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|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Paper Reference: | SECP_70_1207_11 |
| Action: | For Decision |

Updated SEC Release Management Policy

1. Purpose

This paper presents an updated version of the SEC Release Management Policy. The Panel are asked to provide any comments and agree to issue the policy for consultation, before a final version of the policy is presented to the Panel in September 2019 for approval.

2. SEC Release Management Policy update

In February 2018, the Panel approved version 2.0 of the SEC Release Management Policy. The policy sets out the intent of how SEC Releases should work, but at that time no SEC Releases had taken place and the DCC's thoughts of how they would deliver SEC Releases were still in their infancy.

In February 2019, [SECMP0061 'Enduring SEC Release Provisions'](#) was implemented. This Modification Proposal clarified the obligations regarding the delivery of SEC Releases and better set out the SEC Panel's powers.

With the implementation of SECMP0061, and the continued development of how SEC Releases are undertaken, we have reviewed the SEC Release Management Policy to ensure it reflects the provisions within the SEC and aligns with the agreed framework for progressing releases. As a result, version 2.1 of the policy has been drafted, and this can be found in Appendix A.

We have taken the opportunity to re-draft the document in a more user-friendly format, clearly setting out how SEC Releases are delivered under the framework in a more logical format. Therefore, even though there are only minimal changes to the obligations and responsibilities set out within the policy, the redline changes are extensive as sections have been redrafted and moved around the policy. As such we have attached a 'clean' version of the policy rather than a 'redlined' version to make it easier for review.

3. Release Management Document

When version 2.0 of the SEC Release Management Policy was drafted we also created a "Release Management Document". The intent was to provide a single place where Parties could see a high-level overview of both the SEC Release Management Policy and the DCC Release Management Policy.

However, since that time we have received feedback saying that the Release Management Document causes confusion and just repeats information contained in the individual policies. Upon reflection we believe that a guidance document would be of greater value to Parties than the Release Management Document since each Release Management Policy should be sufficiently drafted to be read and understood in isolation without the additional complexity of another document. As such we intend to remove the Release Management Document and replace it with Release guidance to be published alongside all other SEC guidance.

4. Next steps

The Panel are requested to review the updated policy and provide us with any comments. Following resolution of any comments received we will issue the updated policy for industry consultation.

Due to the short paper days between Panel meetings we would need to issue a 10 Working Day consultation in order to bring an updated policy back to the Panel in August. However, we believe Parties would appreciate longer to review the documents. We therefore recommend an updated policy is instead presented to the Panel in September after a longer consultation period.

5. Recommendations

The Panel are requested to:

- **PROVIDE** any comments on the updated SEC Release Management Policy;
- **AGREE** to issue the updated SEC Release Management Policy for consultation; and
- **AGREE** the policy and any comments received will be presented at the September 2019 SEC Panel meeting.

David Kemp

SECAS Team

5 July 2019

Attachments:

- **Appendix A:** SEC Release Management Policy v2.1

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SEC Release Management Policy

Version 2.1

Managed by



About this document

This document is the Smart Energy Code (SEC) Release Management Policy, established in accordance with SEC Section D10.7.

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1. Purpose

The following matters are subject to the Smart Energy Code (SEC) Release Management Policy:

- The frequency of Releases;
- The allocation of Modification Proposals into a Release by the setting and prioritisation of implementation timetables and implementation dates;
- The creation and oversight of Releases;
- The communications plan for Releases; and
- The implementation of all approved Modification Proposals.

Secretary of State Directions

Amendments to the SEC will be made via approved Modification Proposals. However, the SEC does allow for amendments via Secretary of State directions in accordance with the Energy Act 2008.

Directions from the Secretary of State will typically be achieved through a signed direction letter, or Statutory Instrument, that will specify an effective date for any amendments. Such changes will be delivered either as part of a SEC Release or an ad hoc release as set out below.

2. Roles and responsibilities

SEC Panel

The Panel are responsible for setting the implementation date/approach of a Modification Proposal and setting the scope of a Release. They are also responsible for setting the Go-Live criteria and ensuring that criteria have been met before making a Go-Live decision. The Panel will use input from its Sub-Committees to help make its decisions. During the implementation of a Release, the Panel will act as a project board, ensuring due process is being followed.

