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SECMP0053

‘Amend Target Response Times for Service Requests Critical to Installation and Commissioning Processes’

Modification Report

Version 0.1

About this document

This document is the Modification Report for [SECMP0053 'Amend Target Response Times for Service Requests Critical to Installation and Commissioning Processes'](#). It provides detailed information on the background, issue, solution, costs, impacts and implementation approach. It also summarises the discussions that have been held and the conclusions reached with respect to this Modification Proposal.

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This document also has four annexes:

- **Annex A** contains the business requirements for the proposed solution.
- **Annex B** contains the redlined changes to the SEC required to deliver the proposed solution.
- **Annex C** contains the redlined changes to the SEC required to deliver the alternative solution.
- **Annex D** contains the full DCC Preliminary Assessment response.

1. Summary

Target Response Times are the target duration for the round-trip journeys for Service Requests and are set to either 30 seconds or 24 hours, depending on how time-critical they are. Through development of installation and commissioning processes it has been identified that some of the Target Response Times set out in Smart Energy Code (SEC) Appendix E are not appropriate.

The proposed solution is to amend the Target Response Times set out in Appendix E to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The priority would be reducing the Target Response Times for time critical Service Requests to 30 seconds; however, this might also involve amending some Target Response Times to 24 hours where 30 seconds is not required. This will help to mitigate the impacts of these changes on the data and Communications Company (DCC) Systems.

This modification impacts all Supplier Parties and the DCC. The DCC Systems and Party Interfacing Systems are impacted by this modification. The cost of this modification is £235,000, up to Pre-Integration Testing (PIT) as described in the Preliminary Assessment found in Annex D. The proposed implementation date is the November 2019 Release, subject to the six month lead time being returned in the SECMP0053 Impact Assessment.

2. Background

Context

During the design of the Smart Metering Implementation Program, the Government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) led a series of working groups to develop a view of business processes which, amongst other things, ultimately influenced the DCC's Service Provider contracts. Part of this was to set Target Response Times, setting the duration of round-trip journeys for Service Requests (time taken for the request to be sent and the response received). These have been typically set to either 30 seconds or 24 hours, depending on how time-critical they are. These Target Response Times are used to gauge the maximum response time a certain Service request can take, rather than indicating a specific Service Request will always take exactly 30 seconds or 24 hours to return.

The original driver for setting Target Response Times for certain Service Requests to be 30 seconds was that the Service Request in question would need to be processed either as part of the installation and commissioning of a smart meter or to provide instantaneous information or services to a customer.

Through development of installation and commissioning processes it has been identified that some of the Target Response Times set out in SEC Appendix E are not appropriate.

What is the issue?

The Proposer has further developed their installation and commissioning processes, and through this has identified that some of the Target Response Times set out in SEC Appendix E are not appropriate.

Specific examples of this are the Service Requests to configure Auxiliary Load Control:

- Service Request 6.14.1 (Update Device Configuration (Auxiliary Load Control Description)); and
- Service Request 6.14.2 (Update Device Configuration (Auxiliary Load Control Scheduler)).

In many cases these may be required at installation and commissioning to control heating and/or hot water. However, these Service Requests have Target Response Times set to 24 hours, meaning that installers will leave the site without knowing that this critical functionality is configured correctly.

There may be others such Service Requests, depending on how different Users have designed their installation and commissioning processes (for example Service Request 7.9 (Add Auxiliary Load To Boost Button)).

The Proposer believes that it is critical that the meter is configured in a way that delivers appropriate information and services to the customer. They believe it is not appropriate to install and commission a smart meter without being able to configure critical functionality during that installation visit. Installers should not be leaving site without knowing that the customer's meter is able to provide the services that they require.

Until and unless these changes are made, the Proposer believes that it might not be possible to install smart meters at specific premises given the risk that they may not be able to be configured correctly.

An additional issue this modification looks to address is that with some current Target Response Times not being suitable this impacts the reporting on performance of the DCC Systems. By

amending the identified Target Response Times, this will better align the SEC to the performances which are being achieved through DCC Systems.

SECMP0053 was raised by EDF on 26 April 2018 to resolve this issue.

3. Solution

Proposed Solution

This modification proposes to review and amend the Target Response Times set out in SEC Appendix E 'DCC User Interface Services Schedule' to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The priority would be reducing the Target Response Times for time critical Service Requests to 30 seconds; however, this might also involve amending some Target Response Times to 24 hours where 30 seconds is not required. This would help to mitigate the impacts of these changes on the DCC Systems and allow for more accurate reporting on the part of the measuring the performance of the DCC Systems.

The Proposer identified three Service Requests that they consider to be time-critical and welcomed views from the Working Group and wider industry as other Suppliers may have differing views of time-critical Service Requests as there is no standard installation and commissioning process. The Proposer wished to make clear that this solution was designed to better reflect the reality of the time Service Requests take for reporting purposes, rather than desiring functional changes to improve the performance of Service Request response times.

