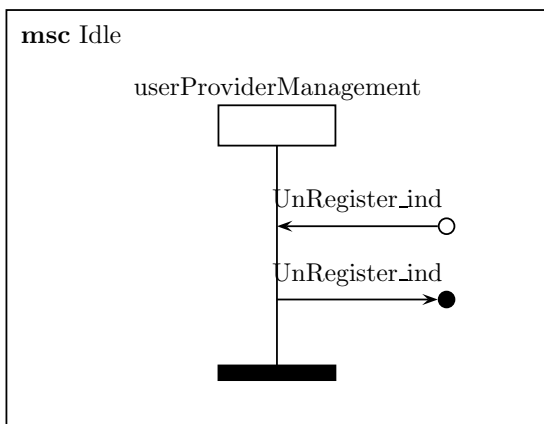
Scenario 10



Description:

The signal *UnSubscribe_ind* provides the result of the unsubscribe operation. The signal *UnSubscribe_ind* sends the result to the application.

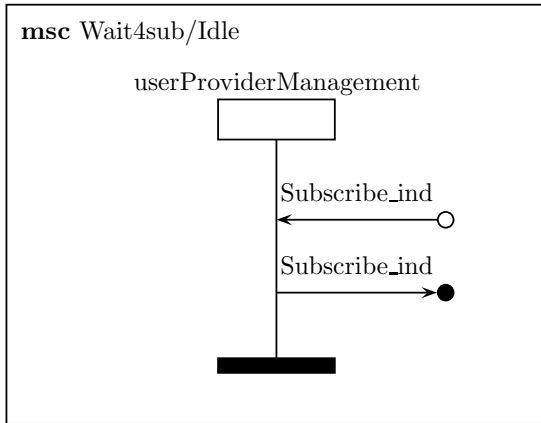
Scenario 11



Description:

The signal *UnRegister_ind* provides the result of the unregistration. The signal *UnRegister_ind* sends the result to the application.

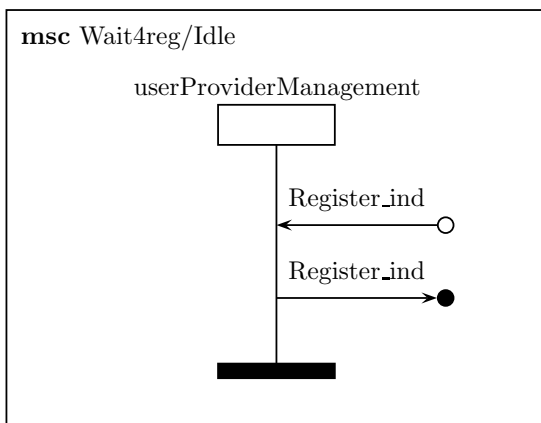
Scenario 12



Description:

The signal *Subscribe_ind* indicate, that the subscription at the service has completed. The signal *Subscribe_ind* is the answer to the application with a return value indicating the success or failure.

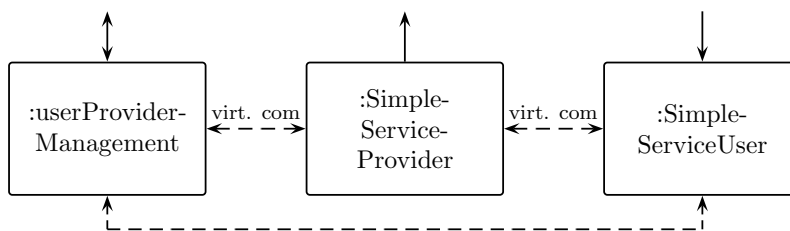
Scenario 13



Description:

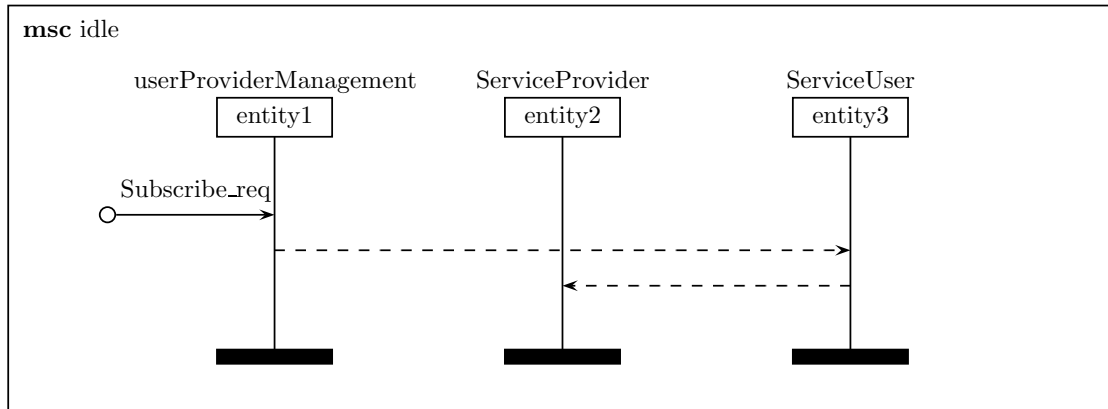
The signal *Register_ind* indicate, that a new registration of service has completed. The signal *Register_ind* is the answer to the application with a return value indicating the success or failure.

Architecture



4.2 Provided Service

Scenario 1

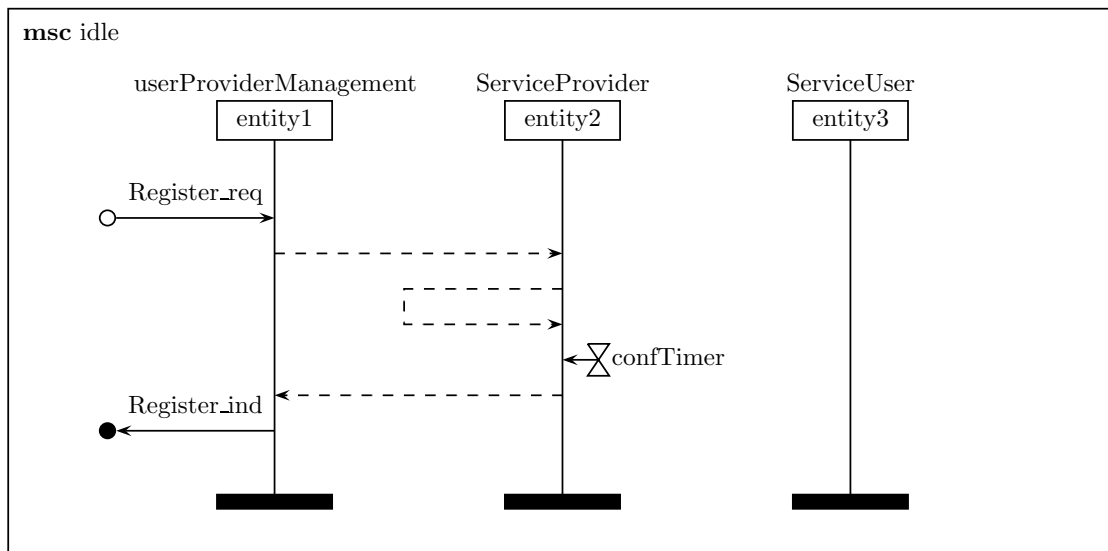


Description:

No application has subscribed a service in the network.

The signal *Subscribe_req* initiates the subscription at a service with the given name. No further operations are performed.

Scenario 2

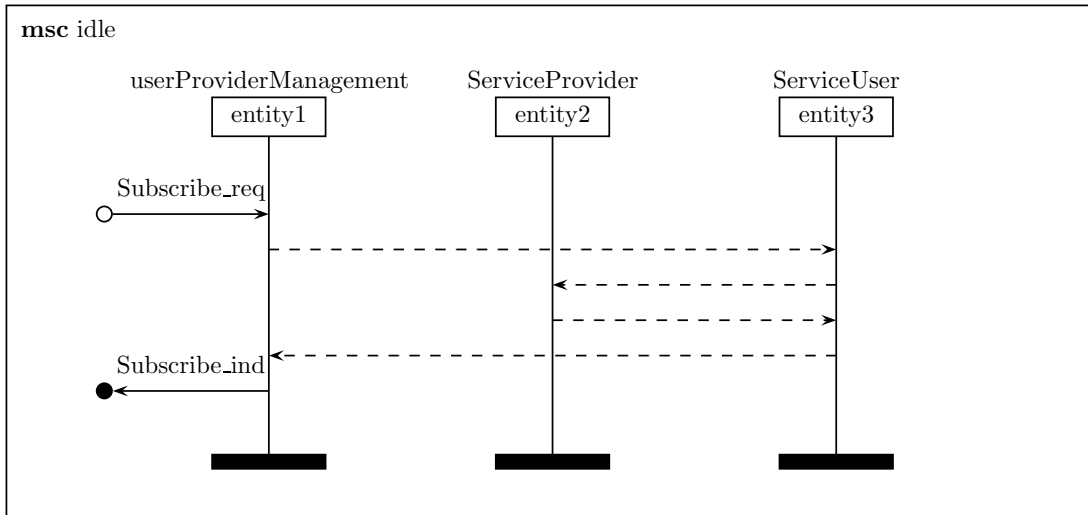


Description:

No application has subscribed a service in the network.

The signal *Register_req* initiates the registration of a new service with the given name. The timer *confTimer* signals, that there is no other service in the network registered by this service name. The signal *Register_ind* is the answer to the application with a return value indicating the success or failure.

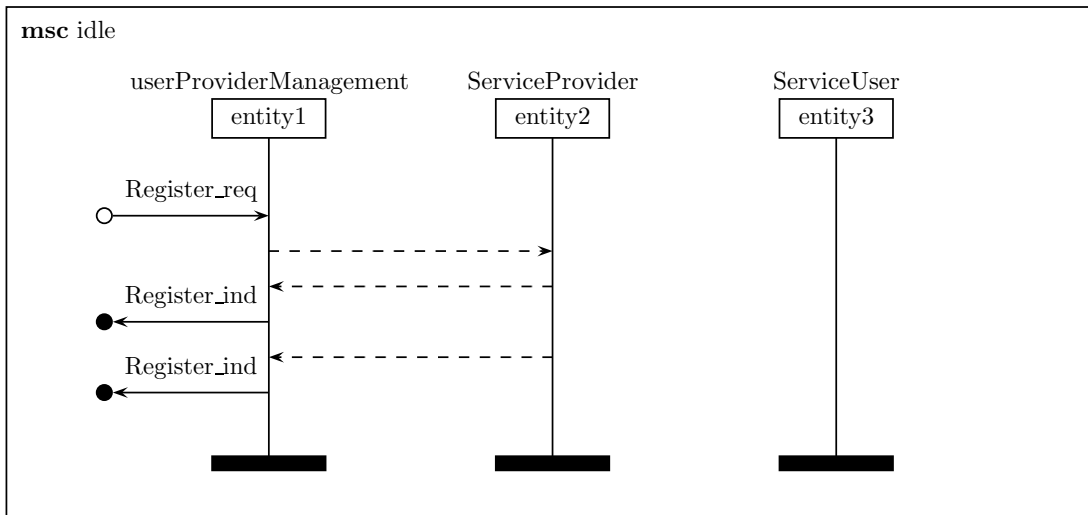
Scenario 3



Description:

A service with a well defined name is registered by the service provider. No application has subscribed a service in the network. The signal *Subscribe_req* initiates the subscription at a service with the given name. The signal *Subscribe_ind* is the answer to the application with a return value indicating the success or failure.

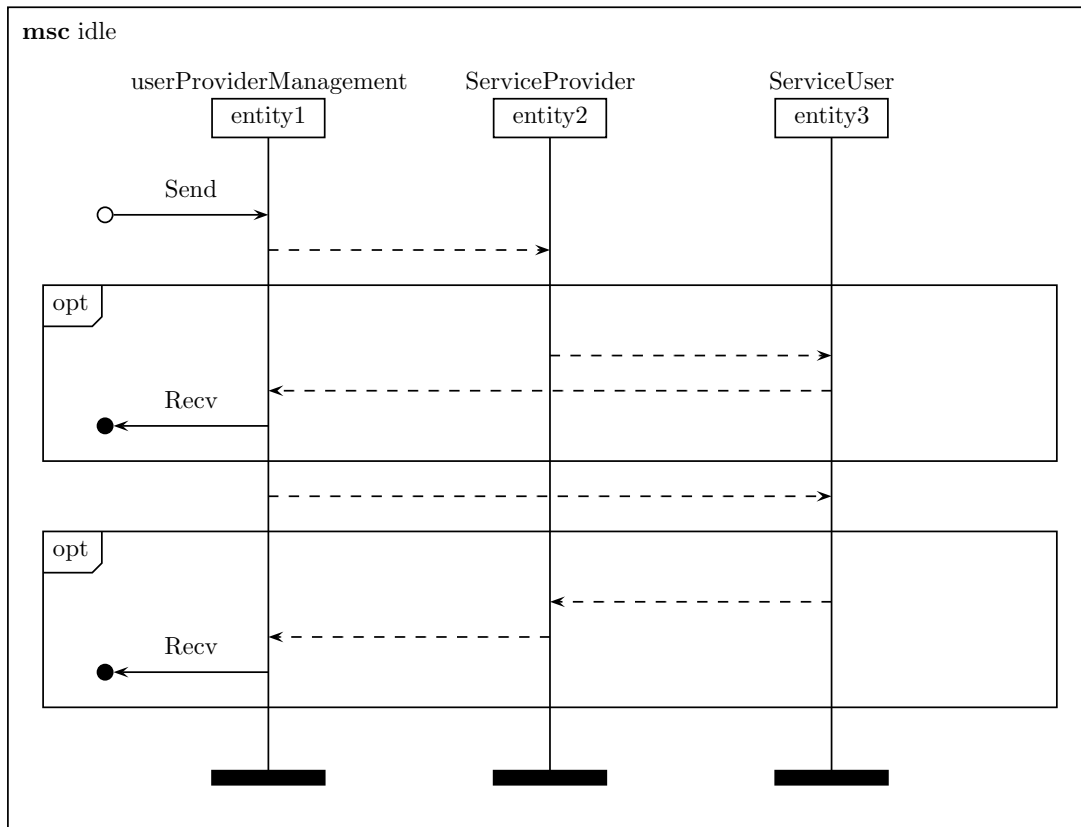
Scenario 4



Description:

A service with a well defined name is registered by the service provider. A service user has subscribed a service in the network. The signal *Register_req* initiates the registration of a new service with the given name. The signal *Register_ind* is the answer to the application with a return value indicating the success or failure. The signal *Register_ind* is the answer to the application with a return value indicating the success or failure.