If they believe it necessary, the Panel may appoint an independent auditor to monitor the Data Communications Company's (DCC's) implementation process, plans and progress in support of a Release.

The Operations Group

When required, the Operations Group will provide a view on the impact a modification will have on the operational environment and the timing/duration of any required outages. These views will help shape any decisions the Panel need to make regarding implementation approach.

In addition, the Operations Group will help review the Panel's Go-Live acceptance criteria and will assist the Panel with the Release go-live decision.

The TABASC

During the progression of a modification, the Technical Architecture Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) will be asked to provide feedback on the implementation date and approach of a Modification Proposal, so the Panel may take their views into consideration when setting their approach. The intent is to ensure changes impact similar areas of architecture to minimise the impact on Parties.

Testing Advisory Group

When required, the Testing Advisory Group (TAG) will be utilised to review and comment on modification Testing at an individual Modification Proposal level. The TAG will also be utilised to review and comment on the approach for release level testing, testing progress and testing outcomes, to aid the Panel in any decisions that are required. A timetable of when TAG input is expected, will be included as part of the wider implementation approach timescales in the SEC Release Implementation Document (RID).

SEC Party Obligations

SEC Section D10.4 requires each Party to co-operate with the Panel to ensure that approved Modification Proposals are implemented by the respective implementation date. Therefore, the RID will indicate where support from Parties or specific Party Categories are required, to aid the successful implementation of a Release, particularly in relation to the testing approach.

The DCC

The DCC are responsible for delivering the systems elements of Release in line with its obligations as set out in the SEC. Prior to a Release, the DCC are responsible for producing the Testing Approach Document and for providing a breakdown of estimated release costs. During the implementation of a Release, they are responsible for providing the required reports to the Panel and for providing evidence the Go-Live criteria have been met. Following the release, the DCC will present a report setting out any lessons learnt and the final release costs.

SECAS

Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) will act as project managers and administrators for a release, ensuring that the agreed steps as set out in the Release approach are followed, and will provide the necessary support to the Panel.

3. Frequency of Releases

Scheduled Releases

There will be three scheduled releases of SEC content per year. Two of these scheduled releases will be referred to as 'SEC System Releases' and may consist of modifications that impact both DCC Systems and SEC documentation.

The remaining scheduled release will be referred to as a 'SEC Documentation Release' and may consist of modifications that only impact SEC documentation and will not impact the DCC Systems. Whilst such releases may have a User impact, if there is no impact on the DCC Systems it is still referred to as a 'SEC Documentation Release'.

It is possible that a SEC System Release may be replaced with a SEC Documentation Release if there are no DCC systems impacting Modifications scheduled for that Release. However, this will be communicated well in advance.

The scheduled release cycle will be:

| SEC Release cycle | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Release | Timing | Type |
| February | Last Thursday in February | SEC Documentation Release |
| June | Last Thursday in June | SEC System Release |
| November | First Thursday in November | SEC System Release |

Ad Hoc Releases

Where it is not appropriate or efficient to implement a modification in a scheduled Release, an additional ad hoc Release of new SEC content may occur. An ad hoc Release may implement modifications that could be included in either a SEC Documentation Release or a SEC Systems Release. The process for developing and delivering an ad hoc Release is the same as that of a scheduled Release.

Impacts on Technical Specifications

Whilst there are two SEC Systems Releases per year, the Panel note the impact that changes to the DCC User Interface Specification (DUIS), the GB Companion Specification (GBCS) and the Technical Specifications can have on SEC Parties. Therefore, the Panel will endeavour to limit such changes to one of the SEC Systems Releases per year, noting that such decisions will take into consideration the efficiency, urgency and cost of each proposal.

Naming convention

Scheduled and ad hoc Releases to the SEC and supporting documentation will be referred to as Releases. Each Release will be titled after the month and year in which the Release contents will go-live, e.g. 'June 2019 SEC Release'.

Change freeze

Circumstances may arise where the Panel may consider introducing a period where no Modification Proposals can be implemented. This will be known as a 'change freeze'. Before introducing a change freeze, the Panel will first consult with Parties, clearly setting out the rationale for the change freeze and details of the intended period. The Panel will consider the consultation responses when reaching a decision on whether to introduce a change freeze, and will clearly communicate their decision to Parties as soon as reasonably practical.

