

DECEMBER 2023

SEC Newsletter



WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER 2023 SEC NEWSLETTER!

Welcome to the December 2023 SEC Newsletter!

As we draw close to the end of the year, we would like to thank you for your continued support throughout 2023, and your engagement with the Smart Energy Code (SEC).

In this edition, we provide updates on the key outcomes from the SEC Panel and SECCo Board in the last quarter, the SEC Modification Improvement Project, the Programme Assurance Report, the new SECAS Large Supplier Engagement Call and a Change Board election with a call for nominations.

You can also read our usual updates on modifications, meeting dates and key Industry news, and listen to our latest Modcast. The spotlight has been placed on the new SECAS Smart Metering Technical Manager, where you can find out more about him.

We hope you enjoy this edition; please contact us at the [SECAS Helpdesk](#) if there are any topics you would like to see covered in an upcoming newsletter.

We wish you happy holidays and will see you in the new year!



The SEC Panel and SECCo Board have had a busy few months (September – November 2023) overseeing key industry events, progressing recommendations from the SEC Sub-Committees, and providing outputs to SEC Parties via post-meeting documentation and so much more.

- The Panel approved the project scope on improvements to the modification process and agreed in principle for the DCC to progress with a pilot which aims to improve Service Level Agreement (SLA) adherence and introduces classifications for complex and non-complex modifications.
- The Panel approved the initiation of a transition to a Future Commercial Product Assurance (CPA) Scheme to ensure the continued security assurance of smart metering Devices and to secure improvements to the operation of the Scheme. The Scheme will continue to be sponsored by DESNZ and the proposal is for SECCo to become the Scheme Owner. The Panel will continue to work with the Department, via the Security Sub-Committee (SSC) as necessary in implementing and transitioning to the Future CPA Scheme.
- The Panel reviewed DCC statements of readiness and assessment on GBCS 4.1 by the Operations Group (OPSG) and agreed the GBCS 4.1 Toshiba Comms Hub firmware pilot phase has been completed and endorsed entry to mass manufacture. The Panel also recommended that the GBCS 4.1 capability should proceed to phase one of live operation for the WNC Comms Hub.
- Following the delivery of the Other User (OU) Project findings at the September 2023 Panel meeting, the Panel noted traffic management (encompassing demand capacity issues) was a broad activity and requested SECAS refocus activity to move forward OU-specific actions.
- The DCC presented the Panel with its plans to implement an ex-ante regulatory structure, by April 2025, which will provide greater visibility and transparency of costs and how costs are attributed to the services the DCC provides. The Panel recommended that the DCC should be mindful of the DCC Licence renewal about implementing an enduring structure as well as ongoing work on DP218: Review of the SEC Charging Methodology.
- The Panel endorsed the DCC's preferred option in the Outline Business Case (OBC) Public Key Infrastructure Enduring Solution.
- The Panel undertook a Risk deep dive on the SEC Panel Risks and will undertake the inaugural Board Risks deep dive in the new year. The Panel is keen to review how risks are monitored and managed and has requested that SECAS review the Risk log to include more detail and to identify 'parent and child' risks, in particular where related risks are managed by the Sub-Committees.
- The Panel approved the recommendation of the Design Phase of the SEC Website Replacement & Document Repository Project and agreed for the project to move to the Implementation Phase. SECCo Board approved the funds associated with the delivery of the Implementation Phase of the project.



Governance

MODIFICATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

SEC Panel approved a package of work at its September 2023 meeting on how to improve the modifications process. 14 actions were agreed including an end-to-end review of the current process. These 14 actions covered the efficiency and effectiveness of the modification process, the reduction in the number of open modifications, and improved visibility and throughput of high-priority modifications. Eight of these actions have already been completed including increased challenge from SECAS to ensure issues are of a sufficient scale, business cases are progressed, and escalating modifications where there is a lack of communication with the Proposer.