Scenario 5



Description:

A service with a well defined name is registered by the service provider. A service user has subscribed a service in the network.

The signal *Send* contains data from the application. If the service name corresponds to the name of this service, the signal *Recv* forward the data to the appropriate application. If the application has registered at the specified service, the signal *Recv* forward the data to the appropriate application.

Imported and exported definitions

Used packages

– none –

Required definitions

- Data type `AddressType`
- Signal `Register_req(Integer,::AddressType::Newtype::AddressType)`
- Signal `UnRegister_req(Integer,::AddressType::Newtype::AddressType)`
- Signal `Send(Integer,::AddressType::Newtype::AddressType,Octet_string)`

- Signal Recv(Integer,::AddressType::Newtype::AddressType,Octet_string)
- Signal Subscribe_req(Integer,::AddressType::Newtype::AddressType)
- Signal Investigate_req(Integer,::AddressType::Newtype::AddressType)
- Signal Investigate_ind(Integer,::AddressType::Newtype::AddressType,Boolean)
- Signal Subscribe_ind(Integer,::AddressType::Newtype::AddressType)
- Signal UnSubscribe_req(Integer,::AddressType::Newtype::AddressType)
- Signal UnSubscribe_ind(Integer,::AddressType::Newtype::AddressType)

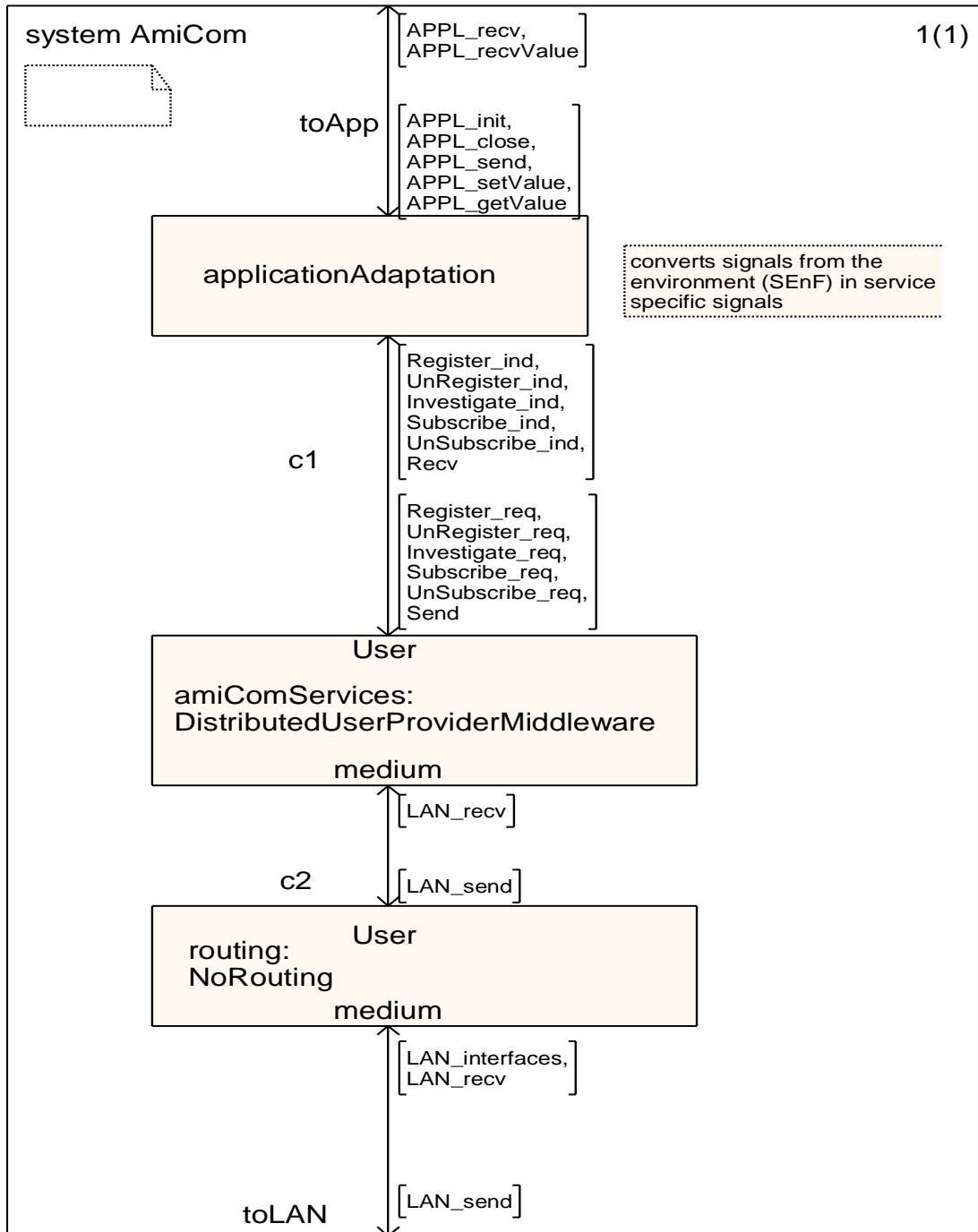
Provided definitions

- Process type ServiceProvider
- Process type ServiceUser
- Process type userProviderManagement

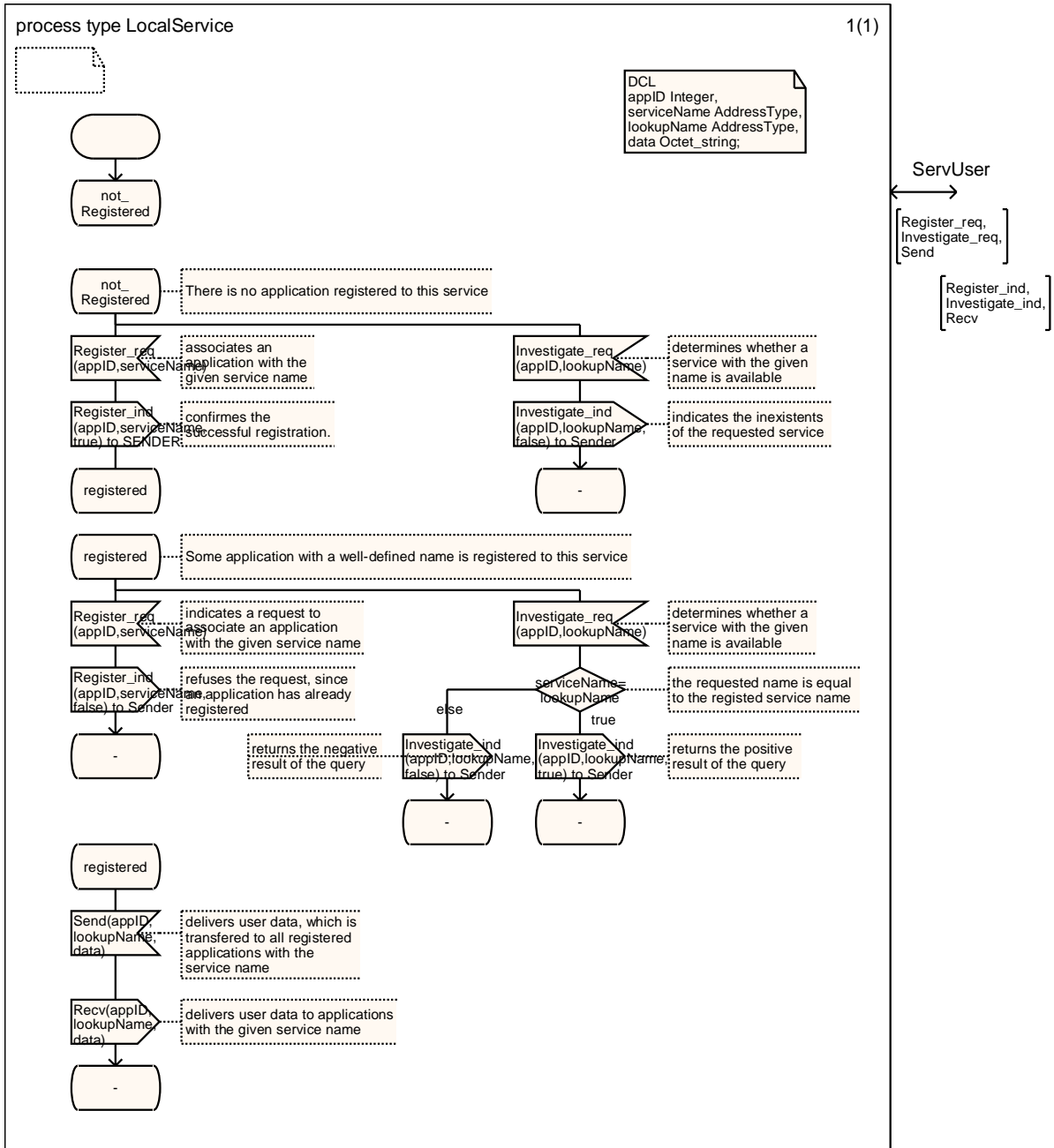
Checklist

– none –

5 Annex A: SDL specification

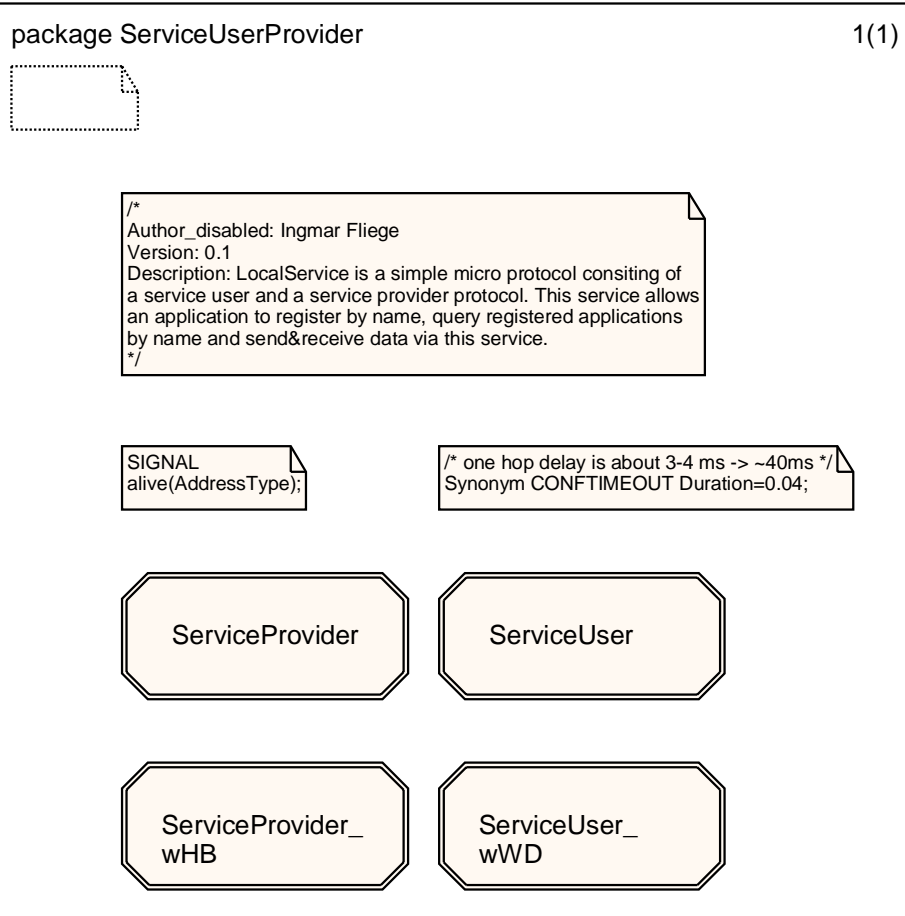


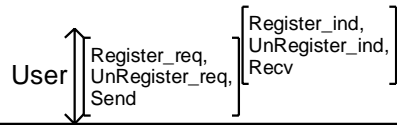
5.1 Service Specification (not distributed)