4. Setting implementation dates

Setting dates

The implementation date for a Modification Proposal will be set by the Panel when the Modification Report for that proposal is presented to the Panel. If approved, that is the date a Modification Proposal will be implemented.

In setting the implementation date, the Panel will be able to account for the priority of implementing a Modification Proposal, relative to other targeted or approved Modification Proposals in a release.

In setting the implementation date the Panel will take into consideration:

- Views of the Proposer, Working Groups, Parties, the DCC and Panel Sub-Committees;
- The requested lead time from Parties and the DCC;
- The complexity and urgency of the Modification Proposal;
- The size and scope of existing Releases; and
- Any potential efficiencies in delivering a Modification Proposal in a specific Release.

Implementation date format

When setting an implementation date, the Panel will ensure that the Modification Report contains a 'decision by date' and, where appropriate, a 'fall back date'.

As such, implementation dates will be constructed in the following format:

- DD Month YYYY (Month YYYY SEC Release) if a decision to approve is received on or before DD Month YYYY or
- DD Month YYYY (Month YYYY SEC Release) if a decision to approve is received after DD Month YYYY, but on or before DD Month YYYY.

Where appropriate implementation dates may also be expressed as being a set number of days after a decision has occurred. In such circumstances the implementation date will be constructed as follows:

- DD Month YYYY (XX Working Days following decision)

Amending Approved Implementation Dates

Where necessary, the Panel may request the Authority revise implementation dates for approved Modification Proposals. This may be in response to a change in priorities or other identified issues.

In this circumstance the Panel shall write to the Authority explaining the rationale for amending the implementation date for the Modification Proposal. Where the Panel believe it appropriate to do so, a consultation may be issued to Parties before requesting the amended date, to seek views on the most appropriate implementation approach.

If the Authority agree to the new implementation date, it will automatically supersede the original date. The Panel will inform Parties of the Authority's decision as soon as reasonably practical.

5. Setting the release scope

The SEC Release Implementation Document

Once a Modification Proposal has been approved for inclusion as part of a Release (based upon the implementation date set in the Modification Report) a SEC Release Implementation Document (RID) will be drafted.

Each Release will have its own RID which will be updated as subsequent Modification Proposals are approved, until it is finalised as set out in section 5.3 of this document. The Panel will have oversight of each RID and shall approve the RID and any subsequent amendments.

The RID will set out the implementation plan and implementation timetable for the Modification Proposal. It will also set out the impacts, costs and progress of a Release.

Each RID will be published on the SECAS website and made available to Parties. Any Party that wishes to comment on the RID may do so by notifying the SECAS helpdesk. The Panel will consider the comment or query and act accordingly.

Contents of the Release Implementation Document

The RID will contain details of:

- Each Modification Proposal that has been targeted or approved for inclusion as part of the Release;
- The impacts that each Modification Proposal will have on each Party Category and on the DCC Systems;
- The SEC documentation (including SEC Sections, Schedules and Appendices, other subsidiary documents and SECAS Guidance documents) that will need to be amended as part of the implementation of the Release;
- The central cost of implementation (i.e. the cost for both SECAS and the DCC to implement the Release) broken down by each individual Modification Proposal where applicable;
- The timescales, activities and risks associated with implementing the content of the Release, including timescales for the commencement and completion of DCC and User testing phases;
- The DCC testing approach (as proposed by the DCC) that sets out the testing activities that will be undertaken to deliver each approved Modification Proposal within the Release;
- The required level of User testing and details of how the DCC shall support Users with testing; and
- The Release acceptance criteria that shall be agreed by the Panel that will need to be met before the release can go live.

Setting the Release scope

To allow for certainty over the scope of a Release, and to provide sufficient time for Users to prepare for the implementation date, the scope of a release will be set well in advance.

The scope of the systems element of a release i.e. those Modification Proposals that impact the DCC and/or User systems, will be set 12 months prior to the implementation date of a release. For Modification Proposals that impact SEC documentation only, and not the DCC systems, the scope of the release will be set at six months prior to the release implementation date.

For example, any DCC or User system impacting modifications in the June 2020 Release would be confirmed as part of the release scope by June 2019 (12 months prior). Any documentation only modifications in the June 2020 Release would be confirmed as part of the release scope by January 2020 (six months prior).

