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Paper Reference:	**SECP_72_1309_15**
Action:	**For Decision**

Approval of the updated SEC Release Management Policy

1. Purpose

This paper presents the responses to the SEC Release Management Policy consultation and the consequential amendments. The Panel are asked to approve the updated policy for use.

2. Consultation on the updated policy

In July 2019, the Panel considered updates we had proposed to the SEC Release Management Policy following the implementation of SECMP0061 'Enduring SEC Release Provisions'. The Panel agreed to issue the updated policy for industry consultation.

We received five responses to the consultation. Respondents were supportive of the changes and the comments received mainly sought clarity on points of detail. The comments made and our response can be found in Annex A of this paper.

As a result of the consultation, we have made minor updates to the policy; these are highlighted in Appendix A. If the Panel agree with the changes, we will finalise the updated policy and publish it on the website.

3. Recommendations

The Panel are requested to:

- **NOTE** the responses received to the consultation; and
- **APPROVE** the updated SEC Release Management Policy for use.

David Kemp

SECAS Team

6 September 2019

Attachments

- **Appendix A:** SEC Release Management Policy v2.3

Annex A: Industry comments and SECAS's response

Respondent	Respondent's comments	SECAS's response
EDF Energy	As a high-level policy regarding SEC Releases the content of the SEC Release Management Policy seems fine – it is likely that the actual process of agreeing and implementing a SEC Release (and especially a SEC Systems Release) will be much more complicated than this policy would indicate. The SEC Release Management Policy does not make any reference to the consequential impacts that might arise from any SEC Systems Release, and specifically any Release that compromises new versions of the DCC User Interface Specification (DUIS), the GB Companion Specification (GBCS) or the Technical Specifications. Implementing a SEC Systems Release not only involves creating new versions of those documents, and setting the Installation/Maintenance Validity Period start dates; consideration will also need to be given to whether previous versions of documents will need to be removed or end dated, or Installation/Maintenance Validity Period end dates set. In the absence of this information SEC Parties will not know whether or when they are required to implement a particular SEC Systems Release, which will be critical to understanding the impacts of any Release. Consideration of the impacts of new versions of DUIS/GBCS/ Technical Specifications on the existing versions needs to be part of the consideration for any SEC Systems Release, and therefore part of the SEC Release Management Policy.	We acknowledge the issues that Parties have with the complexity of the effective periods of these documents. We recognise that they would appreciate further information to assist their understanding of the impacts on them. We have added in a paragraph to Section 5 of the policy stating that the RID will include the relevant version numbers and Validity Period start and end dates for these documents, following consultation with the TABASC. We will ensure any consequential impacts arising from specific modifications are drawn out in the relevant Modification Reports. We will also summarise any key points around this in the RID, especially if Parties need to take action as part of the implementation project. We will also be reviewing the configuration management of these documents as part of our forthcoming SEC Documentation Management Review and will be seeking the views of Parties as part of forming any recommendations. We believe there is action we can take to simplify the management of these documents. Finally, we note that the policy will be reviewed periodically, to allow any lessons learned to be incorporated.
Npower	No comment.	-

Respondent	Respondent's comments	SECAS's response
SSE	We are generally supportive of the content and the format of the updated SEC Release Management Policy. Our specific comments on the content are set out below. **Section 5 – Contents of the Release Implementation Document** In SEC Section D13.13 (c) the RID "defines how the DCC shall report progress towards readiness;", however it does not seem clear where this would be reported when looking at the current list referenced in this section of the RMP. On a separate note for SECAS, we believe SEC Section D13.13 is a typo and may be one to add to the SEC housekeeping log - D13.13 directly follows D10.12 in SEC v6.17. **Section 6 – SEC Release Testing Approach Document** The paragraph currently sets out: "The TAD should be issued to the TAG for review at least nine months preceding the go-live date of a SEC 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." We believe this should read: "The TAD **shall** be issued to the TAG for review at least nine months preceding the go-live date of a SEC Release. The TAD **shall** 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." **Section 7 – Release cost** This section should include the costs for System Capacity Testing (where appropriate).	Section 5: We have added a section on the DCC providing reports towards readiness into Section 8 of the policy. We also acknowledge the error highlighted and have added this to the housekeeping log. Section 6: We agree with the proposed changes and have incorporated these in the revised wording. Section 7: We have included clarification on this point.
SMS Plc	N/A	-

