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MP102 ‘Power Outage Alerts triggered by an OTA firmware upgrade’

April 2020 Working Group Meeting Summary

Overview

SECAS provided an overview of the issue identified by MP102 and discussed the scale of the issue and business requirements.

Issue:

- Firmware updates are causing Electricity Smart Metering Equipment (ESME) to reboot which cuts the power to the Communications Hub (CH) for more than three minutes
- No governance regarding the duration of the meter cutting the power supply to the CH via the Intimate Communications Hub Interface Specification (ICHIS)
- Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) have no means of identifying or suppressing erroneous Power Outage Alerts (POAs)

Scale of the issue:

- Initial estimation of 500,000 ESMEs affected by the issue
- Landis & Gyr have been performing their own project which is partially complete
- They have identified an approximately 1.4 million ESMEs affected by the issue
- Landis & Gyr intend on using the Globally Unique Identifiers (GUIDs) and to cross reference them against the meter list to allow industry to locate where an OTA firmware update may be generating false AD1¹ Alerts

Business requirements:

- ESME must not cause a cut or drop in Direct Current (DC) power to the CH for a duration of three minutes or more during a reboot

Discussions held

The Working Group understood the issue and agreed that it should be addressed. A Working Group member commented that the initial estimate of 500,000 affected ESMEs was a substantial under-estimate. The Working Group member stated that this information had come directly from the DCC.

The business requirements were discussed at length. The Working Group and Proposer felt that the business requirements will need further development before proceeding to the DCC Preliminary Assessment. The Working Group agreed that the current business requirements are too open at the moment and offer an unnecessary level of ambiguity. SECAS, the Proposer and Networks Parties will

¹ Power Outage Event

collaborate to refine the business requirements. A paramount requirement was discussed that all AD1 Alerts should be legitimate.

Details of a DCC investigation outlined by SECAS were discussed, however a Working Group member confirmed that the work they had been completing with the DCC should provide the results required. The DCC confirmed that they would share their findings for the benefit of the modification.

The purpose of the modification was questioned when the Working Group tried to address the long-term solution of existing meters in the field. The issue lies with amending the technical specifications which would, in effect, cause already installed meters eventually becoming non-compliant.

It was agreed by the Working Group that the modification would be split into two separate modifications. One to address the technical specifications so going forwards, meters are manufactured to not reboot for more than three minutes, and another to address existing meters already installed. This is due to the potential lengthy lead time of tackling both issues under one SEC Modification. It was agreed that this modification would address the technical specifications.

Next Steps

The following actions were recorded from the meeting:

- The Proposer and SECAS will collaborate to produce more explicit business requirements.
- The Proposer and SECAS will work together to agree on the proposal of dividing the modification into two separate modifications.
- The DCC will provide their findings on the investigation into the scale of the issue once completed.