There may be occasions where it would be more efficient, or necessary, to deliver a modification as part of a Release after the Release scope has been set. In this situation, the Panel may choose to add a Modification Proposal into a Release regardless of when the scope has been set. The Panel will provide any rationale for including a Modification Proposal after the Release scope has been set in the Modification Report, and communicate their approach to all Parties.

Baselining the Release Implementation Document

The RID will be an evolving document and will be updated as and when modifications are approved for the relevant Release. The Panel will be presented with the initial RID and will approve any amendments to that document as it evolves.

When the scope of a release is set, the RID will be presented to the Panel to be baselined. This version of the RID will include all the information as set out in section 5.2 of this document.

The RID will be baselined at v1.0 once approved by the Panel. Any further amendments to the RID due to modifications being added or removed from the baselined scope will result in an increase in integer version (i.e. v1.0, v2.0, v3.0).

6. Setting the testing approach

SEC Release Testing Approach Document

In order to deliver the required sections of the RID that relate to:

- the DCC testing approach and setting out the testing activities that will be undertaken to deliver the Release; and
- defining User testing and details of how the DCC shall support Users with testing,

the DCC shall create a Release Testing Approach Document (TAD) for each SEC Systems Release. The TAD will form an attachment to the RID, but is considered to be part of the RID.

The TAD should be issued to the TAG for review at least nine months preceding the Go-Live date of a Release. The TAD should be finalised and published for all Parties at least six months prior to the Go-Live date of a release. These dates are a minimum requirement and should not be seen as the standard approach.

User Testing

Users will be kept informed as to what type of testing will be required and when it will take place, in line with the approach set out in the RID. This information will be communicated to Users via email and through the SEC Website. In addition, any supplementary testing information will be made available on the respective release page on the SEC Website.

7. Release cost

Costs included in the RID

Each Modification Report shall include the DCC costs required to deliver that modification as a standalone Release.

These costs will be broken down as:

- Up to end of Pre-Integration Testing (PIT) – including Design, Build and Pre-Integration Testing;
- Post PIT – including separate costings for System integration Testing (SIT), User Integration Testing (UIT) and Implement to live;
- One off operational costs; and
- Ongoing operational costs.

The individual cost of implementing each Modification Proposal in a Release, as set out above, will be included in the RID from its initial draft, up to when it is finalised.

Forecast cost

When a RID is first baselined for a SEC Systems Release (12 months preceding the go-live date), the DCC will provide the Panel with a Forecast Release Cost.

The Forecast Release Cost is the total estimated cost of delivering all targeted and approved Modification Proposals in a Release, and will take into consideration any synergies and savings of delivering multiple modifications in the same project.

The Forecast Release Cost shall be broken down into the same groups as individual Modification Proposals as outlined in section 7.1 above. The Forecast Release Cost shall form part of the RID.

Actual cost

Within two months of the completion of Go-live, the DCC shall present to the Panel a report on the actual cost of implementing the Release.

The actual cost report shall set out the variances between the forecast Release cost and the actual Release cost and shall provide commentary and rationale as to these differences.

Reporting on cost

During the implementation of a Release, the DCC shall provide a regular update on the spend and cost of a Release at a frequency requested by the Panel.

8. Release Go-Live

The acceptance criteria for a Release will be established when the RID is finalised and the scope of the Release set. The acceptance criteria will be used as the basis for the decision to go-live. It will set out any specific information or evidence the Panel require in making its decision.

In sufficient time before the go-live date, and as soon as reasonably practical, the DCC will present the Panel with sufficient information to allow them to make an informed go-live decision for the Release. For the avoidance of doubt, sufficient time before the go-live date is considered to be enough time for the Panel to properly consider the evidence submitted, and in any event should be at least six weeks before the go-live date.

The DCC must seek input from the Operations Group and the TAG before a final submission on evidence to the Panel is made.

The acceptance criteria may also require other Sub-Committees to be consulted, depending on the scope of the Release.

9. Communication Strategy

In order to keep Parties informed of the development of Releases, the following communication will be issued by SECAS:

- Notification of the approval of a Modification Proposal and its approved implementation date within one Working Day of a decision;
- Notification 12 months and six months prior to the Release implementation date highlighting cut-off dates and the scope of any Release; and
- A notice one month prior to the Release implementation date, notifying Parties of imminent go-live.