Respondent	Respondent's comments	SECAS's response
DCC	Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SEC Release Management Policy. DCC plays a central role in the delivery of system impacting SEC Releases and it is important that the Policy document is well drafted and reflects a process and governance framework that allows the most economic and efficient delivery of system impacting change, in accordance with the Second General SEC Objective, which in turn enables DCC to deliver against its General Objectives in the DCC Licence. We offer the following observations and queries in relation to the draft Policy document. 1. We would welcome greater clarification on the proposed role of SECAS as a project manager for SEC Releases (page 5), especially in relation to System Impacting SEC Releases. For example: • what decision-making powers would be granted (if any) to SECAS in this role and by whom? • to what extent is this role budgeted for under code administration? • how does the role of the administrator acting as a project manager dovetail with the planning and coordinatory role undertaken by DCC in delivery system changes? • how far would the project manager role extend? Would SECAS expect this role cover service providers, their subcontractors, or other roles? • what is seen as the potential benefit of extending the SECAS role as described? We would observe that, as a Licenced entity in the energy market, DCC must always consider its General Licence Objectives in the context of any specific commitments relating to change delivery, and we would seek assurance that any project management role undertaken would take this into consideration.	Our response to each point is as follows: 1. SECAS's role is to oversee and manage the progression of the SEC Release on the Panel's behalf, ensuring all the tasks laid out in the RID are completed to time. The cost for this is included in the SECAS core budget. We do not expect SECAS to manage the DCC's internal processes or service providers, but only to ensure that the DCC are on track to meet their deadlines. It would be for the DCC to manage their internal processes and supply chain in order to meet their obligations for the release. We note that the SECAS Change Delivery Manager is invited to sit on the DCC's Release Steering Committee, which oversees the DCC's internal delivery of SEC Releases. We have clarified the policy to remove the term 'project manager', to avoid any confusion.

Respondent	Respondent's comments	SECAS's response
	2. In relation to the SEC release cycle, DCC requests that the SEC Release Management Policy Document is amended to include a clear mechanism for considering and governing possible changes to release date. Managing the central systems in any SEC System Change is one part of DCC's mandated business, and there may be circumstances where concurrent delivery activity outside of the SEC, conflict with a SEC Release and it would be more economic and efficient to move the release date (not only for DCC, but also for other energy market participants, who are also managing a complex framework of change). DCC would suggest that the Panel is given a role to consider requests to amend the date if proposed by a SEC Party. 3. Related to the point above, in instances where there are small changes to dates which move a Release to a different calendar month, we suggest that SECAS consider amending the naming convention to avoid confusion (for example, Summer, Autumn and Winter as opposed to June, November and February releases). 4. Regarding Implementation Dates for Modifications (Section 4). Whilst DCC fully supports the inclusion of a mechanism for amending of implementation dates for modifications, we query whether the process as described is agile enough to manage in circumstances where it may be necessary to revise the scope of a release at relatively short notice. This may be necessary in cases where User and/or DCC testing of certain capability is not complete, and it is more efficient and economical to remove capability associated with a Modification as opposed to amending the overall Release Date. 5. In Section 6, DCC recommends the addition of provisions that allow the Testing Approach Document to be amended, in consultation with SEC Parties and/or TAG. There may be circumstances where new testing requirements have been identified and/or new testing processes may make testing more cost-effective. 6. DCC requests that the date for submission of release actuals in Section 7 of the document is set at 3 months after the release, as opposed to 2 months. This would accommodate holiday periods that follow the Autumn release and	2. Changes to release dates are made in accordance with SEC Section D10.5, which allows Parties (including the DCC) to request a change of implementation date and for the Panel to consider and then issue this request to the Authority. We have clarified Section 4 of the policy to note that Parties (including the DCC) may submit a request. 3. We adopted this naming convention to ensure consistency with the other Energy Codes whose release cycle is the same as ours. We believe this should be kept as-is to better support cross-Code consistency for Parties. We have also clarified that the Panel may move a scheduled SEC Release to a different date where necessary. 4. We agree that the current process is not as agile as it could be. We note that the mechanism for requesting a revised implementation date is set out in SEC Section D10.5, and so a Modification Proposal would therefore be needed to make any changes. We would be happy to support the DCC in raising a Draft Proposal to explore changes to these provisions. 5. We agree with this suggestion, as it would be consistent with provisions in SEC Section D10.20. We have added in a line to Section 6. 6. We agree with this suggestion and have amended the policy.

Respondent	Respondent's comments	SECAS's response
	may follow the Winter release. We see value in allowing a little more time to ensure costs from our Service Providers are validated and assured prior to their submission.	
	7. In Section 8, regarding Release go-live, whilst we recognise the critical importance of providing the Panel with necessary time to make a determination, it should be noted that there may be good reasons for testing to continue beyond this date in the run-up to a SEC System Release, and so it may not be possible to provide a complete testing picture at this point. We would recommend that the Panel and SECAS consider a suitably agile process that facilitates governance in instances where outstanding testing may be required. DCC has extensive experience of managing governance and approvals processes for system releases and would be happy to support further thinking in this area. Submitting evidence at least six weeks before go-live will create challenges delivering medium to large size modifications when User Testing is mandated.	7. We believe the lead time set out in the policy is needed to allow Parties greater certainty of the release go-live ahead of time.
	8. Finally, regarding the draft document itself, we would recommend clarifying the Implementation Date Format paragraphs in section 4, possibly by adding some worked examples alongside the explanatory text.	8. We have added in further clarification to this section.
	Other points to note In reviewing the SEC Release Management Policy, we have also reviewed version 6.17 of the Smart Energy Code, and have noted the following: In Section D10.9 the SEC refers to the 'Panel Release Management Policy', and we consider this should be updated to refer to the 'SEC Release Management Policy'. In Section D10.7 a document is described as "the Panel SEC Release Management Policy" – we consider that this should be amended to "SEC Release Management Policy.	We acknowledge the points highlighted in SEC Sections D10.7 and D10.9 and have added them to our housekeeping log for this to be updated in the SEC.