5.2 Service User & Service Provider Middleware

```
use LocalService;  
use AddressType;
```





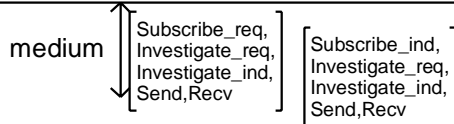
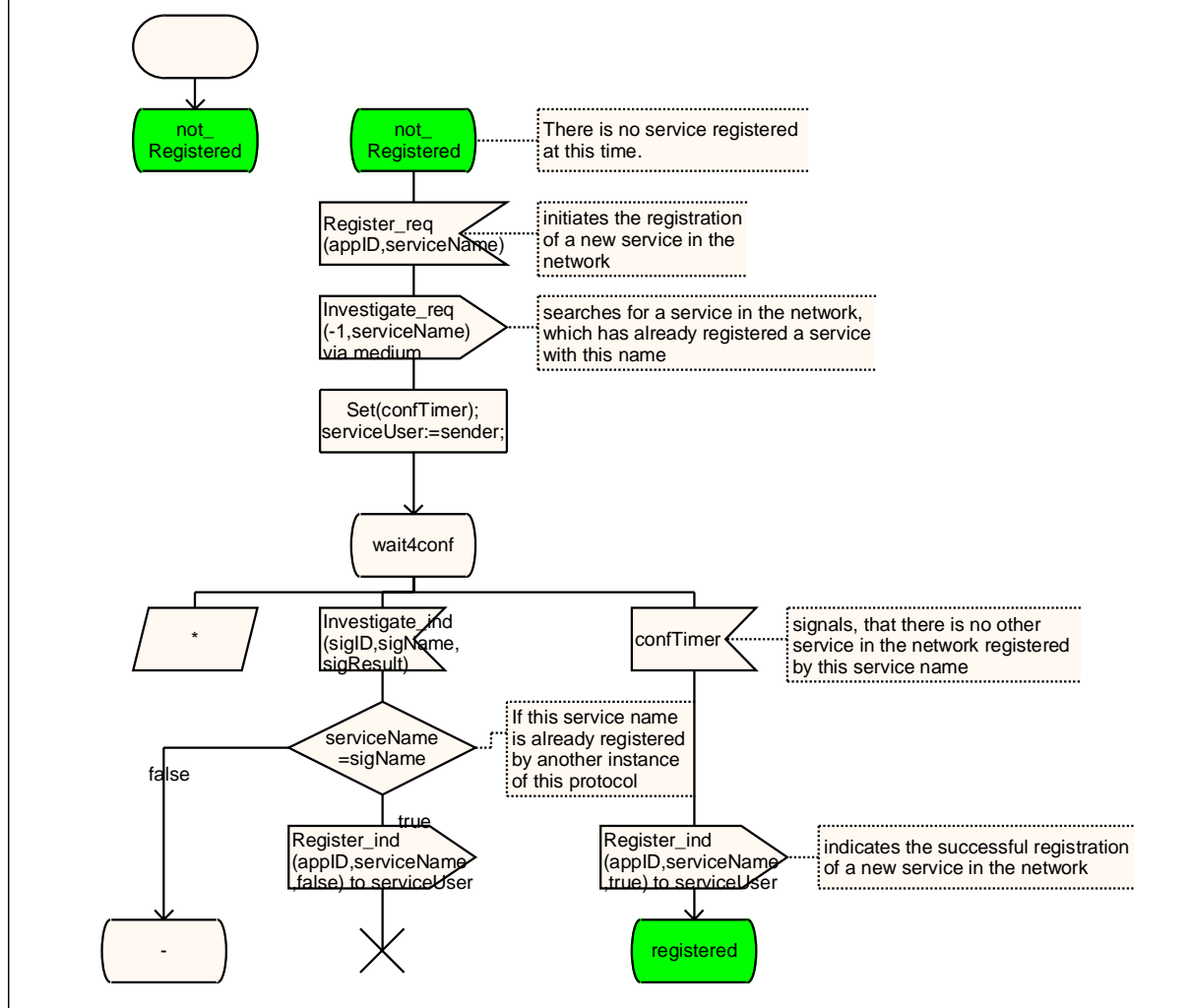
process type ServiceProvider

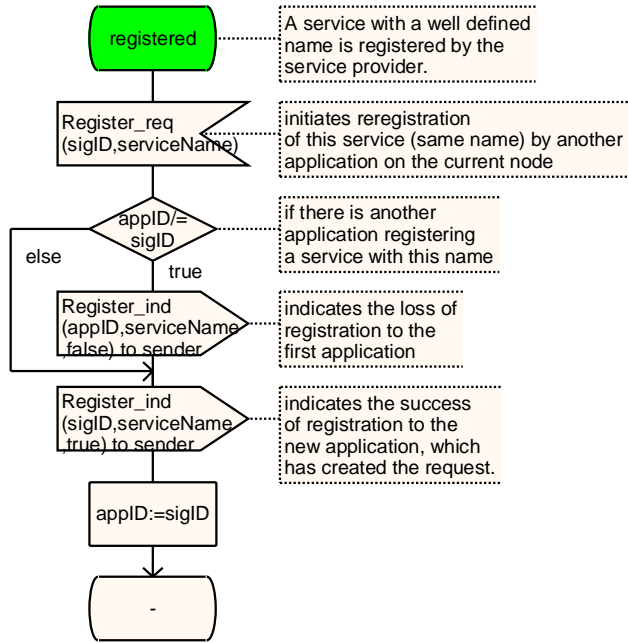
1(3)

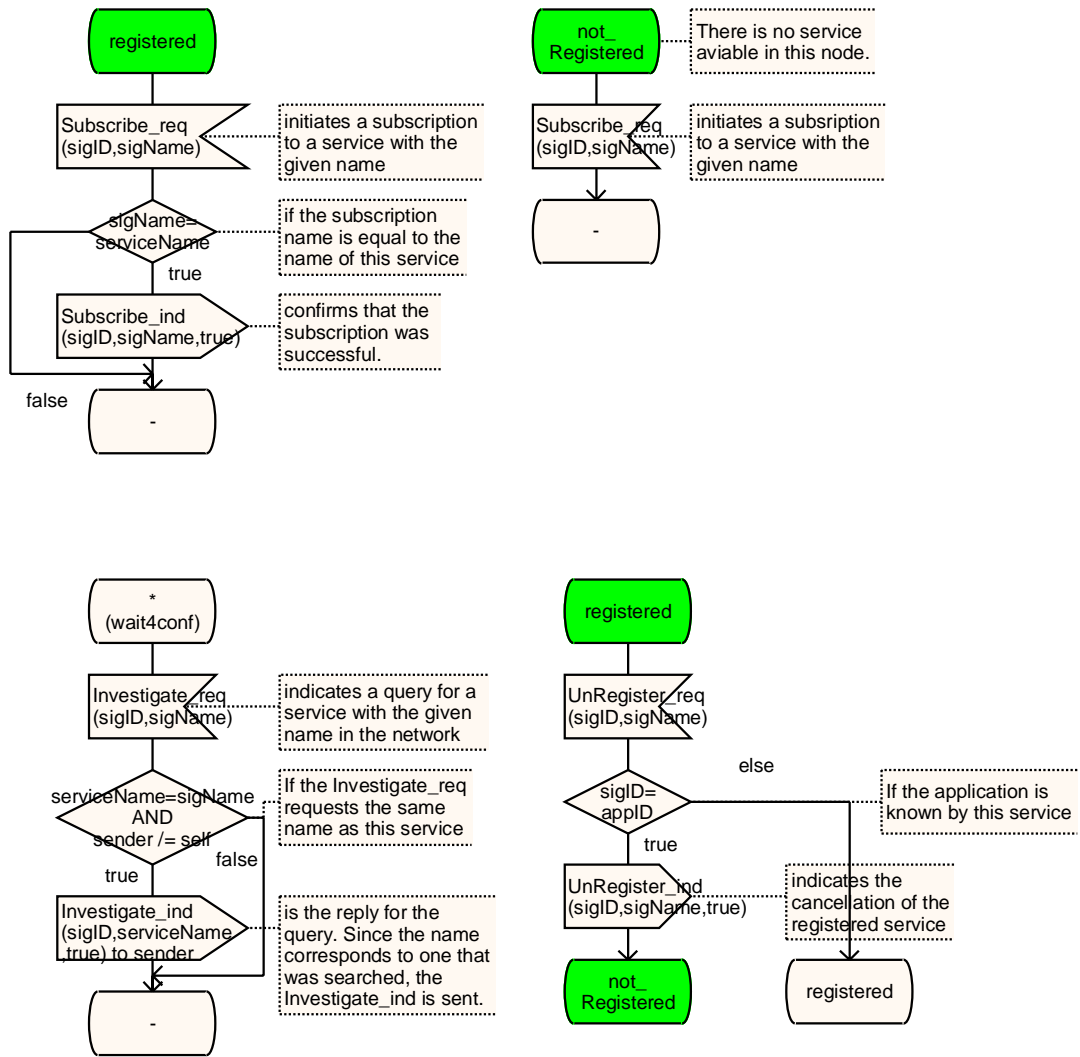


DCL appID Integer;
 DCL serviceName AddressType;
 DCL serviceUser Pld;
 Timer confTimer:=CONFTIMEOUT;

DCL sigID Integer;
 DCL sigName AddressType;
 DCL sigResult Boolean;

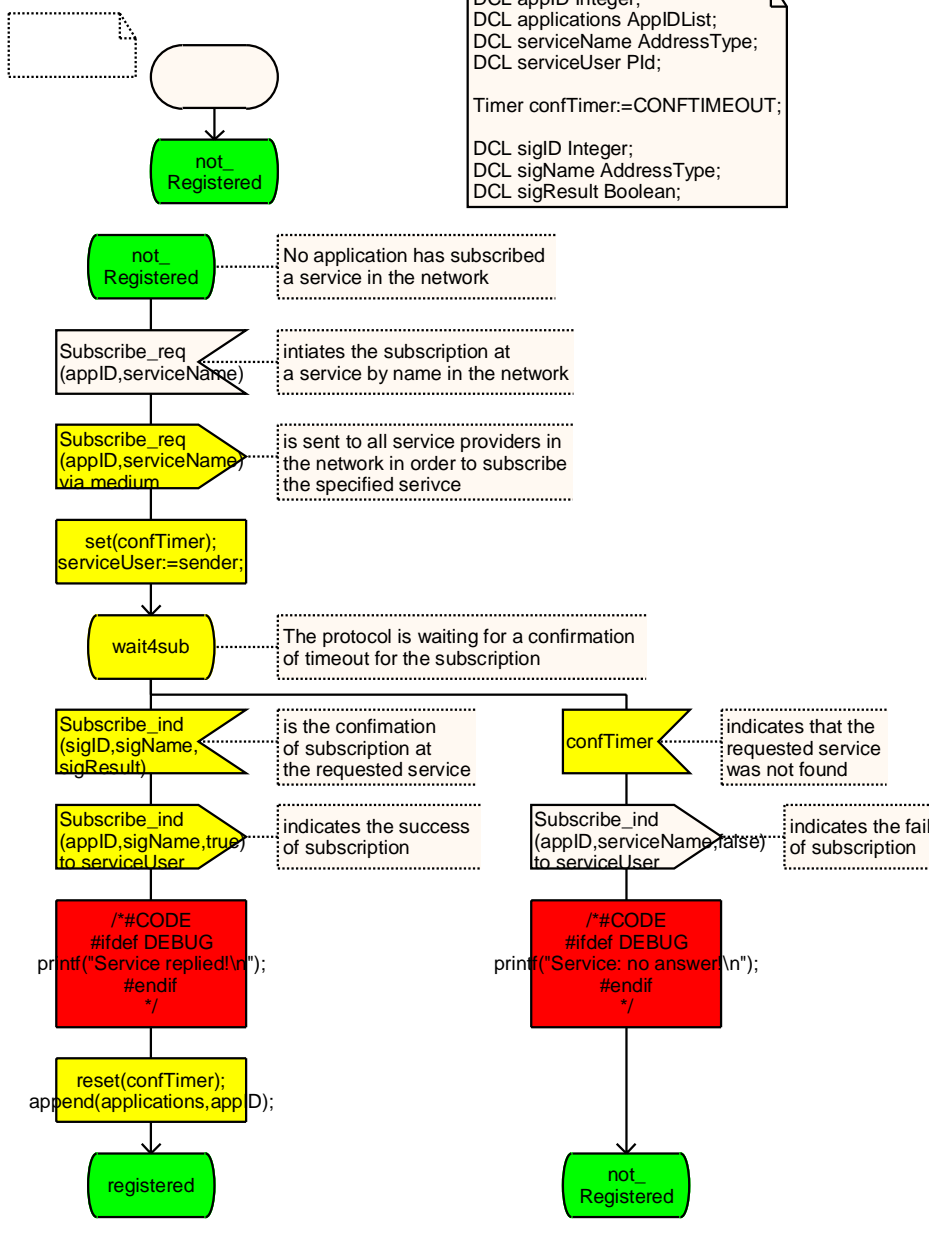






process type ServiceUser

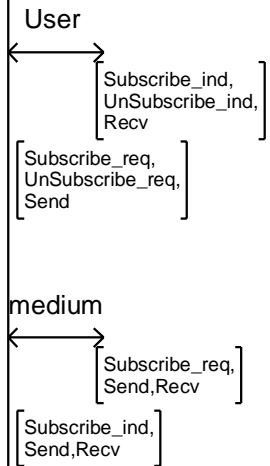
1(3)