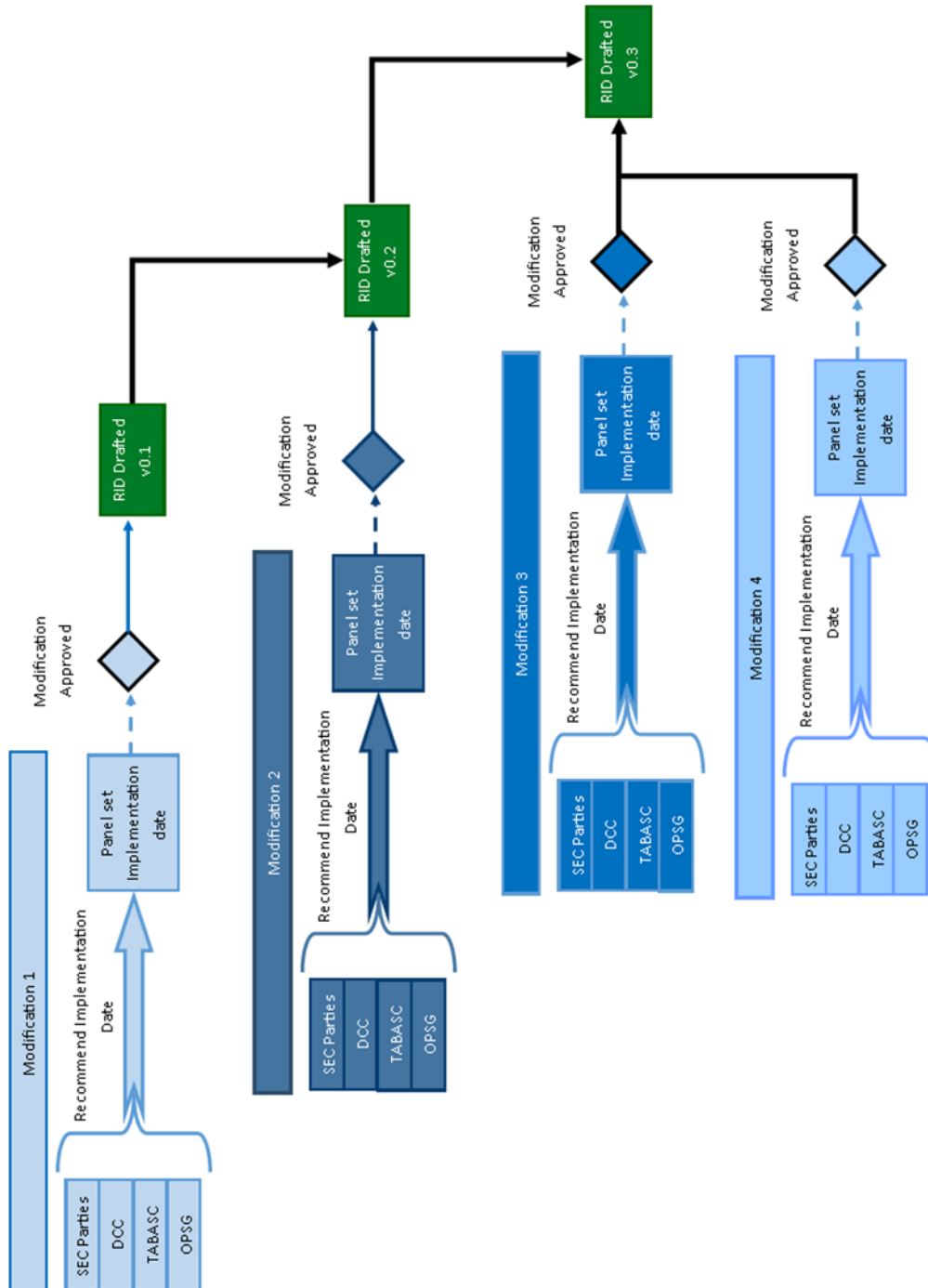
In addition to issuing the notifications set out above, each Modification Proposal will have its own page on the SEC Website which will provide a means to track the progression throughout the process. It will provide details of targeted, and then approved, implementation dates. This information will also be reflected in the Modifications Register.

