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Testing Advisory Group Terms of Reference v2.32

1. Purpose

The Testing Advisory Group (TAG) has been established by the Panel to support it in fulfilling testing duties associated with transitional releases where requested by the Secretary of State and ongoing testing matters in relation to enduring releases and the Refinement of Modification Proposals.

2. Functions of the TAG

2.1. TAG support to the Panel

The overall objective is to support the Panel in discharging its duties regarding testing. These are primarily defined in the SEC or through the [Programme Assurance Policy](#), and consist broadly of advising the Panel or Secretary of State on readiness of a release or programme. Specific functions of the TAG, in support of the Panel's obligations and role include:

Modification Proposals:

- To support the Panel and/or Modification Working Groups by providing (on request) advice during the Refinement Process on the:
 - appropriate level and phases of testing for individual modifications. Such advice and support will include, but is not limited to:
 - any DCC testing phases (including System Integration Testing or Pre-Integration Testing or similar);
 - User testing and any regression testing; and
 - review any DCC analysis on appropriate and necessary testing of Modification Proposals.

The input provided by the TAG on Modification Proposal testing will be documented in the Modification Proposal documentation and reports, including whether the input was actioned by the Proposer and/or Working Group.

Release Management activities:

- To provide formal decisions on behalf of the Panel regarding:
 - Release, programme, and uplift level testing in DCC testing approach documentation; and
 - Release and programme level test completion.
- To support the Panel in discharging its duties, by providing support and advice to the Panel in relation to:

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- Advising the Panel of any matters of concern pertaining to release or programme testing progress;
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the Panel on testing-related Live Services Criteria (LSC) for DCC system-impacting releases and programmes; and
- Escalating issues and risks to the attention of the Panel where appropriate or where Panel action is required.

Transitional Release Management Activities:

- To support the Panel in discharging any transitional release related duties, that are assigned to the Panel by the Secretary of State. This may include, but is not limited to, providing support, advice and recommendations to the Panel on:
 - transitional release level testing set out in DCC testing approach documentation;
 - the transitional release testing progress updates or reports and advise the Panel of any matters of concern; and
 - the outputs of transitional release testing, to inform any release 'go-live' decisions to be sent out in supporting release documentation prepared in line with the Panel Release Management Policy.

User Testing

The TAG does not possess any decision-making powers related to the User Integration Testing (UIT) Test Phase, except where specified in SEC Appendices (e.g. SEC Appendix AQ) for Mandated User Testing (MUT).

When Testing Issues arise in the UIT Test Phase of enduring releases the TAG shall be consulted to provide a recommendation as to the appropriateness of additional action. This may include assessment of defect Severity if deemed appropriate. The TAG shall, if required, refer Testing Issues arising in UIT to the Operations Group (OPSG) for assessment and further action.

As part of LSC readiness review decisions for enduring releases, the TAG shall provide a recommendation on UIT progress to the OPSG for final decision.

2.2. TAG Decision making powers

There are certain decision-making activities that the Panel have agreed can be undertaken by the TAG. These decision activities are detailed below.

SMETS1 Service Release

In the case of activities associated with confirming what and how Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specification 1 (SMETS1) Service release Testing Issues are treated and resolved, the TAG can make decisions on the following matters:

- Consider and confirm the severity level of SMETS1 Services Interface Testing Issues; and
- Support and advise on what to do with Systems Integration Testing (SIT) environment SMETS1 Services Interface Testing Issues when requested to do so by the DCC.

The Panel will be notified of any such TAG decisions on these matters.

Deviation from Test Phase Approach Documents

Where DCC proposes to deviate materially from a Test Phase Approach Document, it shall consult on its proposal to do so with the TAG. The TAG shall consider whether the decision should be made by



the Panel or is appropriate for the TAG. The DCC shall submit the proposal to the Secretary of State for approval.

The Panel will be notified of any such TAG decisions on these matters.

3. Out of Scope

The role of the TAG does not include activities that do not contribute to the achievement of SEC Panel's duties regarding testing; achievement of the SEC Objectives in relation to testing; or the SEC Transition Objective.

4. Proceedings of the TAG

Meetings

The TAG shall meet with such frequency determined by the Panel, or the TAG Chair at the request of the Panel, in order to meet the functions of the TAG.

Meetings may take the form of:

- scheduled face-to-face meetings (to cover for example, release level testing matters);
- teleconferences/online meetings; or
- circulation of materials for review and comment by correspondence (to obtain, for example input on testing activities for individual Modification Proposals);

as required by the subject matter for consideration.

[Meetings will be recorded and transcribed for the sole purpose of the production of meeting minutes.](#)

Quorum

The quorum for each TAG meeting shall be one half of all Voting Members appointed at the relevant time, at least one of whom must be the TAG Chair or the TAG Chair's nominated alternate.

Meeting Notice & Papers

Each meeting shall be convened by the Secretariat. A minimum of five Working Days' notice shall be provided (or such shorter notice as directed by the Panel or the TAG Chair at the request of the Panel).

Notice of each meeting shall be accompanied by:

- Time, date and location of the meeting;
- Arrangements for those wishing to attend the meeting by means other than in person; and
- Agenda and supporting papers.

TAG Chair

The SEC Panel shall approve the appointment of the TAG Chair from the Secretariat and shall review the appointment as necessary.

Duties and Powers

The SEC Panel, where appropriate, delegates duties, powers and functions to the TAG which require the expert testing knowledge of the TAG. The SEC Panel also seeks advice from the TAG to support



the Panel to fulfil the duties regarding testing prescribed in the SEC, signalled in future iterations of the SEC or matters relating to release, or Modification Proposal testing.

