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SECMP0006 ‘Specifying the number of digits for device display’

4th April 2016

Meeting 1 Minutes

Attendees:

Working Group 1 Members	Organisation
Mark Pitchford (SECMP0002 and SECMP0007 Proposer)	Npower
Alan Creighton (SECMP0003 Proposer Representative)	Northern Powergrid
Sam Charlton (SECMP0005 Proposer Representative)	EON
Emslie Law (SECMP0006 Proposer)	SSE
Chris Spence	EDF Energy
Gavin Brown (part)	Chameleon Technology (teleconference)
Louise Porter (part)	Utilita Energy (teleconference)
Tim Boyle	Chameleon Technology

Representing	Other attendees
DECC	Relve Spread
DCC	Stuart Scott
	Adam Pearce (part)
SECAS	Jill Ashby (Chair)
	Kevin Atkin (Technical Support)
	Ian Swanson (Technical Support)
	David Barber (Modifications Lead)
	Sebastian Rattansen (Meeting Secretary)
	Sasha Townsend (Modifications Analyst (part))

Representing	Other attendees
	Keith Phakoe (Modifications Analyst (part))

Apologies:

Working Group 1 Members	Organisation
Graham Smith (SECMP0003 Proposer)	Western Power Distribution
Tim Newton (SECMP0005 Proposer)	EON

1. SECMP0006: Specifying the number of digits for device displays

1.1 Overview

The Proposer's representative presented a brief overview of the Modification Proposal. Based on prior industry discussions, a common standard that specifies the number of meter register digits for smart metering devices to display would be optimal.

SECMP0006 describes inconsistencies in the specifications under the GBCS, the DCC's Message Mapping Catalogue (MMC) and the Zigbee and DLMS conventions. These inconsistencies are sub-optimal as they lead to ambiguity for energy Suppliers (as they will not know how many display digits to expect on a particular device on a Change of Supply / churn event); and are likely to confuse consumers as different Suppliers may be using different configurations. A common standard of a 5 digit display approach for Electricity Smart Metering Equipment (ESME) and an 8 digit display approach for Gas Smart Metering Equipment (GSME) would create a conformance standard and reduce issues for consumer confusion.

1.2 WG consideration of Modification Proposal

The WG discussed the outline requirements for SECMP0006, as set out below in Table 4:

Refinement	WG View
Clarity around the number of meter register digits the WG are asking for	Proposed Solution ESME display 6 whole number digits and GSME displays 5 whole number digits and 3 decimal digits. Alternative Solution: Single and Twin Element ESME displays 5 digits, Polphase ESME displays 6 digits, and GSME displays 5 digits and 3 decimals. See section 5.1.1 for further detail.
Technical Specifications impacted by the Mod	Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specifications (SMETS2) (see section 5.1.1 for further detail)

Refinement	WG View
Devices to display meter register digits	ESME, GSME In-home Display (IHD) (see section 5.1.1 for further detail)
Extent of DCC involvement in Mod implementation	DCC not impacted except for the possibility of a testing role further down the process.
Other SEC Sub-Committee involvement in Mod	Change to SMETS suggests Technical Sub-Committee (TSC) will be involved during the Refinement Process. They can also provide advice on any EC Notification (see section 5.1.1 for further detail), although it is likely that DECC will have a more informed view of this at this stage. SECAS to liaise with DECC for any steer on policy around Notification requirements for this Mod.

Table 4: SECMP0006 outline requirements

1.3 Supporting Discussion Points

A WG Member pointed out that while the number of digits is not defined, 5 digits are used as the typical Industry standard, for non-SMETS meters. A WG member questioned why 6 digits should not be adopted in this Modification, based on the fact that research suggests it takes 8 years for the average 5-digit meter to 'clock over' (i.e. pass 99999), and meters generally have a 15-year life cycle. The various workarounds to cater for this may no longer be an issue if 6 digits were available in the standard.

A Member questioned whether this might give rise to issues in the Settlement processes and the Change of Supplier Process, with consequential changes¹ to accommodate retaining a standard number of register digits. The WG discussed this may not be an issue as a smart meter can hold 10 digits (for ESME) and 15 (for GSME). So, although the standard may be used for the majority of cases, exceptions can be facilitated through the physical capability within the meter.

SECAS, sought to clarify that the electricity meters would be measured in kWh and gas meters would be measured either in cubic meters or litres. It was suggested that with Gas devices the display would read in a format with 3 decimal places, making the device consumption reflective of the metrics. The WG agreed with this approach.

Based on the discussions above it was agreed that two approaches should be taken with the necessary drafting:

- **Proposed Solution:** ESME display 6 digits and GSME displays 5 digits and 3 decimals
- **Alternative Solution:** Single and Twin Element ESME displays 5 digits, Polyphase ESME displays 6 digits, and GSME displays 5 digits and 3 decimals.

Based on the two approaches above drafting should be prepared to reflect these potential changes.

A WG Member suggested that setting a display of this type on devices may have an impact for the IHD screen. For example, to go from 5 to 8 digits displayed would result in a 28% increase on the

¹ This relates to methodologies used today to manage meter register digit rollover in the wholesale arrangements.

LCD screen which may incur further cost of manufacture. Also, a change to the device design would lead to a change in the look of the screen. The WG discussed that this may be justified in the round of costs and benefits and it would be useful to have some estimates for this potential impact.

A WG Member pointed out that from a customer and Supplier perspective the read on the display will not correspond to the read that is accessible to call centre staff through the meter. This could cause problems when dealing with queries around reads and bills. This would be a matter for Suppliers to address through call centre staff training.

SECAS highlighted a potential requirement for EC Notification. This was a matter of display change, which could be an issue for manufacturers whose current displays are not compliant with the new display standard. This might mean that devices for use in GB only have to be configured specifically. If EC Notification is required, this constraint may be subject to challenge. The Chair noted that the challenge, of itself, does not prevent the change from being implemented subject to rationale consideration of any challenge received. It was agreed that the question of EC Notification should be raised with DECC, the final arbiters under the Mod decision making process, would need to consider whether EC Notification is required.

Meter reads were discussed next. As they are not mandated to be displayed on IHDs etc. they have no such requirement, but it was asked if it would be necessary to restrict SMETS2 section 6.4.3 to relate to ESME/GSME only. A member pointed out that regarding the data that could be displayed on IHD displays, the most important reading related to the customer's bill. There are other reads which can be displayed (cumulative usage etc.) but these are of a lower priority and could be a lot smaller on the device display.

1.4 Decisions and next steps

The WG will meet again in a months' time and continue discussions based on progress.

ACTION WG1_01_10: SECAS will draft amendments to the relevant Technical Specification documents.

ACTION WG1_01_11: SECAS to raise this Modification in relation to EC Notification with DECC.