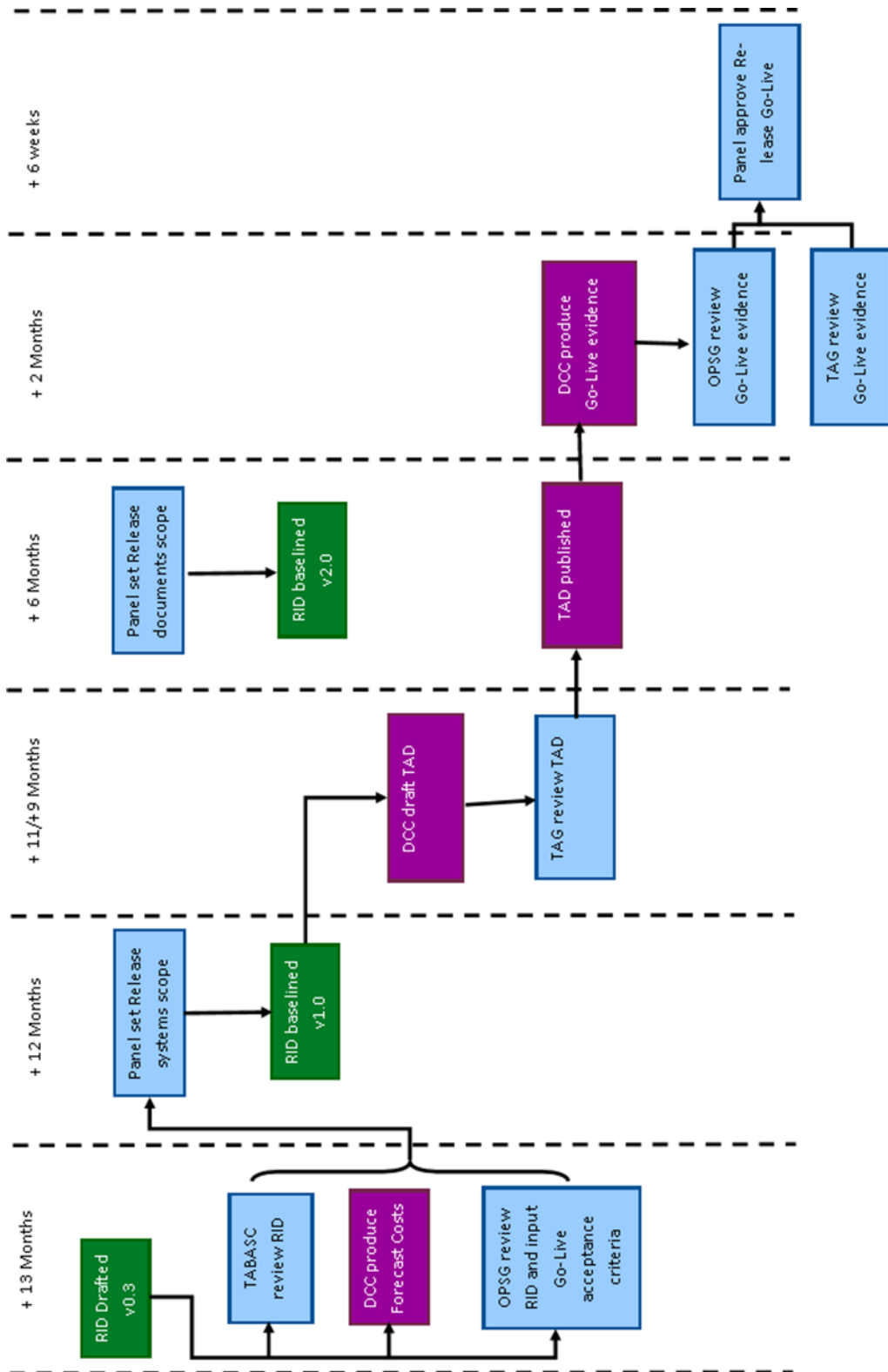
Each Release will also have its own Release page on the SEC Website, setting out the content of a Release as it develops. It will also provide the associated cut-off dates for the inclusion of further Modification Proposals into that scheduled Release.