SECAS is working with the DCC to pilot trials to improve turnaround times for assessments. The end-to-end review is also underway, and interviews with stakeholders are being conducted in December 2023. The project should conclude by April 2024.

If you would like to add any comments or feedback, please contact sec.change@gemserv.com.



PROGRAMME ASSURANCE REPORT

Each month, a Programme Assurance Report is published to update the SEC Panel and SEC Parties on the status of the DCC Programmes. It outlines the work done since the last update, key milestones, and planned engagement over the next quarter. It also outlines any changes to the stages of the Programmes and any artefacts received since the last update.

Key Highlights for December include:

- 4G CH&N – Proposed changes to the SEC, to enable the introduction of 4G Communications Hubs (CHs), have been issued to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) for designation as part of the Network Evolution Transition and Migration Approach Document (NETMAD). A consultation on changes to the Intimate Communications Hub Interface Specification (ICHIS) to set Radio Frequency (RF) noise limits for new installations in the Vodafone 4G frequency band will be issued shortly. This will be consulted on in December 2023 with results published in January 2024.
- DSP Data Systems – The amended Data Service Provider (DSP) outlined business case (OBC), DSP Extension Strategic Outline Case (SOC) and DSP Systems Integrator (SI) SOC were submitted to DESNZ in November. The LC13B Consultation was published and will close in December.
- Future Service Management (FSM) - Programme Approach and Business needs were presented at the November TABASC & OPSG meetings with a verbal update given at SSC.
- PKI Enduring Services – SEC Panel has supported the procurement approach. The OBC has now been issued to DESNZ.
- TAF - Engagement has been increased with the TAG Chair who is now supportive of the work undertaken.
- S1 Dual Control Organisation (DCO) – Initial view of business needs presented at TABASC, SMKI PMA, SSC, and OPSG meetings in November, will be returning to SEC governance groups to endorse the business needs.

The Report can be found on the SEC website [here](#).



Governance

SECAS LARGE SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT CALLS

SECAS will hold monthly engagement calls with Large Suppliers starting from January 2024. The monthly calls will provide a forum for the Large Supplier SEC Panel Members and SECAS to communicate relevant SEC Panel agenda items and updates to Large Suppliers and hear their views to feed into Panel decisions. Large Suppliers can also flag topics for their Panel Members to raise for discussion as Panel AOB items. Invites will be going out shortly.



CHANGE BOARD ELECTION 2023 – CALL FOR NOMINATIONS BY 3 JANUARY 2024

Would you like to have a voice in industry change? We are looking for representatives who want to ensure changes improve the Smart Metering world.

The SEC Change Board meets monthly and reviews all changes being made by the modifications process and has the final say on what should be implemented and what should be rejected.

31 January 2024 signals the end of the term for all current Change Board members.

SECAS is therefore issuing a call for nominations for these seats, which consists of:

- 12 Large Supplier seats
- 3 Small Supplier seats
- 3 Network Party seats
- 3 Other SEC Party seats
- 1 Citizens Advice seat

You are invited to nominate yourself or a prospective candidate by completing the online form [here](#) by Wednesday 3 January 2024. Please note that SEC Parties need to be logged in to the website to access this form.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with us at sec.change@gemserv.com.



LATEST SEC MODCAST

Welcome to our Christmas-cast! For our final episode of 2023 which you can access [here](#), we ran through some of the achievements within SEC Change for the year, including Changes, Releases, and areas we have improved. This is followed by an overview of the ongoing Modification Improvement Project and our goals for 2024.

If you want to know more about any of the above, please email sec.change@gemserv.com or call us on 020 7090 7755.



Industry News

DESNZ DESIGNATION: NETWORK EVOLUTION TRANSITION AND MIGRATION APPROACH DOCUMENT (NETMAD) DESIGNATION DIRECTION

The Data Communications Company (DCC) ran a consultation in September 2023 on a draft of the Network Evolution Transition and Migration Approach Document (NETMAD) which included proposed transitional arrangements of the DCC's 4G Communications Hubs and Networks Programme (CH&N) service. It also sought views on the date for designation of the NETMAD and the consultation concluded on 3 November 2023.

