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Operations Group Meeting 30

3 March 2020, 10:00 – 16:00

Gemserv, 8 Fenchurch Place, London, EC3M 4AJ

OPSG_30_0303 - Final Minutes

Attendees:

Category	Operations Group Members
Operations Group Chair	Dave Warner
DCC	Mo Asif
	Alex Henighan
Network Party	Gemma Slaney
	Matthew Alexander
	John Noad (<i>Alternate for Nassar Zeb</i>)
	Rochelle Harrison
	Zoe Marklew
	Yvonne Mackenzie (<i>Alternate for Endika Enes</i>)
	Paul Clark
	Ed Webber
	Rob Short
	Ralph Baxter
Small Supplier	Jason Salmon
	Kate Barnes
Other SEC Party	Kate Frazer
	Geoff Huckerby
	Tom Woolley

Representing	Other Participants
DCC	Steve Stathakis
	Wendy Liddell
	Darren Robbins
	Penny Brown (Part)
	Ian Brown

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	Rob Richards (Teleconference)
	Gav Parrott
	Sharon Bradley (Part)
SECAS	Veronica Asantewaa (Meeting Secretary)
	Tim Hall
	Joey Manners
	Huw Exley
	Abhay Soorya
	David Kemp (Part)
	Bradley Baker (Part)
	Fiona Chestnutt (Part)
	Alessandro Scarlatti (Part)
TABASC	Julian Hughes
Ofgem	Michael Walls (Teleconference)
BEIS	Natasha Free
	Eleanor Taylor

Apologies:

Representing	Name
Large Supplier	Tony Shanahan
Other SEC Party	Elias Hanna
Small Supplier	Simon Dowse

1. Previous Meeting Minutes

The Chair invited Operations Group (OPSG) members to comment on the Draft Minutes from OPSG_29.

A Large Supplier (LS) member noted that regarding the discussions on the Communications Hub (CH) returns process and Order Management System (OMS) update, it was in fact a Small Supplier (SS) member that raised various concerns and not a LS member.

The OPSG **AGREED** that the minutes from OPSG_29 would be published as final, subject to the above correction.

2. Panel Feedback Report

SECAS provided the OPSG with the following updates from the February SEC Panel meeting:

- The DCC has now raised the Modification [DP116 'Service Request Forecasting'](#) which has been agreed for continued development by the Change Sub-Committee, and will be raised at the next Panel meeting.

- The Panel agreed to recommend the addition of Honeywell Elster Active Meters to the Eligible Products Combination List (EPCL) for SMETS1.
- The Panel has responded to the Enduring Change of Supply (ECOS) consultation. There will be engagement with the SEC Sub-Committees once implementation begins.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

3. Actions Outstanding

SECAS presented the actions outstanding table from OPSG_29. Actions were noted as completed where appropriate. It was noted that a number of actions had not been completed by the target date, and new deadlines for these actions were set.

Action ID	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
OPSG 16/02	The DCC to provide the approved and new cost comparison information as soon as possible, and to confirm which costs had been included in the indicative charging statement, for Production Proving; this action replaces: Action OPSG_05/02.	08/01/2019	03/03/2020	07/04/2020	DCC
<p>The DCC explained that this is due to be raised at the Finance Forum on 17 March. The OPSG members expressed their disappointment that the action had not been fulfilled and noted that business cases are not discussed at the Finance Form. The OPSG Chair noted that the success of the engagement strategy will need to be reviewed to ensure that appropriate communication is made to Users.</p> <p>Action Status: Open.</p>					
OPSG 22/12	DCC to investigate the cost benefit analysis of the Ecosystems Management Framework.	02/07/2019	03/03/2020	07/04/2020	DCC
<p>The DCC noted that this update is the same as for action 16/02, and this will be discussed at the Finance Forum on 17 March.</p> <p>Action Status: Open.</p>					
OPSG 25/01	DCC to track the progress of DNO members experience following the change to the Incident Management System.	01/10/2019	03/03/2020	N/A	DCC
<p>The DCC noted that the SSI Improvement Proposal (SIP) item has been released and still has 11,000 Incidents to clear, the DCC is currently waiting for an estimated cost from CGI to do this in bulk. The</p>					

