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SECMP0063 ‘Ensuring correct Network Operator Certificates are placed on Electricity Smart Meters’

Working Group meeting summary – 5 June 2019

Network Operator Certificate Investigations

The Working Group began by discussing the ongoing investigations on the numbers of Electricity Network Certificates being incorrectly loaded onto meters during the post-commissioning process. SECAS advised that the results of these investigation were expected to come back in a months' time. The Proposer recommended that the results of the investigations needed to highlight the impacts as well as the costs of fixing the issue.

What is the scale and cause of the issue?

It was noted where these scenarios arise, the Electricity Network whose Certificate should have been loaded onto the meter could not simply exchange and correct it themselves and that only the organisation whose Certificate had been incorrectly loaded onto the meter could rectify the issue. A Working Group member advised that not all Electricity Networks could currently utilise the workaround in question and that it would require system changes for some of them to use.

It was noted that the underlying root cause of the issue stemmed from Supplier Parties, though it was acknowledged that Suppliers are not loading incorrect Network Certificates intentionally, it was unknown why they were getting wrong, with Suppliers using automated processes inconsistently following the process through correctly. It was noted that the cause of the issue could be categorised into issues with the data Suppliers are receiving relating to Network Certificates and the functionality of Supplier systems whose automated processes are potentially contributing to the issue.

The Working Group were unable to further assess the scale of the issue or comment on the Proposer's initial estimate that the issue was affecting over 10% of Electricity Smart Metering Equipment (ESME) although the Working Group acknowledged that it is a problem and likely to increase as roll out continues. One of the factors contributing to this was the difficulty in evaluating which ESMEs were those operating in a fully functional Smart Metering System and which weren't, with a Working Group member advising that Alerts such as the N16 'Device Identity Confirmation' and N42 'Security Credentials updated on the device' were unreliable and were not always coming through when they were supposed to. The impacts on Gas Transporters are currently unknown and hard to assess as they are not required to be Data Communications Company (DCC) Users, though it was assumed they would be impacted equally to Electricity Networks.

Business requirements

The Working Group agreed that the modification should progress and assessed the draft business requirements. A member of the Working Group queried if the proposed solution would impact the

installation process and was advised that it shouldn't, with most Suppliers using automated processes to load Certificates which are usually carried out overnight.

The Proposer advised that the requirements should specify that they are specific to ESMEs instead of 'meters' to remove any ambiguity for the DCC. The Working Group also asked that the requirements specifically state that the proposed solution shall also prevent Gas Transporter Certificates from being loaded onto ESMEs.

The Working Group were asked to clarify what they wanted in terms of reporting and agreed that the reporting shall show the numbers of incidences where Suppliers had attempted to load incorrect Network Certificates onto meters as well as giving a view of the numbers of incorrect Network Certificates by each Supplier in question. This reporting would be generated by the DCC and be distributed to the SEC Panel who would consider the results and take action on a Supplier case by case basis where they deemed necessary.

Actions and next steps

The Working Group and the Proposer agreed for the following actions to be taken:

- SECAS to amend the business requirements for the proposed solution, clarifying the requirements are applicable to ESME; and
- The reporting requirement will ask for a view on the number of incidences where incorrect Network Operator Certificates are being attempted to load onto ESMEs as well as view of each Supplier in question.
- Once the business requirements have been considered, SECAS will request the DCC to carry out a Preliminary Assessment.