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SEC Panel Sub-Committee Report

1. Purpose

This paper provides the Panel with an update on recent activities from the Panel Sub-Committees. It highlights the key issues discussed and details specific points the Sub-Committees would like to bring to the Panel's attention. The Panel is requested to note the updates.

2. Operations Group

2.1 Operations Group Meeting Highlights

OPSG has now scheduled an additional meeting each month at which the reports delegated to OPSG by Panel are discussed. Both meetings are reported in this section.

Communications Hubs Returns

In response to a request from OPSG, at the July meeting the Panel requested that the DCC:

1. urgently host a workshop with its Customers to identify immediate improvements.
2. urgently develop a Communications Hub (CH) bulk returns process.

The DCC reported that they have visited User sites to investigate the issues and two workshops have been held to go through the plans and confirm requirements.

At the workshops the DCC reported that they have implemented processes to allow the bulk physical return of CHs in units of a pallet.

However, it is currently still necessary for Users to submit individual Service Requests (SR) for each CH to register the return. The DCC do not have firm plans to comply with the full SEC requirement (SEC F8.9), which (in the view of SECAS and OPSG members) includes the ability to process these registration SRs in bulk. DCC are exploring both interim and enduring solutions and intend to hold a workshop to explore options.

Communications Hubs and Other Exceptions

The DCC again noted that in over half of premises where a mesh CH had been specified, non-compliant CHs have been installed. Some progress has been made with the worst offending User, however, should this continue, it will have an adverse impact on the ability of Communications Service Provider (CSP) Central & South ((C&S) to meet its coverage target.

SECAS has met with the DCC, CSP North (N) and CSP C&S to discuss the increasing number of CH Exceptions reported through the Performance Measurement Report. This has initiated several further workstreams within DCC and CSPs. The OPSG has requested regular reporting on progress on these issues.

The OPSG noted that, as a principle of contract management, DCC should have the appropriate arrangements in place to monitor, verify, and, as appropriate, challenge, exclusions from the performance figures proposed by Service Providers.

Alerts

It was agreed that Alerts Operational issues will be overseen by the OPSG. It was noted that despite the efforts of the DCC and Parties, the number of erroneous alerts has not been contained.

Service Performance

OPSG noted that in the latest Performance Measurement Report (July), Code Performance Measure 1 had again fallen below target. The DCC presented a plan of the actions being taken by CSP N and CSP C&S to get this measure above target by December.

The DCC reported that there had been no Category 1 Major Incidents in September. There had been six Category 2 Incidents on SMETS2: the service impact of this was estimated as equivalent to the time required for 280 installations.

There was one Category 2 Incident on SMETS1, causing 36 migrations to be delayed by 24 hours (as context, the total number of migrations attempted in the last four weeks was 500, with an error rate of 33%).

Service Request Forecasting

The DCC reported that 16 Users are submitting Certificate Signing Requests and 19 Users are submitting Service Requests without having submitted the relevant forecasts. The same Large Supplier appears in both of these categories. OPSG members continue to raise questions as to whether the administrative process for dealing with these forecasts is correct, and SECAS is addressing this with DCC.

SSI Improvements

The DCC presented their amended submission for permission to proceed with development of the next phase of SSI improvements. OPSG highlighted that some of the proposed work items were within the scope of Draft Proposal DP083: 'Change Coordination' which had been submitted by the DCC. The OPSG therefore rejected the work items in question, noting that duplicate work must be avoided. The OPSG asked the DCC to rectify by removing the overlap in scope.

Operational Metrics Project Brief

The OPSG recommended the Operational Metrics Project Brief for forwarding to the Panel and to SECCo Board for approval.

Issues

The OPSG noted that the work on the Data Quality Issues was almost complete. This work was originally commissioned at the request of the SEC Panel. The OPSG agreed that the remaining matters should be transferred to the OPSG Issues Log.

3. Security Sub-Committee and SMKI PMA

3.1 Assurance Status Decisions

The Security Sub-Committee (SSC) set four Assurance statuses in September 2019. Details can be found in confidential Appendix A.

3.2 Verification Assessments

As part of its wider obligations, the SSC review the outcomes of Verification User Security Assessments. If the SSC believe that a User is non-compliant, or potentially non-compliant, with obligations contained in SEC Sections G3-G6, then it will notify the Panel.

During September 2019, the SSC reviewed three Verification User Security Assessments (VUSAs) in which Compliance Statuses were agreed. Details of the VUSAs can be found in confidential Appendix A.

3.3 Director's Letters

The SSC reviewed two FUSA Director's Letter and two VUSA Director's Letter in September 2019 which were both approved and can be found in confidential Appendix A.

3.4 Security Self-Assessments

One Security Self-Assessment of a Shared Resource Provider was reviewed by the SSC in September 2019, but further information was requested before the SSC could reach a decision on the outcome.

