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MP243

‘CHTS v1.1 and GBCS v2.1 Installation End Date and Maintenance End Date’

Modification Report

Version 0.2

28 June 2023



About this document

This document is a draft Modification Report. It currently sets out the background, issue, and progression timetable for this modification, along with any relevant discussions, views and conclusions. This document will be updated as this modification progresses.

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This document also has one annex:

- **Annex A** contains the redlined changes to the Smart Energy Code (SEC) required to deliver the Proposed Solution.

Contact

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1. Summary

This proposal has been raised by David Rollason on behalf of the Data Communications Company (DCC).

The DCC is aware of approximately 2.2 million uninstalled Communications Hubs which are compliant with the Communications Hub Technical Specifications (CHTS) v1.1 and the Great Britain Companion Specification (GBCS) v2.1. The Technical Specification Applicability Tables (TSAT) contain an Installation End Date of 30 April 2024 and a Maintenance End Date of 31 May 2024. These provide the final date that these Communications Hubs can be installed and will be maintained. Any stock remaining after this time will not be compliant and should be scrapped or returned, incurring a financial and environmental cost.

The Proposed Solution is to extend the CHTS v1.1 and GBCS v2.1 Installation End Date and Maintenance End Date by 24 months.

2. Issue

What are the current arrangements?

SEC Schedule 11 'Technical Specification Applicability Tables' contains a table titled 'CHTS and Relevant Versions of GBCS' which includes CHTS v1.1 and GBCS 2.1. The Installation End Date is 30 April 2024 and the Maintenance End Date is 31 May 2024.

The DCC is aware of approximately 2.2 million uninstalled Communications Hubs which are compliant with these specifications. Should installation rates stay at the same level for the rest of this period, the DCC estimates that there could be 2.2 million Communications Hubs which have been produced but remain uninstalled by the end of the existing End Dates. This is because supply and installation rates are roughly equivalent.

What is the issue?

An issue in Great Britain Companion Specification (GBCS) 3.2 specification has led to Communications Hubs continuing to be manufactured to be compliant with GBCS v2.1 for an additional two years more than anticipated. The volume of Communications Hub stock has grown to an extent that stock volumes will not be used before the end of the existing TSAT dates. Any stock remaining after this time will not be compliant and should be scrapped or returned, incurring a financial and environmental cost.

In the coming years 2G and 3G Communications Hubs are being phased out, to be replaced by 4G Communications Hubs. It is anticipated that the rollout of 4G Communications Hubs will be slow to minimise risk. If issues are found with 4G Communications Hubs then Parties may wish to default to installing 2G/3G Hubs. As such, extending the Installation and Maintenance End Dates would allow Parties to fall back on the remaining stock, should they experience issues with the 4G Hubs.

What is the impact this is having?

If the dates pass, any remaining uninstalled stock will be non-compliant with the SEC should be scrapped or returned. The DCC notes that the existing returns process will not be able to support the volume of Communications Hubs which are compliant with these specifications.

If Parties continued to install these Communications Hubs following the end of the Installation Validity Period (IVP), the installation would be non-SEC compliant. The DCC would not be under an obligation to support the maintenance and upgrade of the firmware on the Device.

Impact on consumers

Scrapping this remaining stock could result in fewer Energy Consumers gaining the access to smart meters in the immediate future.

3. Impacts

This section summarises the impacts that would arise from the implementation of this modification.

SEC Parties

SEC Party Categories impacted			
✓	Large Suppliers	✓	Small Suppliers
	Electricity Network Operators		Gas Network Operators
✓	Other SEC Parties	✓	DCC

Breakdown of Other SEC Party types impacted			
	Shared Resource Providers	✓	Meter Installers
	Device Manufacturers		Flexibility Providers

All affected Parties would benefit from this change as they would be able to continue to install Communication Hubs which should otherwise be scrapped or returned to the DCC.

DCC System

There will be no impacts to DCC Systems.

SEC and subsidiary documents

The following parts of the SEC will be impacted:

- Schedule 11 Schedule 11 'Technical Specification Applicability Tables' (TSAT)

Technical specification versions

There are no changes directly to the Technical Specifications, only to the Installation and Maintenance End Dates in the TSAT.

Devices

Devices impacted			
	Electricity Smart Metering Equipment		Gas Smart Metering Equipment
✓	Communications Hubs		Gas Proxy Functions
	In-Home Displays		Prepayment Meter Interface Devices
	Standalone Auxiliary Proportional Controllers		Home Area Network Connected Auxiliary Load Control Switches
	Consumer Access Devices		Alternative Home Area Network Devices

This change will allow Communications Hubs compliant with CHTS v1.1 and GBCS v2.1 to continue to be installed by the Supplier and upgraded by the DCC.

Consumers

This change will result in more energy consumers gaining the access to smart meters in the immediate future.

Other industry Codes

There will be no impact on other industry Codes.

Greenhouse gas emissions

There will be no impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Assessment of the proposal

Areas for assessment

Length of End Date extension

The Proposer has made several estimations about the number of Communications Hubs that are uninstalled which will expire at the end of the existing CHTS v1.1 and GBCS v2.1 end dates, versus the number of Communications Hubs which are being installed each month. They believe that a 24-month extension to the existing End Dates would be appropriate to clear the backlog of existing Communications Hubs. Given previous CHTS and GBCS extensions have required more than one modification to extend, the Proposer believes this extension should cover the period and not require another SEC modification.

The Proposer has suggested extending the CHTS v1.1 and GBCS v2.1 Installation End Date by 24 months. This would change the Installation End Date from 30 April 2024 to 30 April 2026 and the Maintenance End Date from 31 May 2024 to 31 May 2026.

