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MP241 'Interoperability Checker Update'

July 2024 Working Group – meeting summary

Attendees

SEC Party Category	Working Group Members	Representing
Large Suppliers	Emma Johnson (EJ)	British Gas
	Alex Hurcombe (AH)	EDF
	Amy Cox (AC)	EDF
	Sharon Armitage (SA)	E.ON
	Ralph Baxter (RB)	Octopus
	Emslie Law (EL)	OVO
	Kevin Clark (KC)	Utilita
Small Suppliers	Steve Blackler (SB)	E
	Daniel Davies (DD)	ESG Global
Other SEC Parties	Beth Tatton (BT)	Calvin Capital
	Colin Griffiths (CG)	Citizens Advice
	Martin Bell (MB)	EUA
	Jeff Studholme (JS)	Smart Meter Assets
Network Parties	Shuba Khatun (SK)	SSEN

Other Participants		
DCC		
David Walsh (DW)	Robin Seaby (RS)	
SECAS		
Kev Duddy (KD) *WG Chair*	Rachel Black (RBl) *Meeting Secretary*	Mohammedanwar Sumro (MS) *Lead Analyst*
Simon Grimwood (SG) *Lead Analyst*		

Overview

The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) provided an overview of the issue identified, impact, the proposed solution, and the Impact Assessment summary for MP241 'Interoperability Checker Update'.

Issue

- The Interoperability Checker's results may not reflect a consumer's actual experience with their Smart Meter.
- Results are based on Device Models which contribute to misperception and inconsistencies in results
- Leads to negative experience for consumer using the tool

Proposed Solution

The DCC will use system data to enhance the accuracy of the tool. The reports to identify a meter operating in Smart Mode will populate if the Supplier has sent at least one of the below SRVs within sixty days to that specific Device, or a matching Device Model Combination as appropriate.

- SRV 4.6.1'RetrieveImportDailyReadLog'
- SRV 4.8.1'ReadActiveImportProfileData'
- SRV 4.8.2'ReadReactiveImportProfileData'
- All variants of SRV 4.1 & SRV 4.4

To fulfil the requirement to identify whether a property is covered by the DCC Smart Meter Wide Area Network (SMWAN), the DCC will use the current WAN Coverage Checker and include:

- For that premises, the percentage of the total number of Domestic Premises in the surrounding area.

Impact Assessment Summary

- Total cost to implement MP241 'Interoperability Checker Update' £99,901 which includes Design, Build, Pre-Integration Testing (PIT), System Integration Testing (SIT) and deployment costs, which can be broken down into:
    - £86,862 – business requirements one, two and three
    - £13,039 – business requirement four
- A timescale of six months to implement requirements one two and three within six months and
- A timescale to implement requirement four of a further four months

Working Group Discussion

SECAS (MS) provided an overview of the current arrangements, the issue, previously discussed points, detail of the Proposed Solution and summary of the Impact Assessment.

Change in Use Case for the Interoperability Checker Service

A Working Group member (EL) highlighted that the Interoperability Checker Service's intended use is to help consumers check if their Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specification (SMETS1) meter will still retain Smart Mode capabilities if a consumer were to switch Supplier. They highlighted that this modification seeks to inform consumers if their meter is operating in Smart Mode which is not what the Interoperability Checker Service was built to provide.

Citizens Advice (CG) stated that although the use case is different to the initial design, it is currently being used in such manner. They stated that their research identified that consumers are already using the tool to confirm whether their meter is working, and noted media coverage often provides links to the tool to use it in this way.

Provision of WAN information

SECAS (MS) and the DCC (RS) detailed how the DCC will derive the data to populate the Interoperability Checker Service.

A Working Group member (AC) noted the reports are run to different time periods and queried whether a consumer would be presented out of date information. The DCC (RS) noted that data could change after each report is run and would not be updated until the next scheduled report date. They noted the longest time between reports was one month and noted that there are not often changes in a consumer's WAN coverage.

The member (AC) also queried potential impacts from 2G/3G sunsetting, and transition to 4G, raising concern about accurate information to consumers. The DCC (RS) noted there is overlap between the areas covered by 2G/3G and 4G. They explained 4G coverage data will be updated into the tool. They were unable to confirm whether 2G/3G coverage data would be removed from the tool when sunsetting occurs.

A Working Group member (EL) raised concerns that although the data sets would be utilised from the DCC Systems there is no guarantee that that what is being provided is true to what is being experienced at the consumers premises. There are many situations where a consumer may not have WAN coverage, but all their neighbours do.

Citizens Advice (CG) highlighted that they were very supportive of improving the accuracy of whether a meter is working in Smart Mode but were less invested in the provision of information as to a customer's WAN.

Non-communicating Meters

The DCC (RS) explained how the DCC would derive the indication of whether the meter is in Smart Mode or not via a list of Service Requests.

A Working Group member (EL) raised concern that the view from DCC of whether a Smart Meter is working may differ from a Supplier's view and a consumer's view. They were concerned that the provision of this information could lead to a consequential impact of Devices being removed prematurely. They stated that this issue has a lot of focus from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and multiple workstreams on what constitutes as a non-communicating meter. They suggested that a definition of a non-communicating meter would need to be agreed through these forums before DCC could develop a report consistent with all views.

This view was supported by another Working Group member (RB). They added that the Operations Group (OPSG) is working to create standardised categories and these groups need to align on the definition of a non-communicating Device. They suggested SECAS should support the OPSG's effort to create a unified understanding of what constitutes a non-communicating meter before progressing this modification.

Business Case

A working Group member (JS) shared their view that the first point of contact should be the consumer's Supplier. This view was echoed by some Supplier members.

The member (JS) considered that the associated costs of the modification would be better used to redirect consumers to the appropriate Supplier as they have the accurate information.

The DCC (RS) noted that as the Citizens Advice is an independent source of information to consumers that it should be improved to supply consumers with data which is more accurate than is currently available.

The Citizens Advice (CG) advised the traffic for the tool has increased due to consumers wanting to see if their SMETS2 meter is fully communicating on the network. They also made Working Group members aware that from Citizens Advice perspective, the priority is to improve the accuracy of information available to consumers and that the SMWAN element, which is not available in the Interoperability Checker Service tool can be dropped to focus on improving the accuracy of the results generated currently.

They made members aware that with the extra data sets, the consumer has more accurate information which will inform them if their Smart Meter can operate in Smart Mode.

A Working Group member (JS) stated that the benefits were not clearly detailed and needed to be compared against the costs for industry to be able to make any decision.

Next Steps

The following actions were recorded from the meeting:

- SECAS to ensure definition of Non-Communicating Meter is aligned with other workstreams in this area.
- SECAS to detail the business benefits further.