3.5 SSC Highlights

Second and Subsequent User Security Assessments

The SSC agreed to allow the use of the Smart Metering Inventory (SMI) to check the volume of DCC-enrolled SMETS1 and SMETS2 Devices in a User's portfolio. This will affect the type of assessment a User will be required to have in the second and subsequent years, and the Security Controls Framework (SCF) has been amended to reflect the change.

Mitigating Security Risks from Internet-Connected Devices

Gemserv representatives presented the potential mitigations from the analysis undertaken as per the SSC request regarding Security Risks from Internet-Connected Devices. The SSC agreed to review the mitigation options.

Use Case Proposals for Device Triage

Following the CPA Industry Day on Monday 23 September 2019, the SSC agreed to establish a working group to discuss the four Use Cases for meter triage and refurbishment, to notify the SEC Panel and to invite the Panel to nominate a member of the Working Group as it sees fit.

3.6 SMKI PMA Highlights

Commercial National Security Agency Suite (CNSA)

The DCC Data Service Provider (DSP) presented the SMKI PMA with a proposal to use an alternate cryptography standard for signing critical commands, the Commercial National Security Agency Suite (CNSA – previously known as NSA Suite B), as opposed to the Great Britain Companion Specification (GBCS) mandated use of Elliptic Curve Digital Signature Algorithm (ECDSA).

The SMKI PMA agreed to support the recommendation that both methods provide sufficient security and agreed to support the DCC raising a modification to implement this recommendation.

4. Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) and Testing Advisory Group (TAG)

4.1 TABASC Highlights

DCC Elective Communications Services

The DCC discussed with the TABASC provision of Elective Communication Services (ECS), including the governance and architecture principles and how it might work in practice. The DCC is requested to develop the end-to-end business requirements for ECS which will then be reviewed by several stakeholders, including the SEC Panel and its Sub-Committees. The TABASC will continue to support the development prior to the wider review to ensure no gaps.

Long-Term Evolution (LTE) Communications Hubs

The DCC provided the TABASC with an update on LTE Communications Hubs. The DCC is intending to deliver a rapid short-term enhancement to the design of Communications Hubs to support LTE communications in addition to longer-term considerations of next generation Communications Hub requirements. The DCC is currently considering two approaches

1. Involves contractual discussions with current Communications Hub vendors via a request for information for cost and timelines.

2. Involves a full request for proposal from new and existing providers.

The DCC will provide the TABASC with the Business Requirements Document for review.

DCC Change Co-ordination pilot project

The DCC provided an update on the DCC Change Co-ordination pilot project, highlighting that DCC User participants will be asked to provide information regarding estate changes to develop a dashboard view of a risk heat map to plan future changes. The DCC will provide the classification criteria for change co-ordination rankings for discussion at a future TABASC meeting.

4.2 TAG Highlights

SMIP Regression Strategy

The TAG reviewed the DCC SMIP Regression Strategy and requested that:

1. An explicit principle be included for targeted regression tests to be incorporated into the standard test pack whenever those tests relate to key functional areas of DCC Systems;
2. The requirement to test database schema and file structure changes should be explicitly stated within the scope of the strategy. Any changes to database schema should trigger testing of the entire system at production code level; and
3. Regression testing should be undertaken in whichever environment most closely matches the production environment at the time, on the codebase, which is intended to be deployed, and in the configuration, which is intended to be implemented.

The DCC will return with an amended proposal at the next TAG meeting.

DCC Environment Plan – Management Principles

The DCC consulted the TAG with the aim of agreeing a set of principles which will define how environmental constraints can be managed, whilst allowing the code associated with several different programmes to be tested without causing undue delay to those programmes.

The TAG requested that the DCC amend its proposal to make it clear that:

1. Multiple releases can only be tested in parallel in the same testing environment where any risks are understood, and mitigations are in place; and
2. The DCC must conduct an assessment to ascertain whether test results achieved when the DSP software in the testing environment is not the same as the version that will be present in production when that release goes live should be considered valid, and must provide a clear justification for its conclusion.

The DCC will return with an amended proposal at the next TAG meeting.

November 2019 Release Testing Update

The DCC requested that the Panel consider its proposal to move the November release date from 7 November to 24 November. This proposal involves running test phases concurrently. The Panel requested a second date be considered (1 December) with test phases that run sequentially, with a focus on Users being given enough time to complete User testing.

The TAG agreed that the overall risk profile of the two options is very similar and does not provide a significant differentiation between them.

There were no objections to the proposed approach for a 24 November Release date. TAG Members agreed that a risk to the SMETS1 IOC go-live approach which was identified during the review, will be highlighted in a letter to the SEC Panel with a recommendation to revise the Release date to 24 November 2019.

5. Recommendations

The Panel is requested to **NOTE** the content of this paper.

Rebecca Jones

SECAS Team

4 October 2019

Attachments:

- **Appendix A:** User Security Assessments – Identified Non-Compliances (**RED**)