The modification will develop revised Target Response Time, as set out in SEC Appendix E 'DCC User Interface Service Schedule' to reflect the amendments that are proposed to the relevant Target Response Times identified by the Proposer and the Working Group.

Alternative Solution

This modification has an Alternative Solution raised in the Monthly Working Group on 5 June 2019 when discussing the Target Response Time that Service Request that SR 4.8.1 (Read Active Import Data) should be codified as in the SEC. The Proposed Solution's legal text sets out that this should be moved to 5600 seconds, but the Alternative Solution set out an alternative for it to be recorded as 24 hours on the grounds that other Target Response Times in the SEC are set as either 30 seconds or 24 hours. Refinement Consultation respondents will be asked for their opinion on which of the two solutions they would prefer to see implemented.

Legal text

The changes to the SEC required to deliver the proposed solution can be found in Annex B and the changes to the SEC required to deliver the alternative solution can be found in Annex C.

4. 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

Supplier Parties will be impacted by having to consider how any of the amended Target Response Times will impact their business procedures and processes.

It would be beneficial for Supplier Parties to contribute the details of Service Requests they consider to be time critical to the installation and commissioning process and/or to the provision of instantaneous information or services to a customer.

The DCC will be impacted by having to amend their Target Response Times for other industry participants to follow.

DCC System

The Communications Service Providers' (CSP) contracts include Schedule 2.2 'Performance Measures and Monitoring'. Appendix 1, Part C defines Service Request Target Response Times. Therefore, amending the Target Response Times will impact the DCC's CSP contracts.

Party Interfacing Systems may be impacted by this modification. Although this modification will not look to change the structure of any Service Requests, business processes may be changed to accommodate the changes to Service Responses

The full impacts on DCC Systems and DCC's proposed testing approach can be found in the DCC Preliminary Assessment response in Annex D.

SEC and subsidiary documents

The following parts of the SEC will be impacted:

- SEC Appendix E 'DCC User Interface Schedules Specification'

Other industry Codes

There are no changes to other industry codes.

Greenhouse gas emissions

There are no impacts on Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

5. Costs

DCC costs

The estimated DCC implementation costs to implement this modification is £235,000. The breakdown of these costs are as follows:

Breakdown of DCC implementation costs	
Activity	Cost
Design	£235,000
Build	
Pre-Integration Testing	
Systems Integration Testing (SIT), User Integration Testing (UIT) and Implementation to Live	Not provided

More information can be found in the DCC Preliminary Assessment response in Annex D.

The cost of the Impact Assessment as mentioned in the Preliminary Assessment will cost £14,295.

SECAS costs

The estimated Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) implementation costs to implement this modification is two days of effort, amounting to approximately £1,200. The activities needed to be undertaken for this are:

- Updating the SEC and releasing the new version to the industry.

SEC Party costs

These will be reviewed as part of the modification's refinement when a Working Group Consultation is issued.

6. Implementation approach

Recommended implementation approach

The Working Group is recommending an implementation date of:

- **25 June 2020** (June 2020 SEC Release) if a decision to approve is received on or before 13 December 2019;

Originally the planned implementation date was November 2019, in order to provide the most economically affordable and to allow functionally impacting changes to take place with the fewest number of Releases possible. Due to delays in having the Preliminary Assessment returned and the estimated six month lead time cited in the assessment, the date has been moved from the November 2019 Release to 25 June 2020, the June 2020 Release date.

7. Discussions and development

Development of the Original Solution

The originally proposed solution was designed so that a variety of identified Auxiliary Load related Service Requests could have their Target Response Times revised from 24 hours to 30 seconds so that they could better reflect the time critical nature of the requests. The original three suggested were:

- SR 6.14.1 (Update Device Configuration (Auxiliary Load Control Description))
- SR 6.14.2 (Update Device Configuration (Auxiliary Load Control Scheduler))
- SR 7.9 (Add Auxiliary Load to Boost Button)

DCC asked to include SR 4.8.1 (Read Active Import Data) in the revised Target Response Times so that it could be moved from 30 seconds to a later time. This led to discussions being opened to see if the response times could include a third time of 4 hours in addition to the 30 second and 24 hour target times. The scope of the modification was agreed early on to only consider these Service Requests so that it would prevent multiple requests being added to the modification later after the Preliminary Assessment had already been carried out.

A 4 hour Target Response Time was suggested as a possible option to include as part of the solution because it would provide a good middle ground for responses which would take long than 30 seconds to process and return without potentially taking up to a day. Real world examples of where this could be used included where Service Requests were sent at the start of the morning and returned by the end of the business day and vice versa. It was also suggested that if this element wasn't included in the modification's solution, it would likely be raised in a future modification on the condition there were multiple SEC Parties who would benefit from another Target Response Time if it were created. The 4 hour Target Response Time was replaced by a 5,600 second time instead during the agreement of the business requirements with the DCC, suggesting this would be a more accurate time this could be returned in and that the modification's solution should be more focused on the reporting of these time targets rather than incorporating performance related changes.