Action ID	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
Distribution Network Operator (DNO) members are happy with the progress and agreed that this action can be closed. Action Status: Closed.					
OPSG 25/14	DCC to canvas Users for their views on a per User Problem Record and for other suggestions.	01/10/2019	03/03/2020	N/A	DCC
The DCC highlighted that it has had positive engagement with Users. The DCC will circulate the latest update with Users. Action Status: Closed.					
OPSG 27/09	The DCC to ensure that CSP N explain to OPSG and TABASC why their stated lack of a network model/simulation is justified.	03/12/2019	03/03/2020	07/04/2020	DCC
The DCC noted that Communications Service Provider North (CSP N) is procuring network modelling capability and does not know when this will be completed. The OPSG requested that the DCC provide an update at the April meeting on its progress. It was noted that this matter was under review by the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC). Action Status: Open.					
OPSG 28/08	The DCC to provide a summary of the end-to-end capacity and the costs of the additional motorways.	07/01/2020	04/02/2020	07/04/2020	DCC
The DCC highlighted that a third motorway lane was added in February to manage the volume of Alerts. The DCC stated that costs included the cost of the motorway lane, the storage of historical Alerts for up to seven years and future Alerts. The OPSG Chair requested that the DCC provide a briefing on the costs. Action Status: Open.					
OPSG 29/04	The DCC to provide assurance that protocols have been implemented to prevent changes being made to the Production and Disaster Recovery environments concurrently by the next meeting (OPSG_30).	04/02/2020	03/03/2020	07/04/2020	DCC
The DCC noted that in some cases, changes to the Production and Disaster Recovery environments are implemented at the same time. The OPSG requested that the DCC provide scenarios of when concurrent changes to both environments will need to be implemented at the next meeting (OPSG_31).					

Action ID	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
Action Status: Open					
OPSG 29/10	CSP N to provide more information on PBI000000118411 regarding On Demand Read Requests causing a degradation in the service.	04/02/2020	03/03/2020	07/04/2020	DCC
<p>The DCC explained that this Problem Record is still under investigation. The DCC highlighted that there may be inconsistencies between the CSP N design requirements and SEC technical specification DUIS. The OPSG queried if this was just for on demand read requests or bulk requests and questioned how the service would be able to manage bulk on demand prepayment requests. The OPSG again emphasised the importance of the on demand reading capability. The DCC agreed to provide an update at the next meeting (OPSG_31).</p>					

The OPSG Chair requested that SECAS, with DCC, review the Actions Log, defining each action with realistic and achievable target dates.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

ACTION OPSG 30/01: SECAS to review the Action Log and work with the DCC to provide realistic target completion dates in order to manage the backlog.

4. Major Incidents

The DCC presented the Major Incident Review Report for Incident INC000000549963. This was a draft Major Incident Review Report that was submitted to the OPSG for final review. The Major Incident occurred on 31 January 2020 and the root cause was established as a dual fibre break.

The DCC outlined that the response time from the Data Service Provider (DSP) was good with the support of the Technical Operations Centre (TOC); and communications were sent to Users within 15 minutes of the Incident occurring.

The DCC noted that there was a change in the firewall that affected the access to the Remedy IT Service Management and Self-Service Management Interface (SSMI), this was part of the DSP but not directly impacted. The DCC highlighted that the timing of the Incident occurring at the at the same time as the fibre break was coincidental.

The OPSG queried if it was human error that caused the Incident and the DCC highlighted that the Incident was categorised as malicious damage in the Service Provider report. The OPSG asked the DCC to clarify what constitutes "malicious damage".

The OPSG **AGREED** that the Final Review Report for Incident INC000000549963 can be published to all SEC Parties.

ACTION OPSG 30/02: The DCC to confirm what the Service Provider report considers 'malicious damage' with regards to the dual fibre break causing Major Incident INC000000549963.

5. DCC Operational Update

The DCC presented an update on its Operations. The slides presented to the OPSG has since been updated and the OPSG requested that the updated information be circulated to OPSG members.

The OPSG requested that the following changes be made to the operational graphs:

1. Add a larger axis on CHs by Region Graph;
2. Add a summary view of the outstanding problems including those that are to be resolved by scheduled changes, and those for which resolutions had yet to be planned.
3. Depict SMETS1 "Operational" growth via a month by month view of meters that became "Operational"; and
4. Add SMETS1 pacing strategy, overlay forecasts with actuals.

The OPSG also queried a number of items the DCC slide pack, including in particular the Prepayment summary. In January the number of Prepayment Devices installed in the month decreased, however the February predictions did not take in account the dip in January. The DCC **AGREED** to provide updated versions of the slides as soon as possible.

The DCC updated the OPSG on its SMETS1 migration strategy noting that it has succeeded in migrating 20,000 meters in a day at a 99.7% success rate. The DCC plans to attempt to migrate 28,000 meters on a day in April.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update

ACTION OPSG 30/03: The DCC to include the following updates to the Operational Update; add a larger axis on CHs by Region Graph, add a summary view of the outstanding problems including those that are to be resolved by scheduled changes, and those for which resolutions had yet to be planned, depict SMETS1 "Operational" growth via a month by month view of meters that became "Operational", and add SMETS1 pacing strategy, overlay forecasts with actuals.