The Department for Energy Security & Net Zero issued a direction letter, dated 5 December 2023, designating the NETMAD for incorporation into the Smart Energy Code (SEC) as Appendix AU. The direction letter and accompanying appendix can be found [here](#).



DESNZ DESIGNATION: TRANSITION AND MIGRATION APPROACH DOCUMENT (TMAD) DIRECTION IN SUPPORT OF SMETS1 ENROLMENT

On 18 December 2023, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero issued a direction to re-designate SEC Appendix AL 'SMETS1 Transition and Migration Approach Document' (SMETS1 TMAD). The direction took effect from 18 December 2023. This is to extend the SMETS1 TMAD expiry date from 31 March 2024 to 31 December 2024.

The Department's designation letter and accompanying annexes are available to download [here](#).



DCC PRICE CONTROL CONSULTATION: REGULATORY YEAR 2022/23

Ofgem is running a consultation on the Data Communications Company's (DCC) price control information. You can find the consultation [here](#).

The DCC must report its price control information in accordance with the Regulatory Instructions and Guidance (RIGS) that the DCC publish. In this document, Ofgem reviews whether the costs the DCC have reported for Regulatory Year 2022/23 are economic, efficient and sets out Ofgem's proposals.

The SEC Panel will be drafting a response to this consultation. If you have any views for consideration, please contact us at SECAS@gemserv.com for consideration.

If you have any questions or wish to submit a response, please send it to DCCregulation@ofgem.gov.uk by Friday 29 December 2023.



DCC CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO ICHIS

The DCC is seeking views against its proposed changes to the Intimate Communications Hub Interface Specification (ICHIS). A copy of the consultation can be found [here](#).

The changes to the ICHIS would include the introduction of 4G Communications Hubs (CHs), including setting a new Radio Frequency (RF) noise limit for new installations in the Vodafone 4G frequency band and seeking stakeholders' views prior to amending an updated version of the document.

If you have any questions or wish to submit a response, please send it to consultations@smartdcc.co.uk by Thursday 4 January 2024.



Modifications

NEW DRAFT PROPOSALS

There have been five new Draft Proposal raised since the last newsletter. You are invited to provide feedback to the [Change Team](#) to help us understand whether these issues affect you.

[DP256 'SEC Alignment with DCC SMETS1 MHHS Capacity Requirements'](#)

In April 2021, Ofgem concluded that Suppliers should be mandated to settle their customers on a half-hourly basis, known as Market-Wide Half Hourly Settlement (MHHS). The SEC does not set out detailed requirements on how the DCC should effectively manage the service where Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specification (SMETS)1 Service Request (SR) volumes exceed service capacity.

[DP257 'DCC Management of Duplicate Messages'](#)

Several factors impact the DCC traffic, one of which is duplicate messages.

The DCC would like to explore a solution that would look at halving the journey of retrieving a Service Response if the information was previously requested.

[DP258 'Aligning requirements for System Outage notifications'](#)

The DCC have two separate obligations, one being Business Continuity and [Disaster Recovery](#) (BCDR) and the other being Planned Maintenance. Both obligations require a notification period. These notification periods exist to provide Suppliers a period to plan and issue communications to consumers in a timely manner. The issue comes down to having two different notification periods for BCDR and Planned Maintenance. It has caused confusion for Suppliers to follow two different sets of notification periods.

[DP259 'Triage System Interface Definition'](#)

Triage Facilities currently utilise IPsec as a method to secure data connection between Triage Facilities and Manufacturers. One Manufacturer has made a case to employ a different protocol to secure this data connection - TLS - to provide a more granular level of security and control over shared data. TLS is currently detailed elsewhere in the SEC as an acceptable method of encrypting communications but is not allowable under the current definitions for Triage Interface Systems.