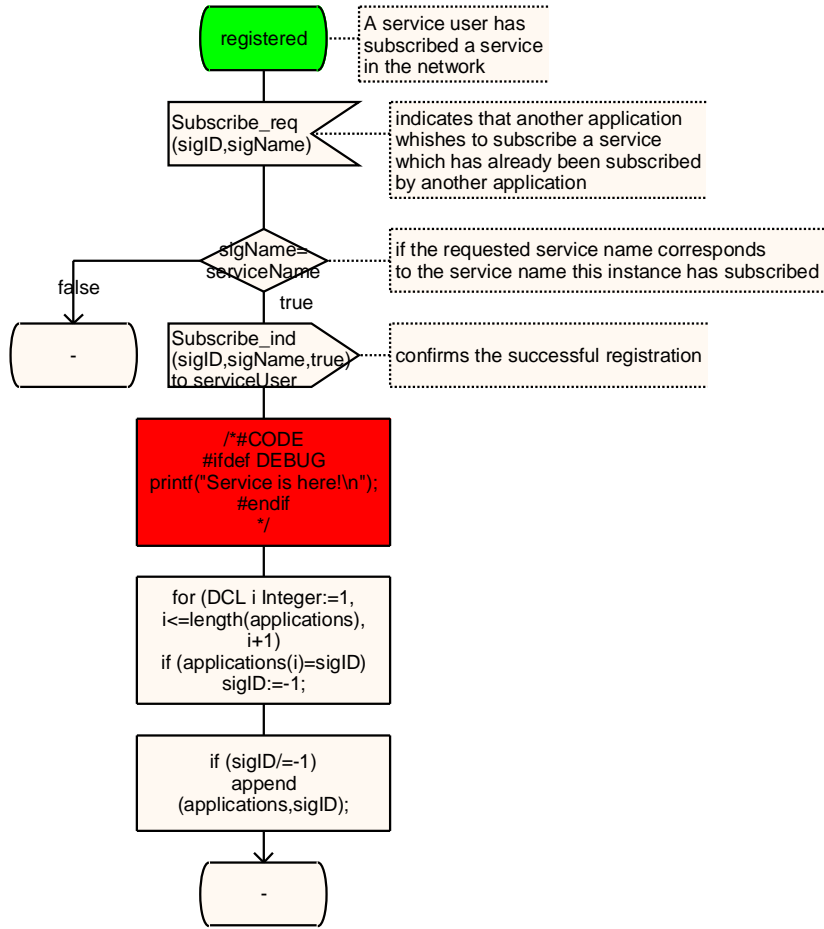


DCL appID Integer;
DCL applications AppIDList;
DCL serviceName AddressType;
DCL serviceUser PId;

Timer confTimer:=CONFTIMEOUT;

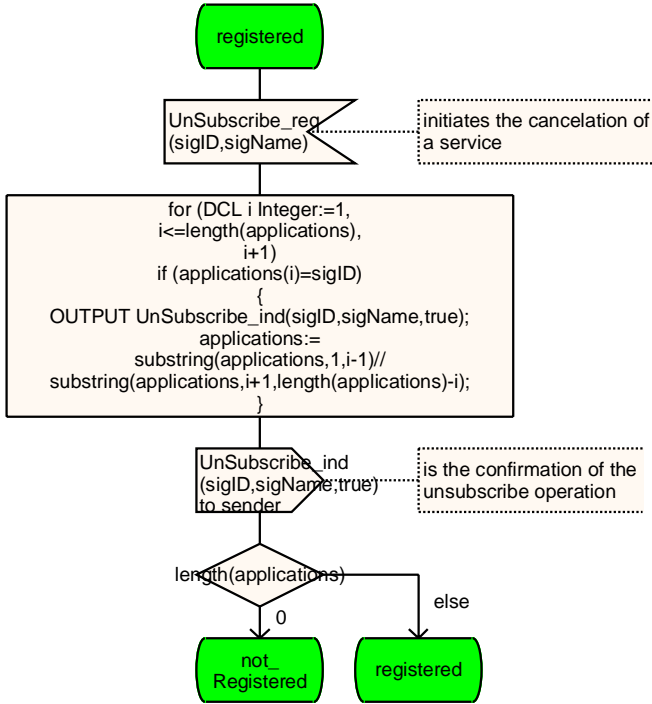
DCL sigID Integer;
DCL sigName AddressType;
DCL sigResult Boolean;

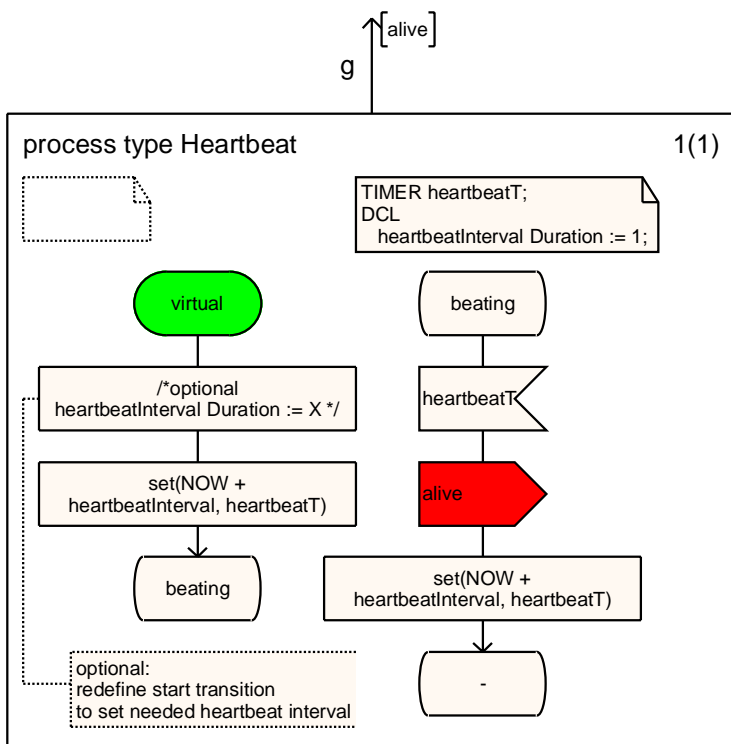


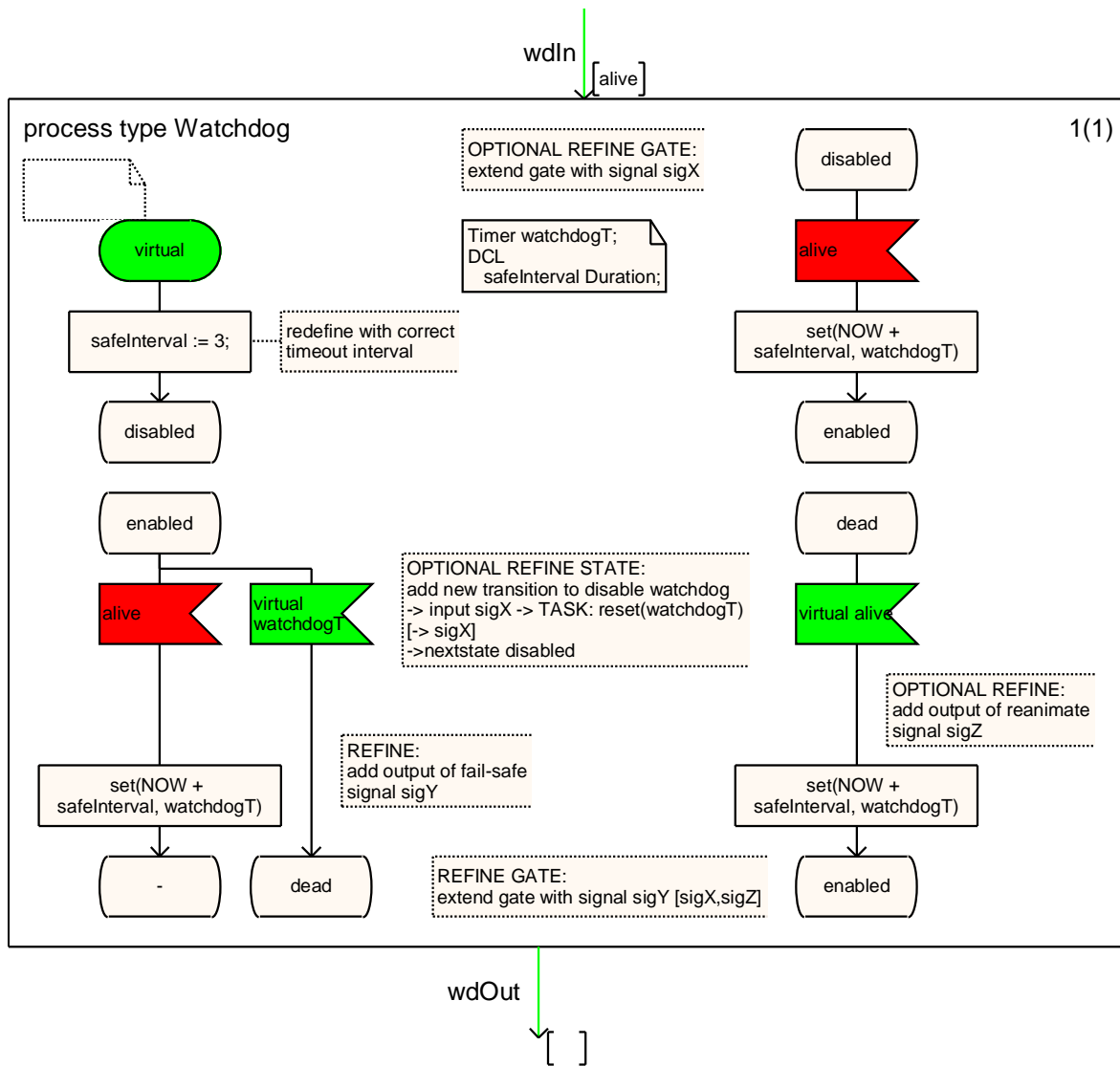


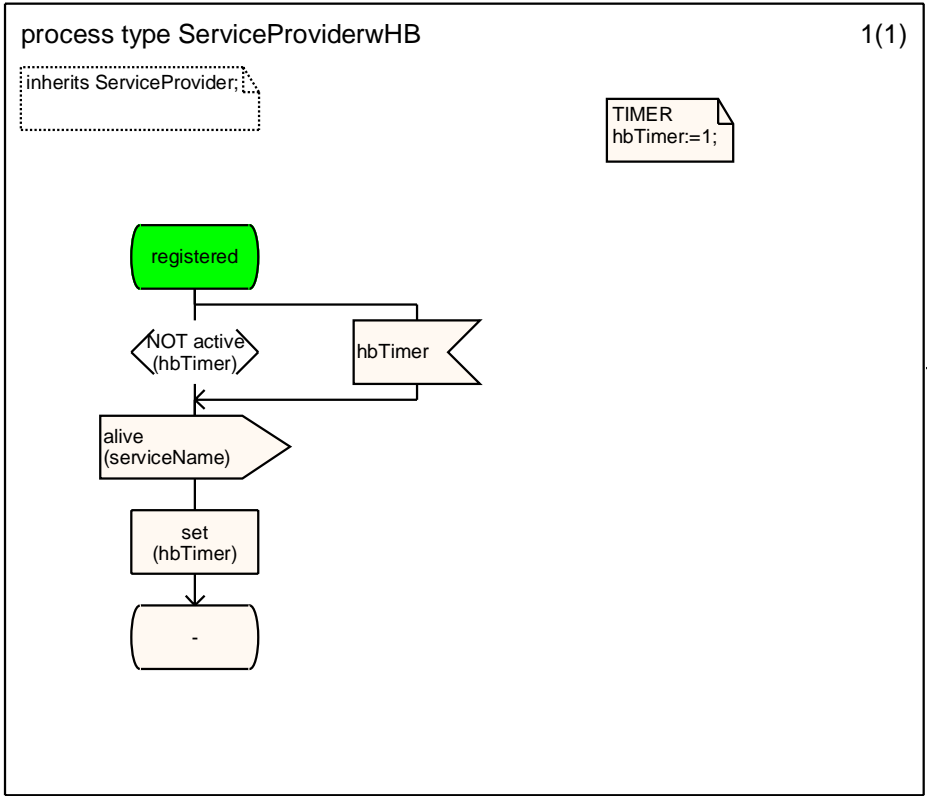


```
NEWTYPE AppIDList String(Integer,empty)
ENDNEWTYPE;
```







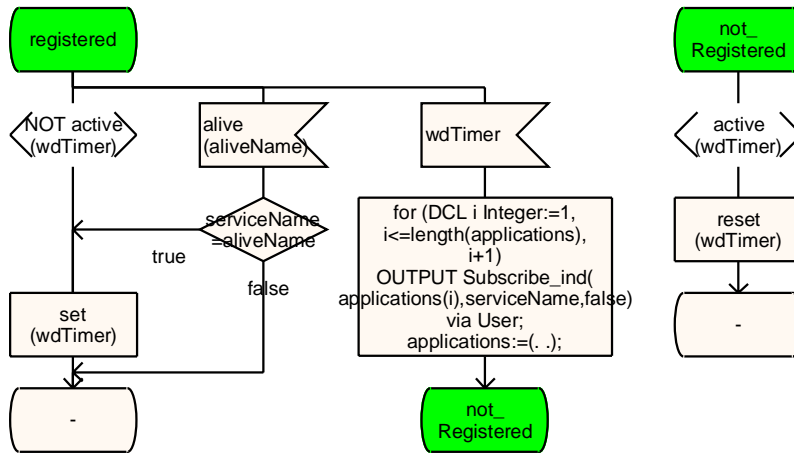


process type ServiceUserwWD

1(1)

inherits ServiceUser;