Discussion of Business Requirement 2 in the Proposed Solution

During the refinement period of the modification, it was initially agreed by the Working Group that two Business Requirements (see Annex A) would form the solution that they wished DCC to deliver, after being asked to review and confirm the Working Group were happy with this request. Requirement 1 being to amend the Target Response Times from 24 hours to 30 seconds for the three Service Requests listed above and Requirement 2 which asked DCC to extend the time from Service Request (Read Active Import Data) 4.8.1 from 30 seconds to 5,600 seconds. Requirement 2 was added to the original scope of the modification by DCC when it was suggested as part of a Working Group meeting that if Target Response Times would be shorted for some Service Requests, others would potentially need to be lengthened to maintain a balance for their targets. This set of requirements was finalised after DCC had been sent over the original Business Requirements document and asking SECAS to amend Requirement 2 to 5,600 second from 4 hours and was accepted for delivering the Preliminary Assessment on 2 January 2019.

The table below includes the developments which happened between the acceptance of the modification's Preliminary Assessment request on 2 January 2019 and its return date on 2 May 2019:

SECMP0053 Preliminary Assessment History	
Date	Event
11 Jan 19	DCC asked for a revision to Requirement 2 so that a paragraph could be removed which SECAS agreed to.
15 Jan 19	DCC stated they would not be able to fulfil the request to deliver the Preliminary Assessment for the modification in 15 Working Days, and requested an extension to increase it to 35 Working Days.
15 Jan 19	The Working Group were informed of DCC's request to extend the return time for the Assessment and voted whether or not to grant the extension.
18 Jan 19	The Working Group's vote concluded to reject the extension.
21 Jan 19	DCC appeal to Panel to have extension granted was rejected.
24 Jan 19	DCC requested to split the two Requirements into two separate modifications so that one could be a candidate for Nov 19 and the other for June 2020.
29 Jan 19	The Proposer approved the request to split the Requirements and SECAS contacted DCC to notify them.
8 Feb 19	DCC contacted SECAS to notify that after further investigations they would no longer be able to split the Requirements as originally suggested due to both Requirements needing to be delivered together.
2 May 19	DCC returned Preliminary Assessment for both Requirements to SECAS.

As part of their assessment, DCC stated that "Requirement 2 may be difficult or even impossible to achieve, and as such, we would expect a review of this requirement" and that further discussions with DCC experts, the Working Group and the Proposer would be needed to progress the modification. At the Working Group meeting held on 5 June 2019 Requirement 2 was discussed at length including whether the Preliminary Assessment's suggestion for Service Request 4.8.1 would be better as a 24 hour Target Response Time rather than 5600 seconds, leading to the creation of legal text for a Proposed and an Alternative Solution which we are requesting consultation respondents indicate their preference for.

8. Conclusions

Benefits and drawbacks

The Proposer and the Working Group have identified the following benefits and drawbacks in implementing this modification:

Benefits

- This modification's solution will help to ensure that Service Requests with a time critical nature are answered in a faster time by registering them to 30 seconds for a Target Response Time, rather than 24 hours. This will be beneficial for onsite testing of smart metering equipment to assure it's fully operational.
- Without amendments to the Target Response Times, it increases the chance of consumer's smart metering equipment not returning potentially critical Service Requests in a reasonable time. This would work against General SEC Objective (a) which details the efficient operation of smart metering systems at a consumers' premises within Great Britain.

Drawbacks

- The Working Group have not yet identified any drawbacks with this modification thus far.

Proposer's rationale against the General SEC Objectives

Objective (a)¹

The Proposer believes that SECMP0053 will better facilitate SEC Objective (a) by better enabling smart meters to be installed and configured correctly and to enable smart meters to be installed in premises where this currently may not be possible.

Working Group members' views

Members of the Working Group believed this modification provides a mutual benefit between Suppliers and DCC by exchanging Service Requests with longer expected response times concerning onsite testing for extending the expected response time of a Service Request which with a response time of 30 seconds that struggles to meet that original performance required in the SEC. DCC expressed their approval that the reality of performance through their systems should be recognised as the basis for reporting.

A Working Group member also believe that the modification also fulfils SEC Objective (b)² through codifying a more accurate reflection of the SEC that allows the DCC to meet the obligations that they have to comply with in their reporting.

¹ (a) Facilitate the efficient provision, installation, operation and interoperability of smart metering systems at energy consumers' premises within Great Britain.

² (b) Enable the DCC to comply at all times with the objectives of the DCC and to discharge the other obligations imposed upon it by the DCC License.

Sub-Committee views

Relevant Sub-Committees will be consulted on their opinions as part of the Refinement period.

Appendix 1: Glossary

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

Glossary	
Acronym	Full term
BEIS	Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
CSP	Communications Service Provider
DCC	Data and Communications Company
DSP	Data Service Provider
PIT	Pre-Integration Testing
SEC	Smart Energy Code
SECAS	Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat
SIT	Systems Integrations Testing
UIT	User Integration Testing



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