[DP260 'June 2024 SEC Release housekeeping'](#)

The current SEC Documents may contain minor errors which were either in the SEC from inception or introduced via various changes over the years since it was created. SECAS maintains a log of these errors, which are either identified by SECAS or notified to SECAS by other parties. These errors make the SEC documents harder to understand and potentially lead to confusion or misinterpretation.



Publications

OPEN INDUSTRY CONSULTATIONS WEBPAGE

Please visit our [Open Industry Consultations webpage](#) for details of consultations that may be of interest to SEC Parties. If you are aware of a consultation that should be added, please contact the [SECAS Helpdesk](#).

SECAS HELPDESK

Please contact the [SECAS Helpdesk](#) with any questions and a member of the team will be happy to help. Helpdesk hours are **Monday-Friday 9-5pm (excluding bank holidays)**.



Key Upcoming Governance Meeting Dates

Key Meeting Dates Industry Events Calendar

SECAS now hosts a collated calendar of industry events, consultations and publications on the SEC website. This is in response to industry feedback that a joint calendar would add value to SEC Parties.

This includes events from SECAS, DCC, DESNZ and Ofgem looking one month ahead. The Industry Events Calendar is available [here](#).

3 January 2024 - [SEC Monthly Working Group Meeting - January 2024](#)

4 January 2024 - [TABASC Meeting 97](#)

8 January 2024 - [Communications Transition Group 11](#)

16 January 2024 - [Change Sub-Committee Meeting 59](#)

18 January 2024 - [TABASC Meeting 97X](#)

19 January 2024 - [Other SEC Party Monthly Engagement Call - January 2024](#)

23 January 2024 - [SEC Panel Meeting 124](#)

23 January 2024 - [SECCo Board meeting 124](#)

24 January 2024 - [Change Board Meeting 86](#)

25 January 2024 - [Small Supplier Engagement Call - January 2024](#)

You can view all upcoming and previous event / meeting dates in the [online calendar](#).

Spotlight Interview with Tom Rothery, SECAS

How long have you been part of the SECAS team?

I've been part of the SEC team for 6 weeks. Whilst I'm new to SECAS the SEC is familiar territory. I worked at DECC (now DESNZ) on the SEC as it was first developed, and then worked in DCC as a regulation lead for 7 years.

What does your role entail?

I oversee the work of the Tech-Ops team in SECAS, which is responsible for supporting tech and operational matters under the code. We support TABASC, OPSG and TAG as well as oversee the CPL and SMDA services. We also support the Panel and Sub-Committees by reviewing and preparing responses to the very many consultations taking place in the sector.

What's one thing — either industry-related or not — you learned in the last month?

That there is a lot of wisdom and expertise held by SECAS colleagues! It has been really interesting learning about what everyone does, and getting that alternative take on challenges that I've been working on in other parts of the industry.

What are the challenges you are expecting to overcome within the SEC next year?

I think in terms of SECAS, for me, it's going to be continuing to learn about how we work and what we do, and then setting and achieving goals to improve. There will be some big changes coming up in terms of the SEC – Market-wide Half-Hourly Settlement, New 4G Comms Hubs and greater detail in terms of new data services provision from DCC, which will all need to be carefully governed, and we will need to be on our game to support decision makers. I also think we need to be thought leaders. I am not a huge fan of corporate management-speak, but this one I think is valid, given the change that's coming SECAS should challenge itself to be really proactive in how we deliver.

How do you define success?

That's a hard one! I think for me, I feel most successful when I develop and then implement a plan. I was once described by an old boss as a 'calm problem-solver', and I think that's the best compliment I've had! So calmly solving problems is probably how I'd define it.

You are the happiest when?

I'm at home. I live in Kent with my wife and our 4 children and us all together at home is still as good as it gets for me. I am quite a homely soul.

What's something about you (a fun fact) that few people know?

I am a big Eurovision fan. We go to fairly excessive lengths at home to celebrate, and I always try to dress up in Eurovision colours. Of course, we were gutted when Covid meant that we missed a year in 2020, but we celebrated with a home recorded lock-down cover version of the UK's last win!