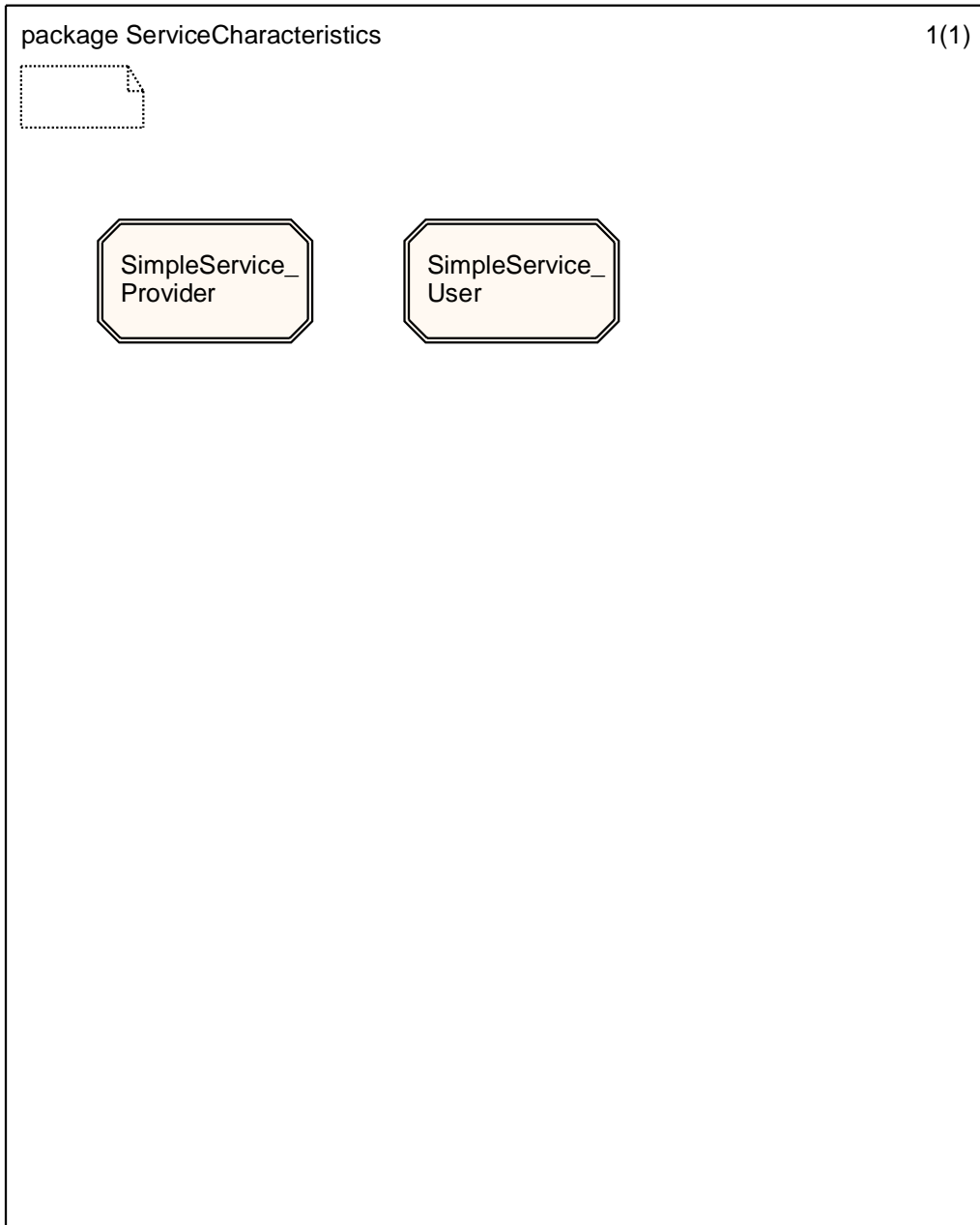
TIMER
wdTimer:=3;
DCL aliveName AddressType;



medium
[alive]

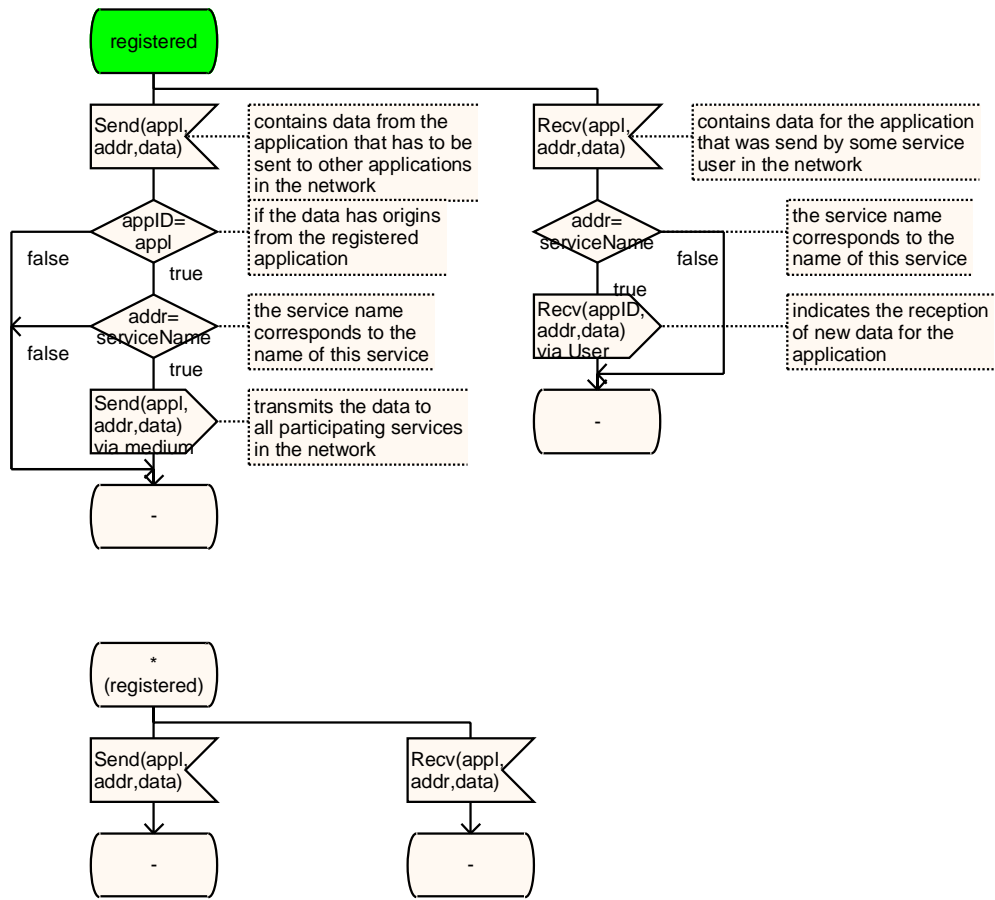
5.3 Service User & Service Provider Characteristics

```
USE ServiceUserProvider;  
USE AddressType;  
USE LocalService;
```



inherits ServiceProviderwHB;

DCL
appl Integer,
addr AddressType,
data Octet_string;

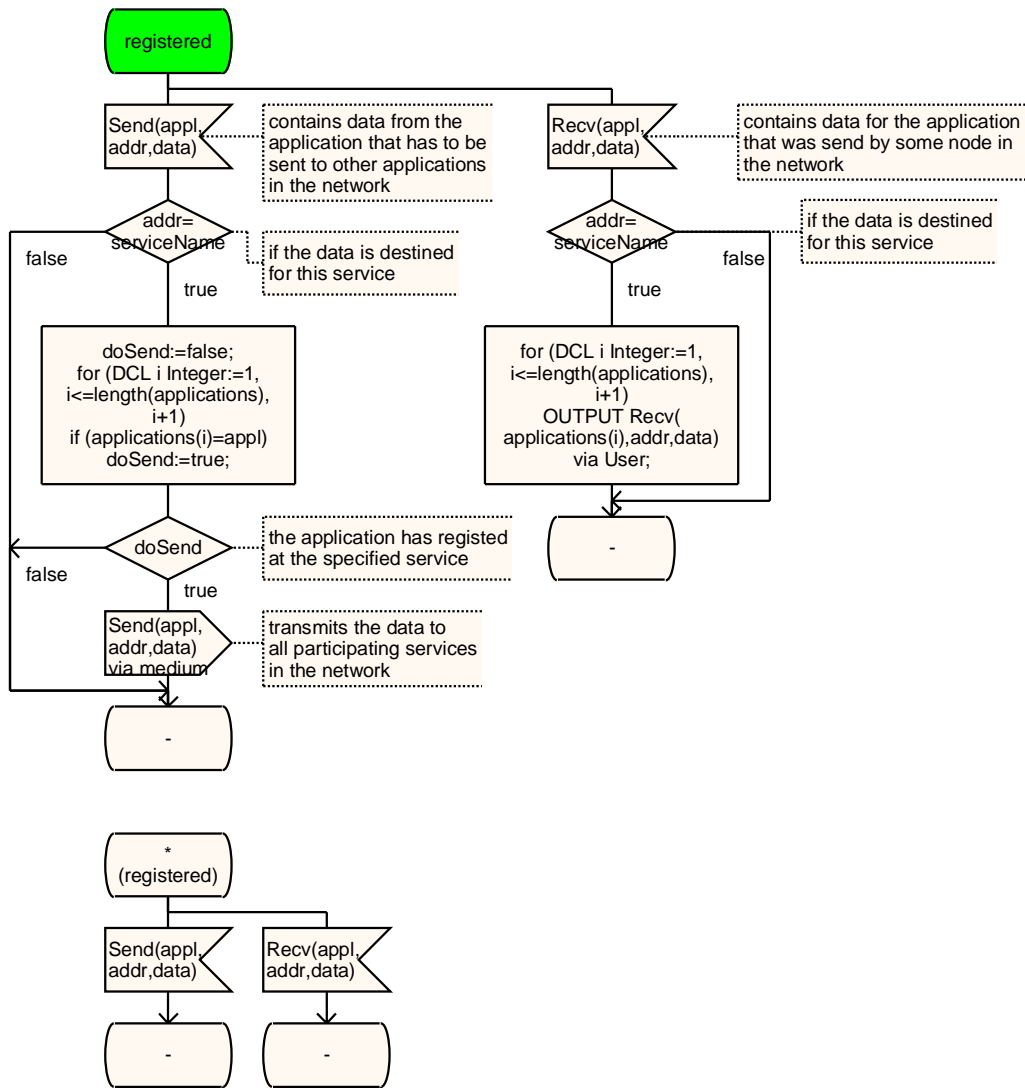


process type SimpleServiceUser

1(1)

Inherits ServiceUserWD;

DCL
 appl Integer,
 addr AddressType,
 data Octet_string,
 doSend Boolean;



```
USE Signals;  
USE LocalService;  
USE AddressType;  
USE ServiceUserProvider;  
USE ServiceCharacteristics;  
USE AmiComPackets;
```

package ServiceManagement

1(1)



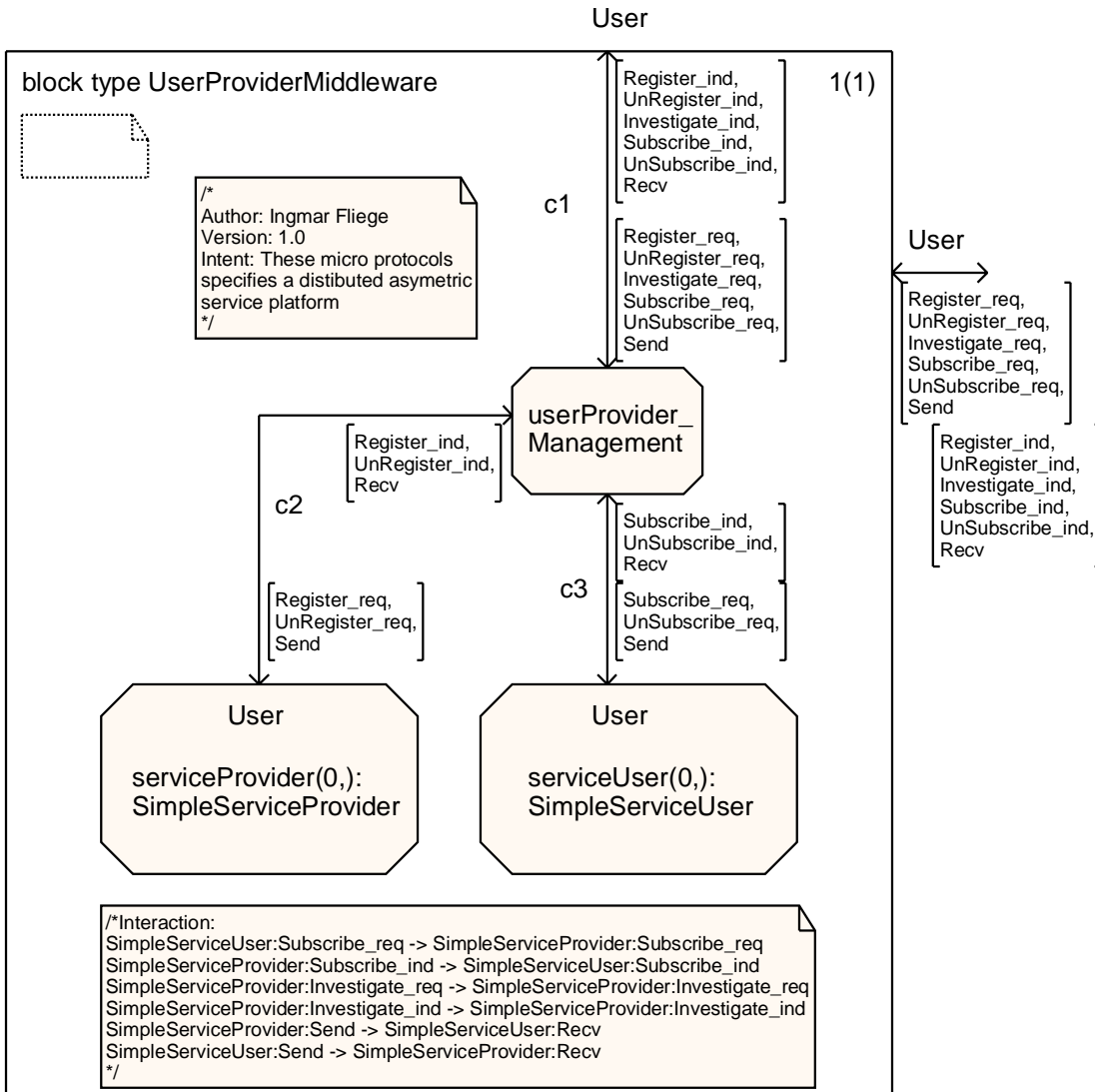
```
SIGNAL  
APPL_init(Integer),APPL_close(Integer),  
APPL_send(Integer,Octet_string,Octet_string),  
APPL_rcv(Integer,Octet_string,Octet_string),  
APPL_setValue(Integer,Charstring,Octet_string),  
APPL_getValue(Integer,Charstring),  
APPL_rcvValue(Integer,Charstring,Octet_string);
```