SECAS will gain feedback on the length of time that the existing End Dates should be extended by during the Refinement Process.

Potential amendment to Section A3.33

During initial discussions on this modification, one CSC member noted that several modifications have been raised to extend the existing End Dates. They added that rather than updating the TSAT tables by a modification, the decision could rest with an appropriate Sub-Committee.

Observations on the issue

Previous extensions to TSAT

The TSAT contains IVP (from Installation Start Date to Installation End Date) and Maintenance Validity Period (MVP – from Maintenance Start Date to Maintenance End Date). These dates are to ensure Devices compliant with older versions of technical specifications are either updated or replaced as they age. Due to several factors, including slower than expected uptake of smart metering, delayed roll out of newer Communications Hub Releases, and UK Government distancing restrictions in 2020/21, installations have not been as high as anticipated. Older versions of Communications Hubs bought by Suppliers have been stored while the stock is installed.

There have been four previous modifications to extend IVP and MVP dates:

- [MP139 'MVP and IVP dates for CHTS'](#) extended CHTS v1.0 and GBCS v1.0 & v1.1 IVP end dates from 31 January 2021 for 12 months. It also extended CHTS v1.1 / GBCS v2.1 IVP end dates from 28 February 2021 for 12 months and extended MVP end dates for CHTS v1.1 / GBCS v2.1 from 31 May 2021 for 12 months.
- [MP191 'Extending CHTS v1.0 & v1.1 IVP and MVP end dates'](#) extended the CHTS v1.0 IVP and MVP end dates from 31 January 2022 and 28 February 2022 respectively by 12 months.
- [MP201 'CHTS v1.1 and GBCS v2.0 Applicability End Date'](#) extended the CHTS v1.1 and GBCS v2.0 from 28 February 2022 by 18 months.
- [MP221 CHTS v1.0 and GBCS V1.1 Installation End Date and Maintenance End Date'](#) extended the CHTS v1.0 and GBCS v1.1 Installation End Date by three months to 30 April 2023 and the Maintenance End Date by three months to 30 May 2023.

Views of Sub-Committee Chairs

SECAS engaged with the Chairs of the Operations Group (OPSG), the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC), the Security Sub-Committee (SSC) and the Smart Metering Key Infrastructure Policy Management Authority (SMKI PMA) to confirm what input is required from these forums.

The TABASC Chair noted that they believe the TSAT tables are not working as intended. This is because newer Devices are being installed, with no priority given to installing older Devices.

The OPSG Chair questioned the operational impacts of not installing Communications Hubs before the relevant Installation and Maintenance End Dates. Smart Energy Code Administrator and

Secretariat (SECAS) noted that these Devices can still be installed, but Over-the-air (OTA) firmware upgrades must take place to negate any issues. SECAS also noted that the DCC is under no obligation to complete firmware upgrades on these Devices.

The SSC Chair noted an interest in case the Commercial Product Assurance (CPA) Certificates of the affected Communications Hubs were due to expire before the proposed extension dates. SECAS notes there are 24 entries on the Central Products List (CPL) for Communications Hubs which have CPA Certificates that will expire prior to the existing Installation End Date of 30 April 2024 and Maintenance End Date of 31 May 2024.

Sub-Committee input

SECAS will engage with the Chairs from the OPSG, TABASC and SSC to input into the modification report. SECAS will seek the following feedback:

Sub-Committee input	
Sub-Committee	Input sought
OPSG	To determine if the Proposed solution is an appropriate period of time to extend the existing End Dates by. To examine any other operational impacts by failing to install before the existing End Dates.
SMKI PMA	No input sought.
SSC	To determine whether there are any security risks by extending the Installation and Maintenance End Dates from CPA Certificates expiring.
TABASC	To determine if this is an appropriate period to extend the End Dates by. To determine if there is an alternative solution to encourage Parties to install before the End Dates.

5. Appendix 1: Progression timetable

Timetable	
Event/Action	Date
Draft Proposal raised	13 Jun 2023
CSC converts Draft Proposal to Modification Proposal	20 Jun 2023
Modification discussed with Working Group	5 Jul 2023
<i>Modification discussed with TABASC</i>	<i>6 Jul 2023</i>
<i>Modification discussed with SSC</i>	<i>12 Jul 2023</i>
<i>Modification discussed with OPSG</i>	<i>24 Jul 2023</i>
<i>Refinement Consultation</i>	<i>16 Aug 2023 – 6 Sep 2023</i>
<i>Modification discussed with Working Group</i>	<i>4 Oct 2023</i>
<i>Modification Report approved by CSC</i>	<i>17 Oct 2023</i>
<i>Modification Report Consultation</i>	<i>18 Oct 2023 – 8 Nov 2023</i>
<i>Change Board Vote</i>	<i>20 Dec 2023</i>

Italics denote planned events that could be subject to change

6. Appendix 2: Glossary

This table lists all the acronyms used in this document and the full term they are an abbreviation for.

Glossary	
Acronym	Full term
CHTS	Communications Hub Technical Specifications
CPA	Commercial Product Assurance
CPL	Central Products List
CSC	Change Sub-Committee
DCC	Data Communications Company
GBCS	Great Britain Companion Specification
IVP	Installation Validity Period
MVP	Maintenance Validity Period
OTA	Over-the-air
OPSG	Operations Group
SEC	Smart Energy Code
SECAS	The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat
SMKI PMA	Smart Metering Key Infrastructure Policy Management Authority
SSC	Security Sub-Committee
TABASC	Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee
TSAT	Technical Specification Applicability Tables