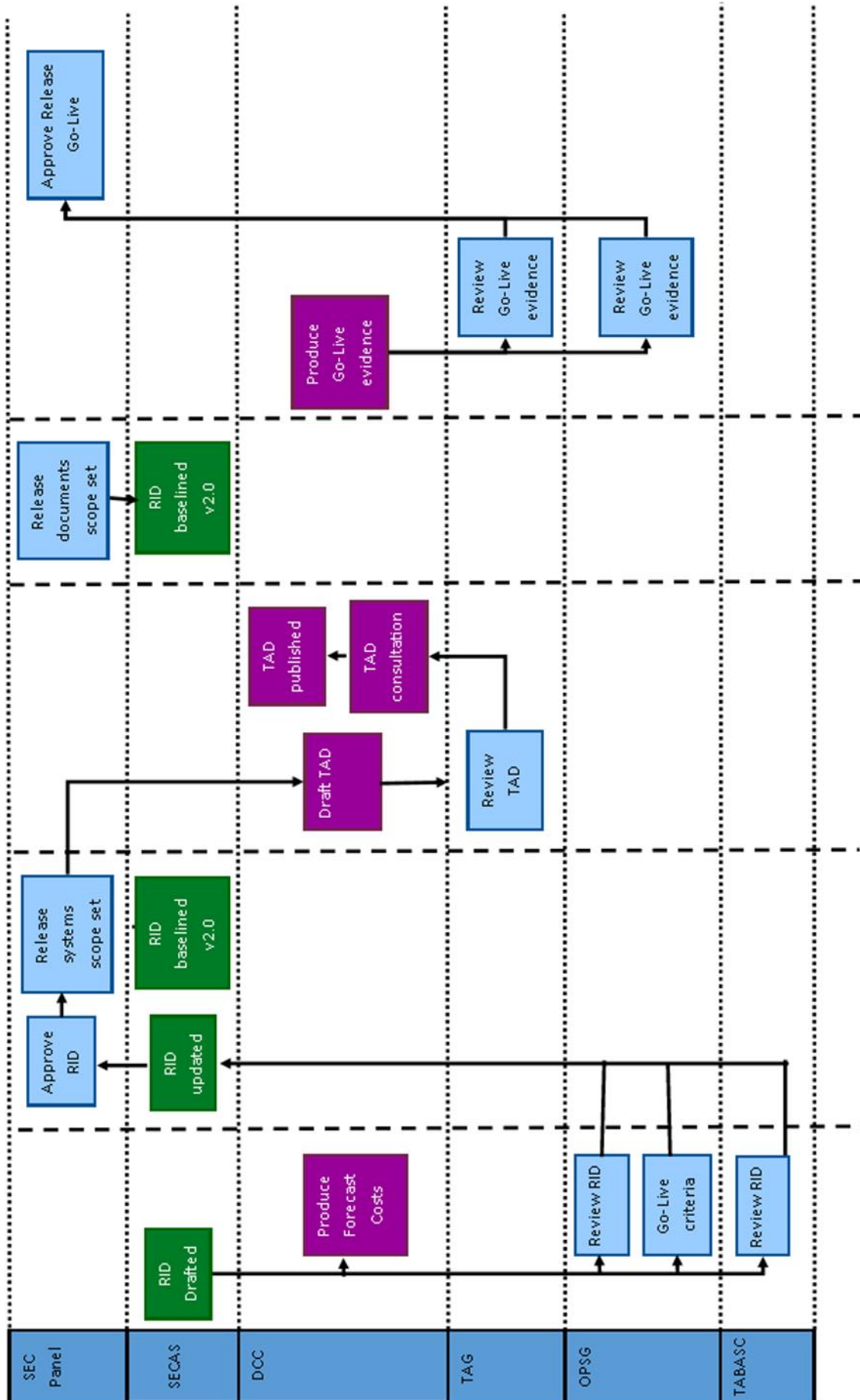
Release Notes

As part of the outcome of testing of a modification or suite of modifications for a Release, any associated DCC Release Notes will be provided by the DCC and made available on the respective Release page on the SEC Website.

Appendix 1: Summary of the SEC Release timelines







Appendix 2: Version control

| Document history | | | | |
|------------------|----------|------------|--------|--|
| Version | Status | Issue date | Author | Comments |
| 1.0 | Approved | 11 Dec 15 | SECAS | Final for publication |
| 2.0 | Approved | 09 Feb 18 | SECAS | Final for publication |
| 2.1 | Draft | 05 Jul 19 | SECAS | Updated to reflect new SEC Release management framework as introduced by SECMP0061 |



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