ServiceMiddleware

UserProvider_
Middleware

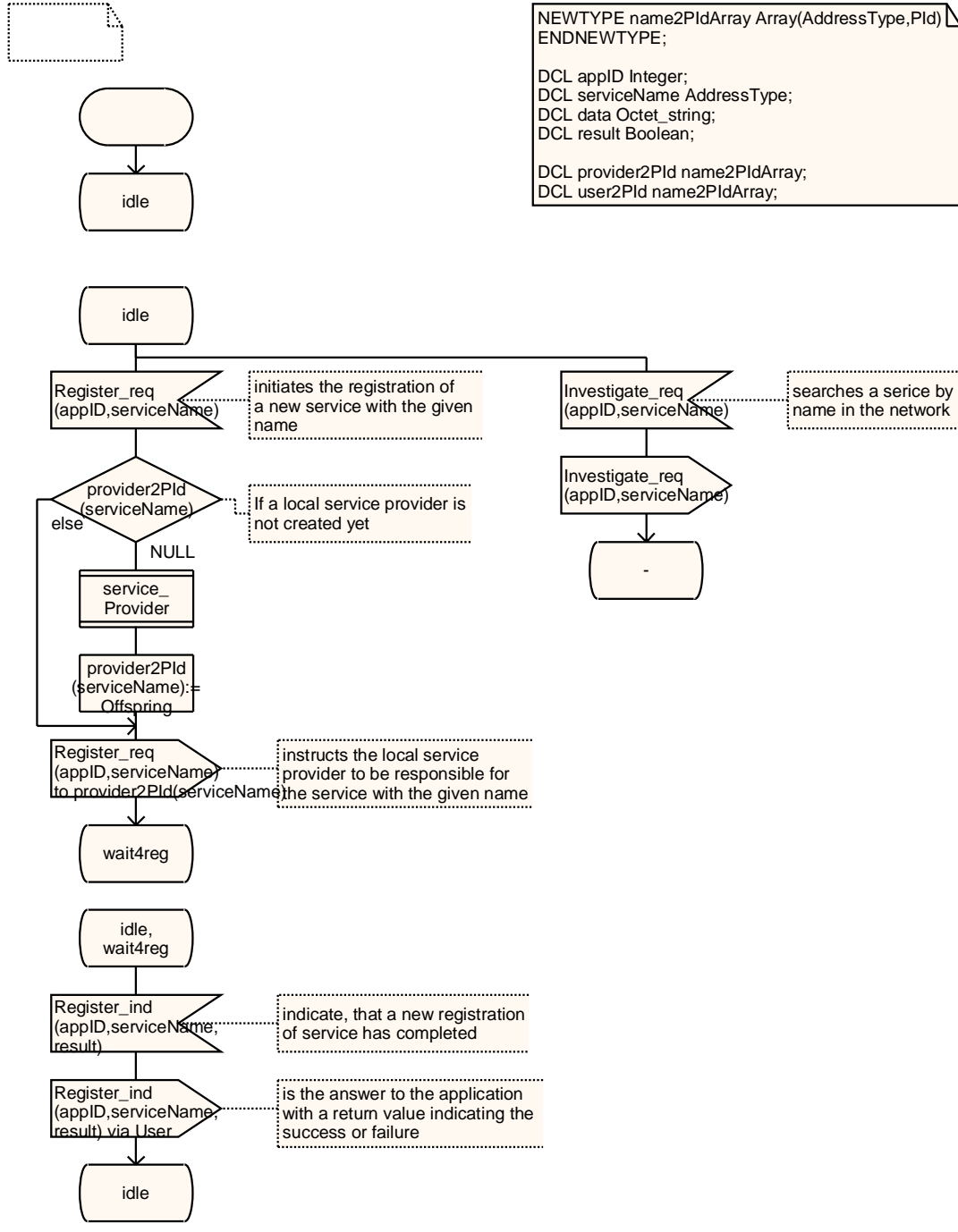
Local_
UserProviderMiddleware

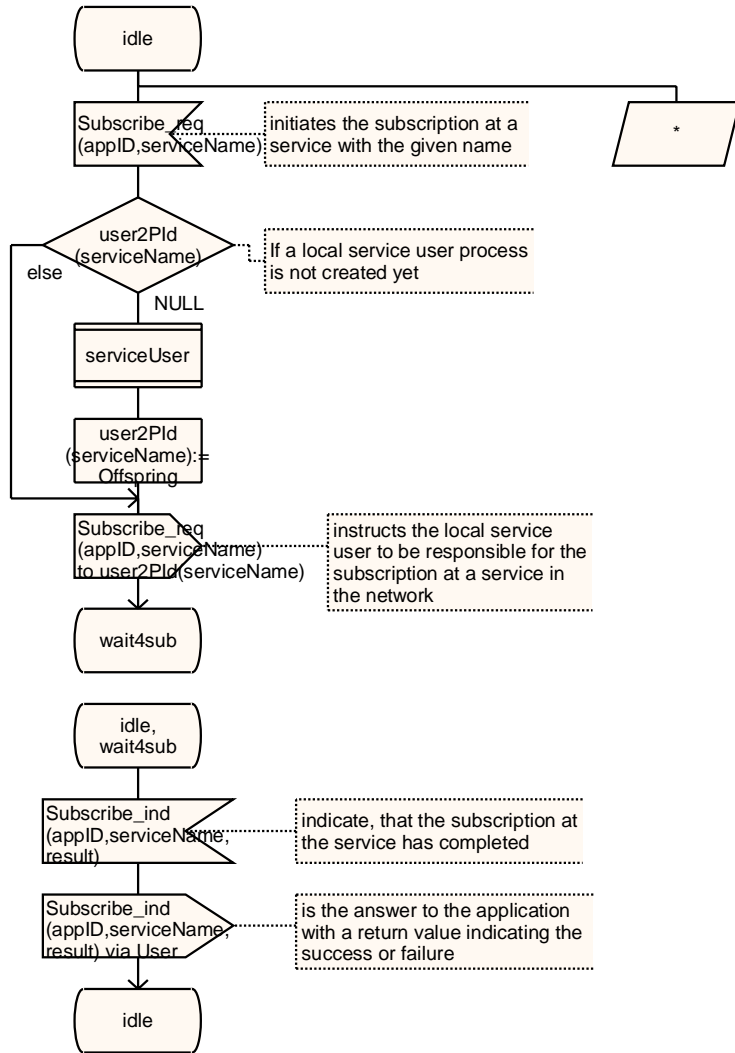
Distributed_
UserProviderMiddleware



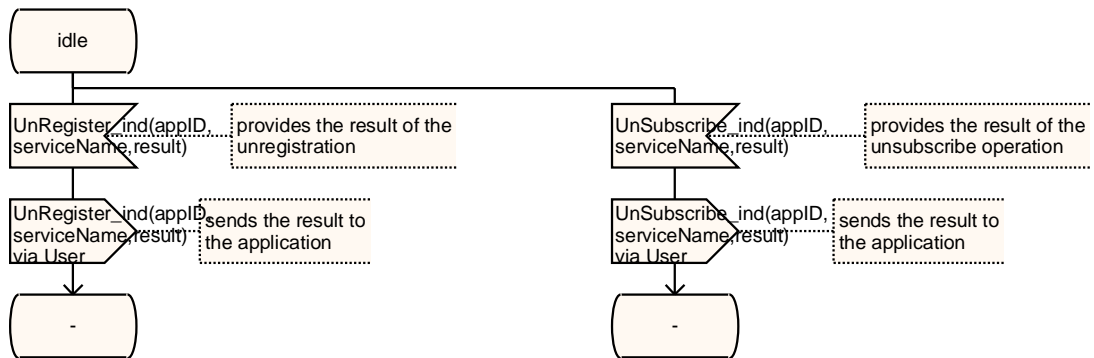
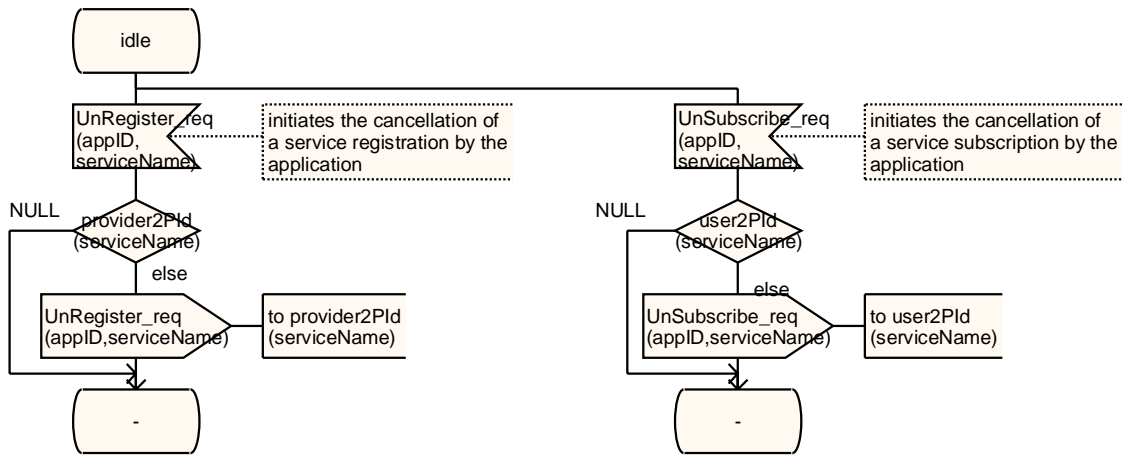
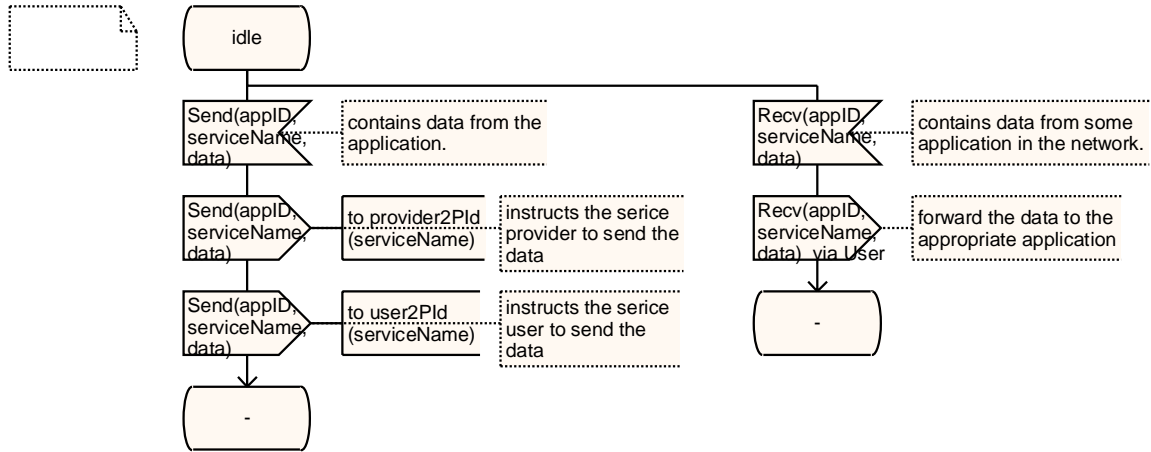
process userProviderManagement

1(3)





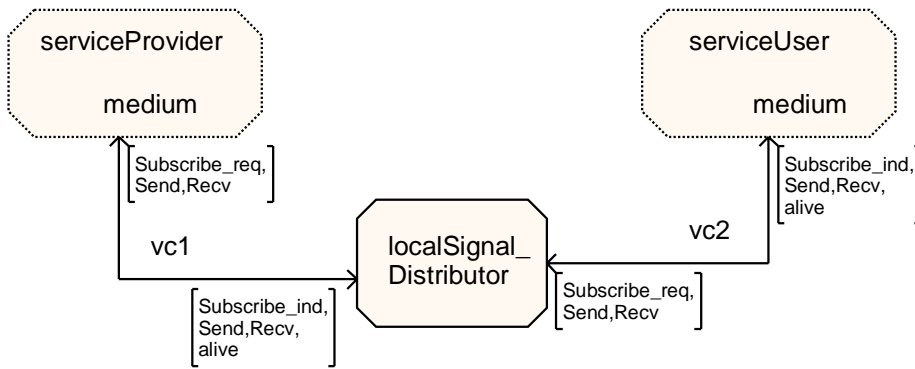
process userProviderManagement



block type LocalUserProviderMiddleware

1(1)