Where required to provide support to the Panel for the purpose of Panel decision making (such as approval of Testing Approaches, resolution of disputes or approval of changes) the TAG shall provide recommendations to the Panel, where appropriate.

The Panel shall review duties, powers, functions and performance of the TAG on at least an annual basis through reviews of these Terms of Reference.

Duration

The requirement for the TAG to continue will be reviewed from time to time by the SEC Panel, giving regard to the Panel's ability to discharge its responsibilities.

Membership

The Secretariat will notify SEC Parties of available seats on the TAG at least on an annual basis. When this occurs, or at the conclusion of a TAG member's term of office, the Panel shall invite applications from individuals to serve on the TAG in accordance with SEC Section C6.7. Those individuals shall be of suitable experience and qualifications required to fulfil the duties of the TAG. The Panel shall direct the Secretariat to arrange and administer an election for the categories of Membership set out in Section 6.

The Panel shall admit or remove any person from the TAG as it considers appropriate. The Panel will assess applications from individuals and will determine membership, having regard to sufficiency of expertise and representation of DCC User Roles.

Members shall act independently, not as a delegate, and without undue regard to the interests, of any Related Person and will act in a manner designed to facilitate the performance by the Panel of its duties under the SEC.

Members should propose another natural person to act as their Alternate. The Chair must approve such appointment. The alternate, once approved, may attend the TAG and must act in the capacity as Alternate to discharge the member's duties.

Term of Office

The term of office for each member is 24 months.

Other Interested Parties

Other interested parties may be invited to attend the TAG on an ad-hoc basis at the discretion of the TAG Chair. Their views will be represented in final recommendations to the Panel.

Member Confirmation

Candidates will be required to provide written confirmation to SECCo that:

- They agree to serve on the TAG in accordance with the Panel duties and SEC Obligations; and
- They will be available as reasonably required by the Sub-Committee to attend meetings and undertake work outside of the meetings.

Conflict of Interest

Given that members have a duty to act independently, conflicts of interest should not regularly arise. Members shall have a duty to identify whether the discussion on a recommendation to the Panel

presents a conflict of interest. In such cases the member shall declare the conflict of interest and abstain themselves from the meeting for the purposes of that discussion.

5. Deliverables

The TAG will be expected to provide recommendations to the SEC Panel regarding the functions listed in section 2. Detailed deliverables will be identified by the TAG and approved by the SEC Panel. The Secretariat will support the TAG in developing these deliverables.

6. Membership of the TAG

The table below sets out the composition of the TAG. Each seat listed in the table below with the exception of Other Interested Parties constitutes a voting member of the TAG. Members must have sufficient experience, qualification and expertise. The membership will also consider attendance and contribution to the effectiveness of DCC's Testing Design and Execution Group (TDEG) such that the TAG can benefit from consistency and knowledge transfer from its associated groups.

Member group	Numbers
Large Suppliers	One from each Large Supplier group, with alternate
Small Supplier Members	Up to three, who may act on a rota basis
Network Operators	Up to three, representing electricity and gas network parties
Consumer Member	One
Other SEC Parties	Up to three, who may participate on a rota basis
Other Interested Parties	At the discretion of the Panel or TAG Chair

7. Secretariat

SECAS will provide the technical secretariat and code administration for the TAG. The role of the technical secretariat is to:

- Prepare and maintain the TAG Members Pack including code of conduct;
- Prepare a timetable and organise the TAG meetings, including meeting rooms;
- Circulate agendas and papers for consideration at a TAG meeting 5 Working Days in advance of that meeting date;
- Prepare and circulate the Minutes within 5 Working Days following each meeting;
- Administer the circulation list for TAG papers and Minutes;
- Manage the TAG recommendations record;
- Keep up-to-date the TAG page on the SEC website;
- Maintain the TAG Risks Register and TAG Issues Log; and
- Support the operation of the TAG.

8. Confidentiality and Disclosure

Given the potentially sensitive nature of work of the TAG, agenda items, papers and discussions will be assigned an information sharing level, in line with the [Panel Information Policy](#).

Information sharing levels will be suggested by participants when providing information, and determined by the Chair.

As a TAG Member, each participant will be asked to undertake in writing to abide by the confidentiality and disclosure provisions in relation to each information sharing level as described above, by signing the Confidentiality and Disclosure Agreement in Appendix A to these Terms of Reference.

Individuals who the TAG Chair has invited to attend a meeting of the TAG will also be asked to sign the Confidentiality and Disclosure Agreement but will only be permitted to attend the TAG during discussions on agenda items relevant to their organisation.

TAG Members who breach the rules of the confidentiality and disclosure provisions under any information sharing level ~~shall may~~ have their TAG membership ceased.

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9. Review

The Terms of Reference, membership and operation of the TAG will be reviewed at least on an annual basis. They may also be reviewed at any time as required. Amendments to these Terms of Reference will be approved solely by the SEC Panel.

APPENDIX A

Confidentiality and Disclosure Agreement

I, the undersigned, have read and understood the Testing Advisory Group Terms of Reference. I understand that I am required to comply with the confidentiality and disclosure obligations in respect of each of the information sharing levels (CLEAR, GREEN, AMBER, AMBER-STRICT and RED), as set out in the Terms of Reference. I understand that I must declare any conflict of interest to the TAG Chair whether it exists now or during my continued membership of the group, as soon as I become aware that such a conflict exists. I understand that should I fail to abide by the information sharing levels confidentiality and disclosure obligations or conflict arrangements (as set out in the Testing Advisory Group Terms of Reference) I may be excluded from the Testing Advisory Group. Having understood and accepted the above statements, I therefore agree to abide by the Terms of Reference in my engagement with this group.
Name:
SEC Party Category:
Primary/Alternative Participant:
Signature:
Date:
Terms of Reference Dated: