

SEC Guidance Notes: Elective Communication Services

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1. Introduction

This Guidance Note is intended to provide readers with an explanation of what Elective Communication Services are, how SEC Parties can partake in these services, an example and how any recharging mechanism would work.

SEC Section A defines Elective Communication Services (ECS) as, 'the provision of communication services that are (or are to be) defined in a Bilateral Agreement (rather than the DCC User Interface Services Schedule) in a manner that involves communication via the SM WAN (provided that such services must relate solely to the Supply of Energy or its use).'

2. Background

2.1 Smart Energy Code (SEC)

The requirements relating to Elective Communication Services are set out in Section H7 of the SEC located [here](#).

2.2 Purpose

The original policy intent behind Elective Communication Services was to provide a mechanism through which Users could commission bespoke functionality in the form of new service requests.

The service allows SEC Parties to exclusively implement new services for a set period of time with the support of the Data Communications Company (DCC) to enable innovation, competition and re-use of the DCC network.

3. Key elements of Elective Communication Services

3.1 Prerequisite

Only a DCC User is entitled to receive Elective Communication Services. A Party that is not a User is not entitled to receive Elective Communication Services. A Party is also not eligible to use Service Requests (SRs) for a User Role where they have **not** completed User Entry Process or Additional SR Testing.

3.2 Permitted Communication Services

Any User is permitted to submit an ECS request to the DCC, however a User shall **not** be entitled to request or receive (and the DCC shall not provide to such User) any Elective Communication Services that would constitute a Restricted Communication Service.

A **Restricted Communication Service** is any service that is not a Permitted Communication Service.

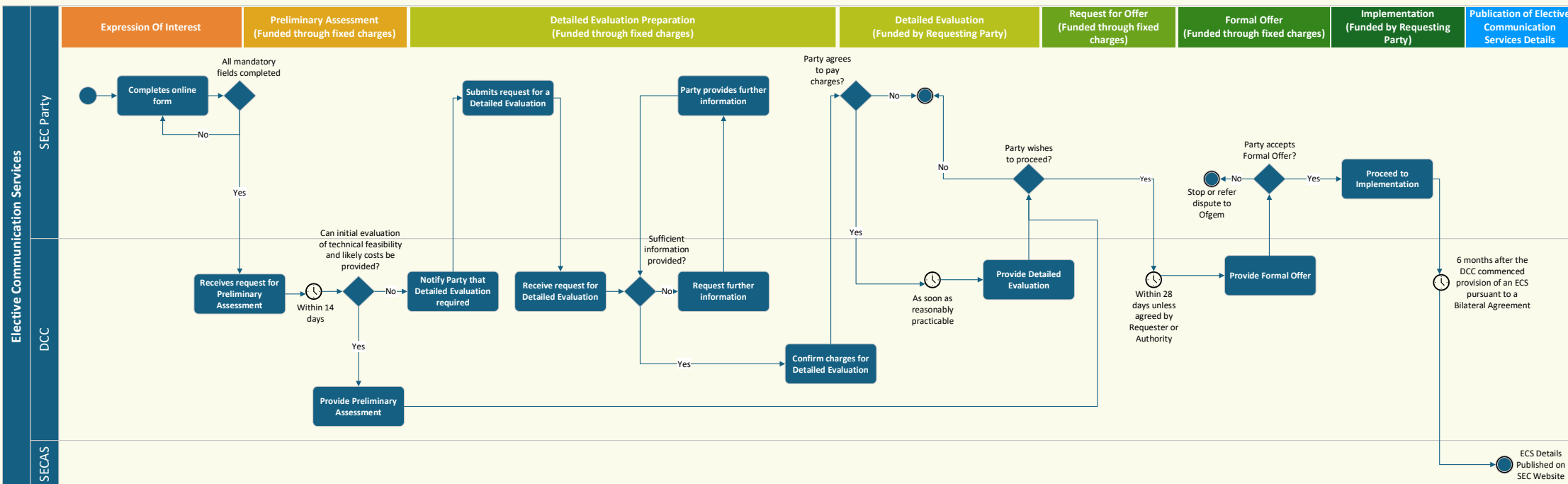
Permitted Communication Services are those set out in the DCC User Interface Services Schedule or a service which the Panel has (on the application of the User) approved as a permitted communication service.

Please note that the service is still expected to fall within the requirements of the DCC Licence.

3.3 Facilitation

The DCC will be responsible for facilitating the progression of an Elective Communication Service with a Party. However, a Party is expected to respond to engagement from the DCC where further information or clarity may be required.