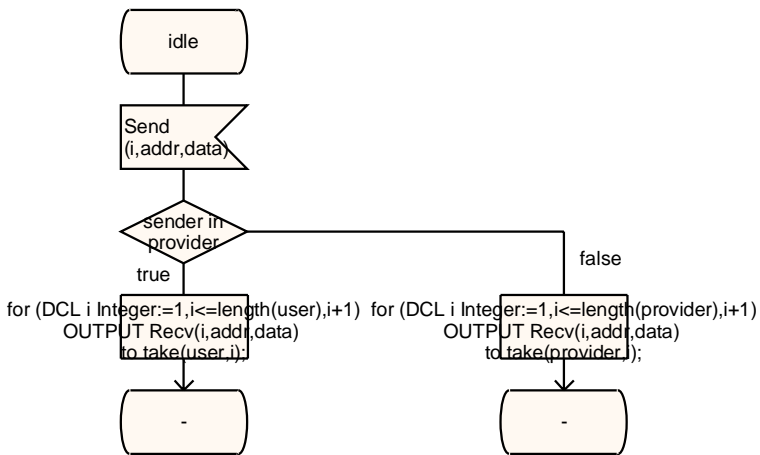
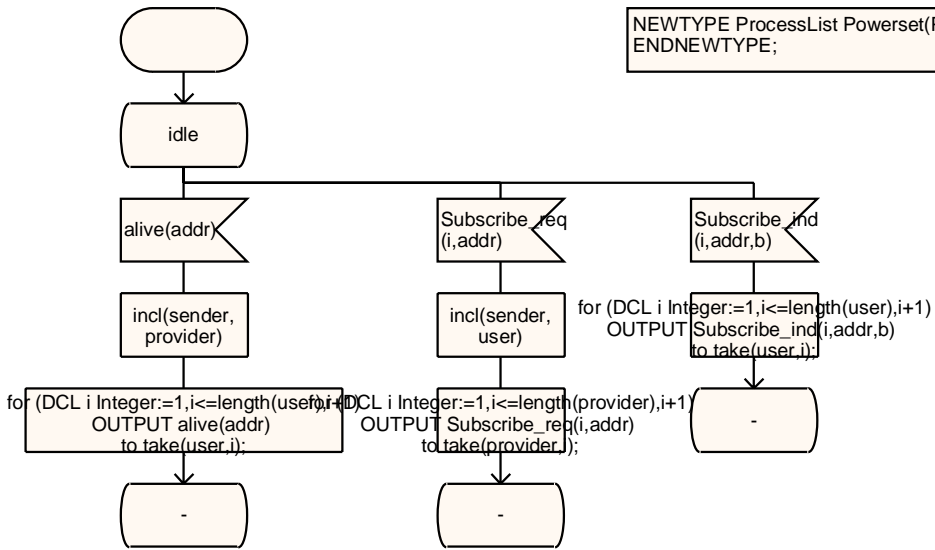
inherits UserProviderMiddleware;

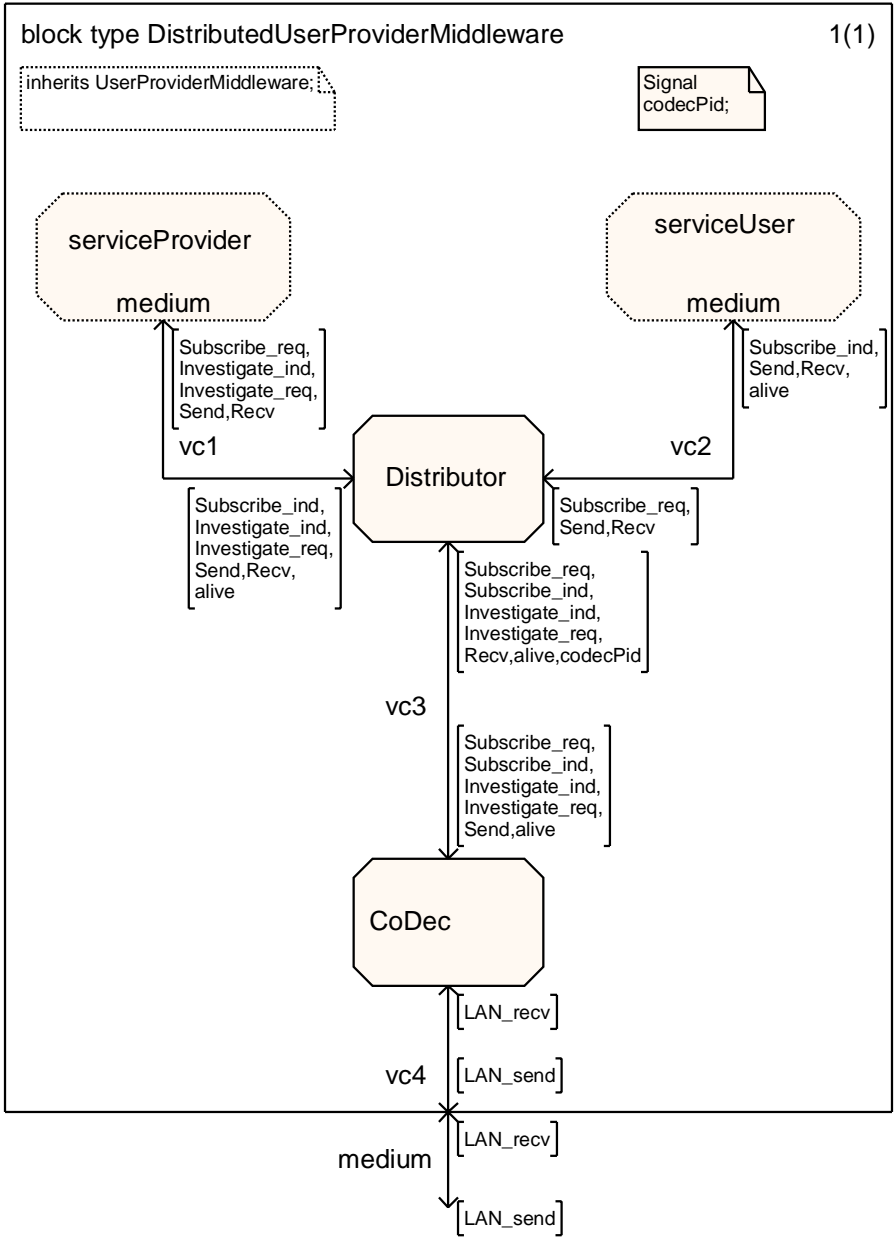




DCL
i Integer,
addr AddressType,
data Octet_String,
b Boolean,
provider ProcessList,
user ProcessList;

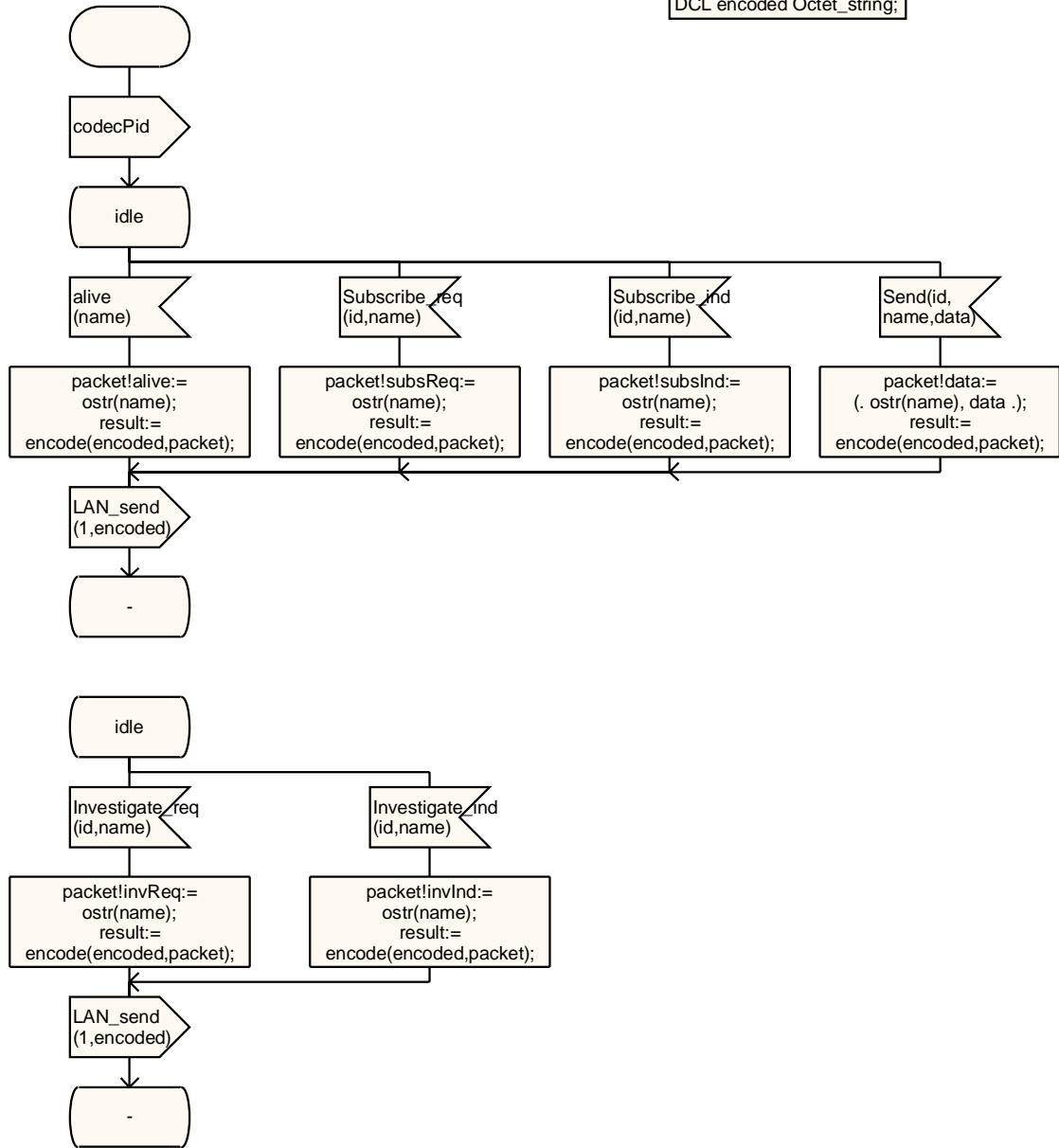
NEWTYPE ProcessList Powerset(PId)
ENDNEWTYPE;

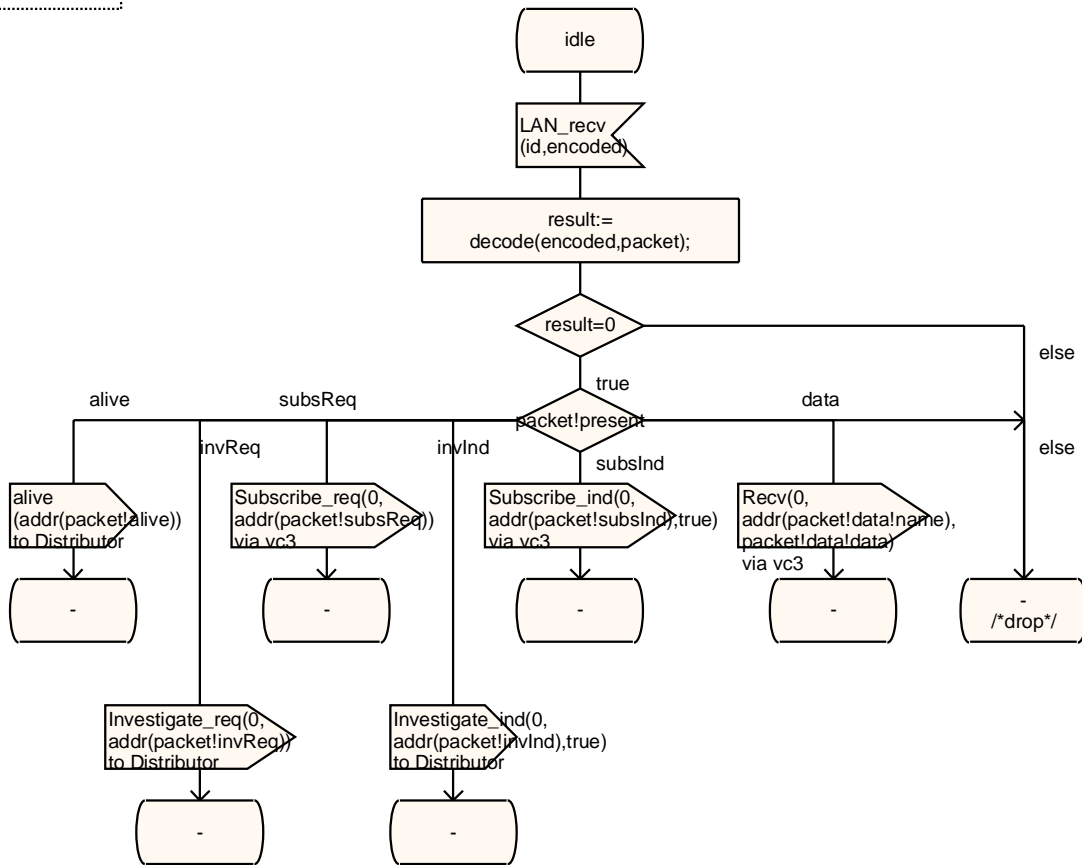




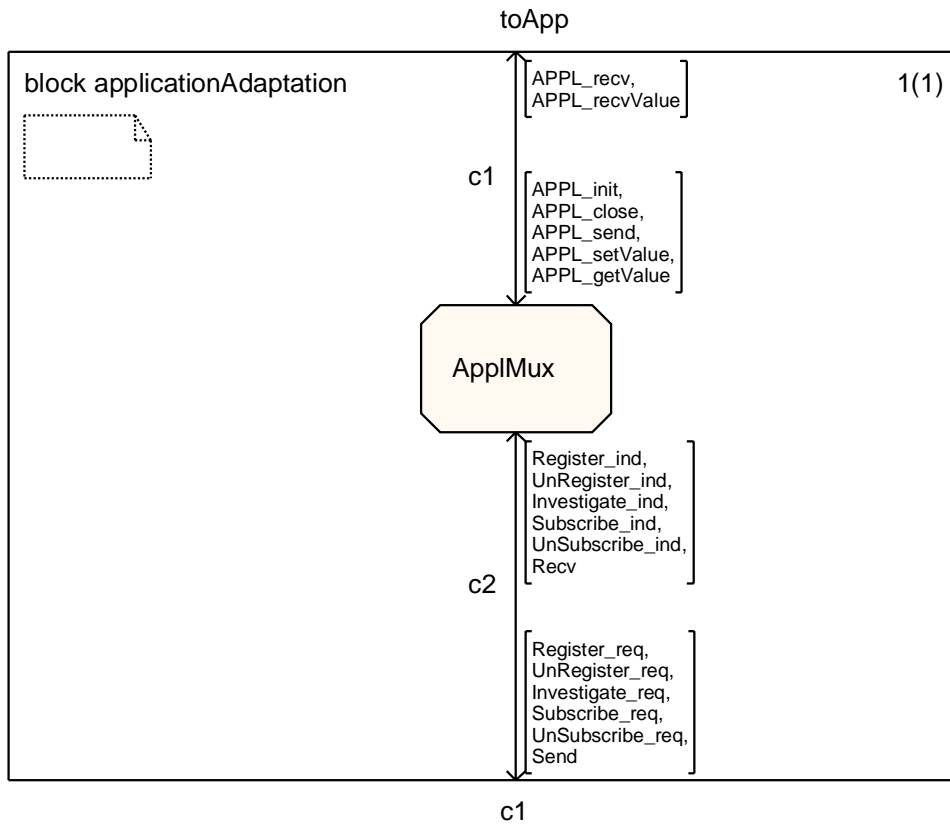
process CoDec

DCL id Integer;
DCL name AddressType;
DCL data Octet_string;
DCL result Integer;
DCL packet ServicePacket;
DCL encoded Octet_string;



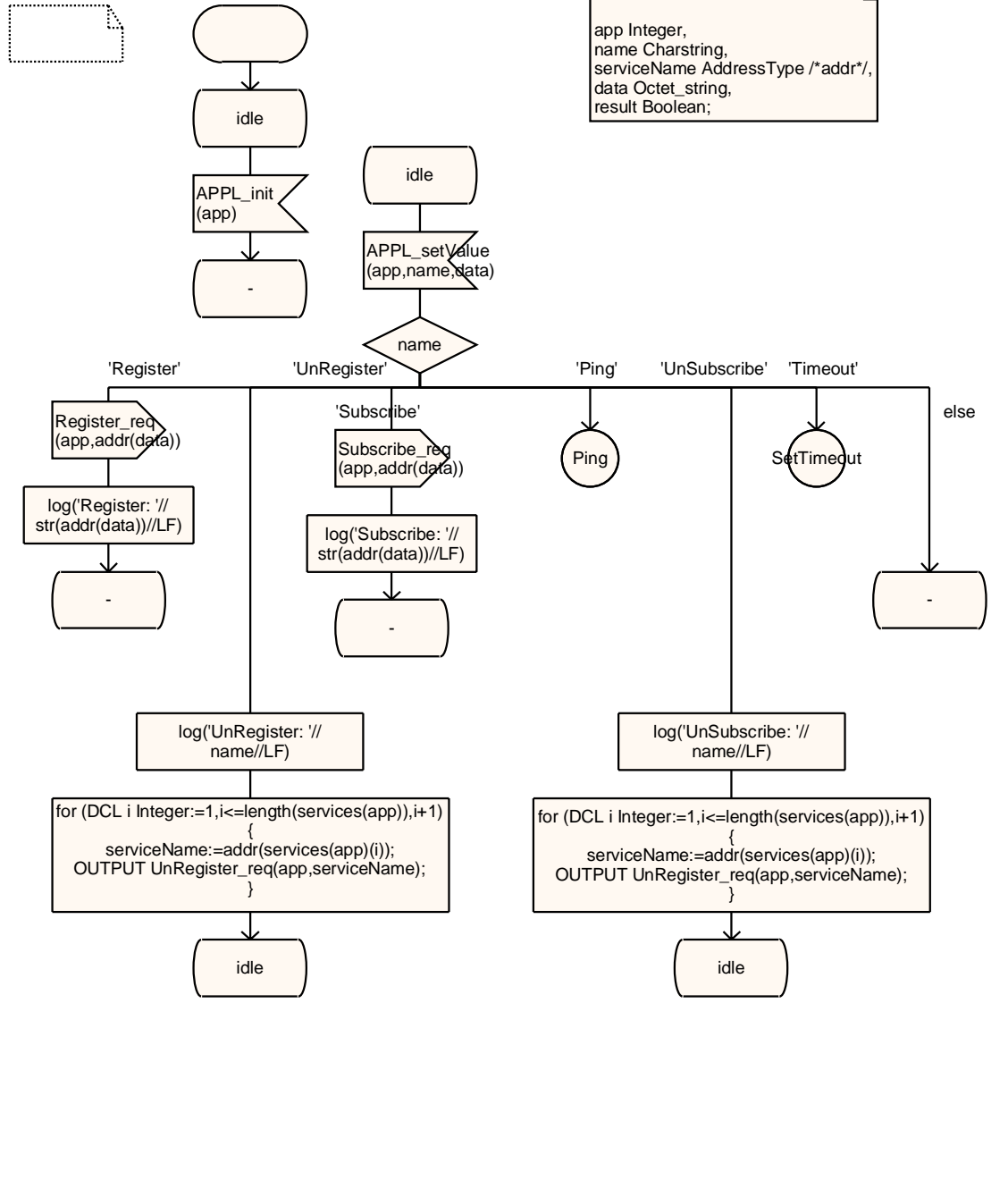


5.4 Application Interface

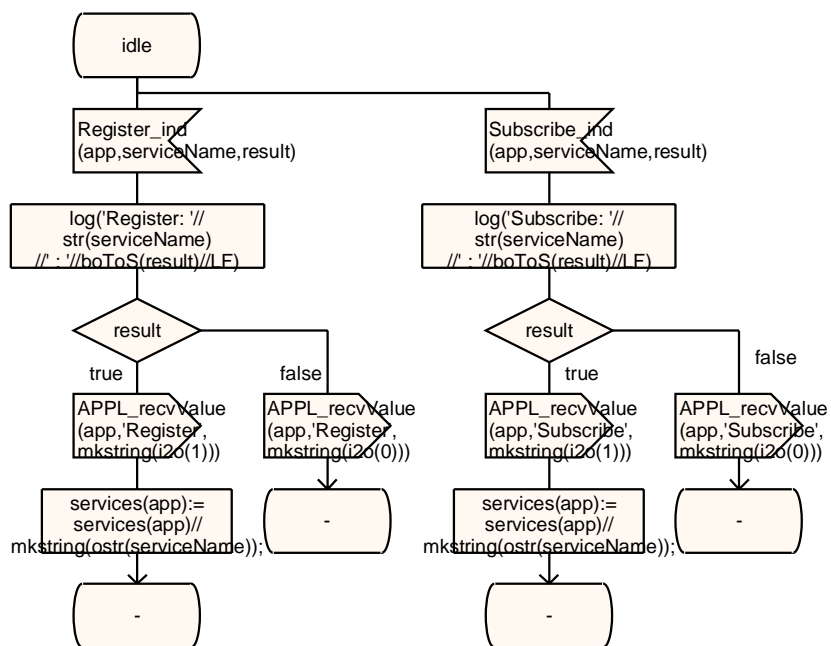


process ApplMux

1(4)



DCL
 app Integer,
 name Charstring,
 serviceName AddressType /*addr*/,
 data Octet_string,
 result Boolean;



process ApplMux

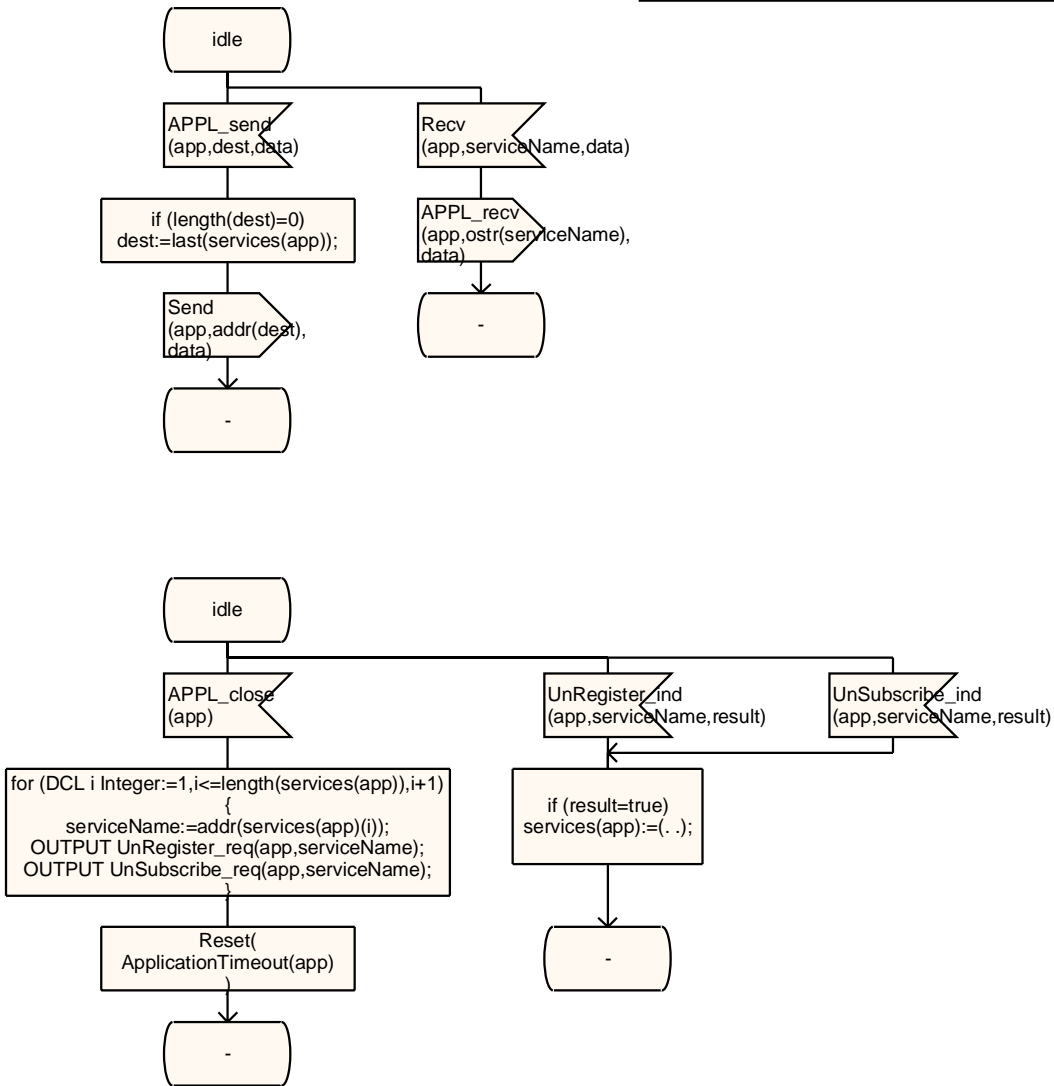
3(4)



```

DCL
dest Octet_string,
services ID2Name;

NEWTYPE ID2Name Array(Integer,NameList)
ENDNEWTYPE;
NEWTYPE NameList String(Octet_string,empty)
ENDNEWTYPE;
    
```

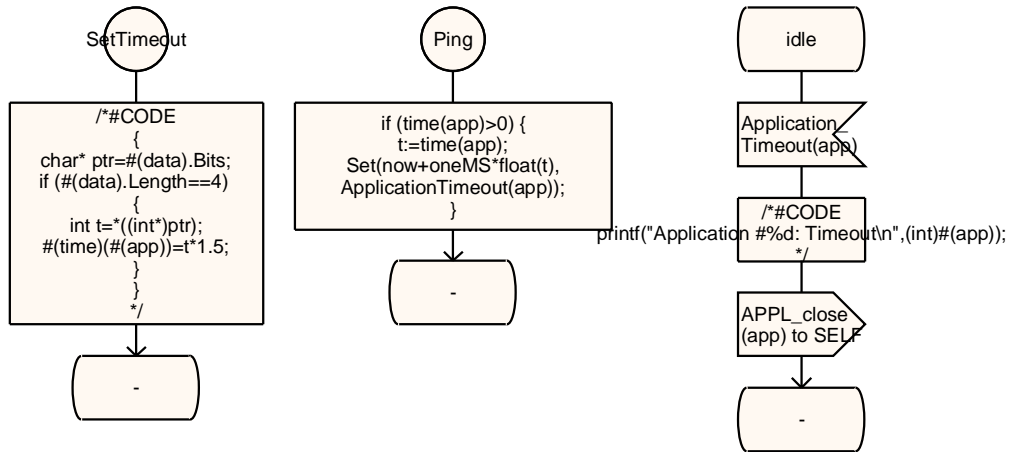


process ApplMux

4(4)

```

NEWTYPE TimeoutMap Array(Integer,Integer)
ENDNEWTYPE;
DCL time TimeoutMap;
DCL t Integer;
SYNONYM oneMS Duration=0.001;
Timer ApplicationTimeout(Integer);
    
```





package AddressType

1(1)



```
NEWTYPE AddressType inherits Charstring
OPERATORS ALL;
ADDING OPERATORS
matches: AddressType,AddressType -> Boolean;
addr: Octet_string -> AddressType;
str: AddressType -> Charstring;
ostr: AddressType -> Octet_string;

OPERATOR matches; FPAR a AddressType,b AddressType;RETURNS Boolean;
START;
return a=b;
ENDOPERATOR;

OPERATOR addr; FPAR os Octet_string;RETURNS AddressType;
DCL i Integer;
DCL s AddressType;
START;
task {
for (i:=1,i<=length(os),i+1)
s:=s//mkstring(chr(o2i(os(i))));
};
return s;
ENDOPERATOR;

OPERATOR str; FPAR a AddressType;RETURNS Charstring;
DCL i Integer;
DCL s Charstring;
START;
task {
for (i:=1,i<=length(a),i+1)
s:=s//mkstring(a(i));
};
return s;
ENDOPERATOR;

OPERATOR ostr; FPAR a AddressType;RETURNS Octet_string;
DCL i Integer;
DCL s Octet_string;
START;
task {
for (i:=1,i<=length(a),i+1)
s:=s//mkstring(i2o(num(a((i)))));
};
return s;
ENDOPERATOR;

ENDNEWTYPE;
```