3.4 Process Map



3.5 Detailed Process



Expression of Interest

The User should complete a form located [here](#) to request a Preliminary Assessment for their proposed Elective Communication Service. The 'How can we work together' section should include that the request is:

- (a) for a Preliminary Assessment of a proposed Elective Communication Service, and
- (b) provide details of the proposed Elective Communication Service.

Preliminary Assessment

The DCC will respond within 14 days after receiving the request and shall either:

- (a) provide an initial evaluation of the technical feasibility and the likely Charges for a proposed Elective Communication Service; or
- (b) give notice that a further and more detailed evaluation of the request is required.

Detailed Evaluation

If the preliminary assessment concludes that a more Detailed Evaluation is required as per item (b) above, a Party may request a detailed evaluation of the technical feasibility and likely Charges for a proposed ECS.

Note in order to proceed with a Detailed Evaluation there are likely to be applicable Charges which will need to be paid to the DCC.

1. The Party should submit a request to the DCC.
2. Upon receipt of the request, the DCC will notify the Party if additional information is required to assess the request. The DCC will provide reasonable assistance to the Party in re-submitting the request if necessary.
3. Once all required information has been received, the DCC will confirm the applicable Charges payable for conducting the Detailed Evaluation.
4. After the Party has agreed to pay the applicable Charges, the DCC will provide the Detailed Evaluation to the requesting Party as soon as reasonably practicable.

Request for Offer

A Party can subsequently request a formal offer for a proposed ECS where:

- (a) they have requested a Preliminary Assessment in respect of a proposed ECS, and have been provided with an initial evaluation and likely charge by the DCC; or
- (b) they have requested and obtained a Detailed Evaluation in respect of a proposed ECS.

To request a formal offer a Party must contact the DCC.

The DCC shall then either:

- (a) make an offer to provide the ECS; or
- (b) notify the Party that the DCC is not willing to make such an offer and clarify the reasonings why.

Formal Offer

The Formal Offer provided by the DCC would include details of the Charges that would apply to the ECS, as determined in accordance with the Charging Methodology; and include an offer by the DCC to enter into a Bilateral Agreement.

A Bilateral Agreement means 'an agreement entered into pursuant to Section H7 (Elective Communication Services) between the DCC and a User' as defined in the SEC.

It is advised that Parties consult SEC Section H7 to understand the conditions of the SEC and Bilateral Agreement further. In the event of any inconsistency between the SEC and a Bilateral Agreement, the provisions of the SEC shall prevail.

Publication of ECS Details

The DCC will notify SECAS of the date on which the provision of the ECS commenced. However, without prejudice to the DCC's obligations under SEC Section H7.19, the existence and contents of each Bilateral Agreement shall constitute Confidential Information which the DCC is obliged to keep confidential in accordance with SEC Section M4 (Confidentiality).

When 6 months after the DCC commenced provision of an ECS pursuant to a Bilateral Agreement, the DCC will provide the below details to SECAS. These details will then be published by SECAS on the SEC website.

- (a) A brief description of the Elective Communication Service;
- (b) the frequency with which, and (where stated) the period during which, the Elective Communication Service is to be provided; and
- (c) the Target Response Time within which the Elective Communication Service is to be provided.

3.6 Recharging Mechanism

Detail on how Elective charges are determined, recovered and recharged is contained within Smart Energy Code Section K8.

In the event that another (eligible) DCC user wishes to request an ECS following the 6-month exclusivity/confidentiality period, then within DCC general assumptions for ECS, this is considered to be a 'Second-Comer' request.

- The 'Second-Comer' Party may be eligible to pay a contribution to the costs borne by the first Party that requested the service (the initial contributor).
- Cost information would be provided and form part of the response to an application for the ECS by the 'Second-Comer'.

- This could include a share of the Detailed Evaluation costs, and/or development and operational costs – subject to the value of the contribution required and the time elapsed since the first Party agreed to pay the initial costs.
- The first Party receives a rebate for these costs.
- This applies to any additional Parties who wish to receive the Elective Communication Service, e.g. if a third Party wishes to receive the service, DCC would need to reapportion costs to the first and second Parties.

The Second-Comer Contributions described above do not apply in the following conditions (as detailed in SEC Section K8.8):

1. Where the relevant costs are less than £20k;
2. Where the relevant costs are between £20k-£500k (inclusive), and 5 years has elapsed from the offer for the ECS being accepted;
3. Where the relevant costs are more than £500k and 10 years has elapsed since the offer for the ECS was accepted; or
4. Where the initial ECS requester no longer exists or cannot be contacted by the DCC.