ACTION OPSG 30/04: SECAS to distribute updated slides (Alerts and DCC Operational Update) to OPSG members.

6. Spurious Alerts

The DCC presented an update on the Alerts.

SMETS1

The DCC stated that it has stopped the 8014 Alerts on SMETS1 meters. There has now been a rise in 81B8 incorrect polarity Alerts generated by Electricity Smart Metering Equipment (ESME) meters, apparently correlated with solar panels. The OPSG asked the DCC to clarify if these Alerts were spurious. The OPSG Chair noted that more understanding is needed on the nature of 81B8 Alerts that are arising and mentioned that this could be discussed at the Technical Specifications Issue Resolution Sub-group (TSIRS). The OPSG Chair requested that SECAS identify the appropriate group to discuss this further and report back at the next meeting (OPSG_31).

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SMETS2

The DCC mentioned that it did manage to reduce the 8F01 Spurious Alerts; however, they have started to increase again due as the meters with the impacted firmware continue to be installed. The DCC is confident the Alerts will not grow significantly as the firmware is subject to CPA remediation plans managed by the Security Sub-Committee (SSC), and the Alerts continue to be resolved by Service Users. The OPSG said that an enduring process is needed for the management of information sharing on issues; a Large Supplier (LS) member mentioned that some manufactures may not provide this information to Suppliers that they do not have a contract with.

SECAS noted that an OPSG member has asked whether there is a process to remove firmware versions that have significant Operational issues from the Certified Product List (CPL). SECAS commented that the current SEC process to remove CPL entries are via CPA remediation plans either due to certificate expiration or significant security concerns; this is managed through the SSC. SECAS agreed to consider whether there is merit in creating a proposal for OPSG and TABASC consideration.

The DCC confirmed that the root cause for the 8F12 Alerts in CSP N had not yet been identified and the number of these Alerts continues to increase. The DCC provided an overview of the impact of 8F12s on the network, a major concern being the detrimental effect on the life of affected Communication Hubs (CH) due to overuse of memory when managing this alert. The DCC said that investigations are on-going, but it has encountered difficulties in garnering support for joint visits to end consumer premises to complete further testing. A LS member reported that their testing team believed that upgrading to Release 2.0 CH firmware appeared to resolve the issue. The DCC agreed to consider this input. BEIS agreed to raise the query on whether 8F12s have been observed or considered as part of the regular Release 2.0 Testing meeting with DCC.

The DCC expects that up to 50% of the 8F3E Alerts in CSP C&S would be resolved by a CH firmware upgrade, which is planned for April/May. The OPSG members raised concerns about the practicality of completing User Interface Testing (UIT) in that timescale, due to the focus on Release 2.0 UIT.

The OPSG asked that DCC in future confirm that identified remediation actions were fully considered for practicality and robustness, with all parties involved confirmed as committed.

The DCC highlighted that it has introduced new motorway capacity to increase assurance that the DSP will be able to handle additional traffic (including Alerts) whilst alternative remediations are being deployed. The DCC has been requested to produce and present capacity models demonstrating how they believe upcoming changes ([SECMP0062 'Northbound Application Traffic Management - Alert Storm Protection' and CH firmware upgrade](#)) will affect the capacity projections and requirements. The DCC would like to discuss and agree with OPSG and TABASC options for emergency controls that could be employed in order to protect the service if peak capacity were to be breached again.

The OPSG noted that the DCC were including a RAG status for each remediation item in the Alerts report, and requested that the meaning of this be clarified, and that it be applied consistently.

The OPSG Chair requested that DCC continue to develop the Spurious Alerts report to fully represent:

- Types of alert and volumes by region, by device combination
- For each of the above, number of installations newly exhibiting the behaviour each month, and whether these were new installs
- For each of the items in the first bullet point, issue, root cause, remediation plan (with main phases of the plan identified)

The OPSG noted that SMDG had confirmed that they viewed the OPSG as the appropriate body to oversee resolution of the Alerts issues.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update on Alerts.

ACTION OPSG 30/05: The DCC to confirm that identified remediation actions were fully considered for practicality and robustness, with all parties involved confirmed as committed.

ACTION OPSG 30/06: SECAS to draft a report on the OPSG's remit and approach to spurious Alerts.

ACTION OPSG 30/07: SECAS to investigate the appropriate group to discuss the 81B8 Alerts being generated by a certain SMETS1 meter.

ACTION OPSG 30/08: The DCC to include RAG statuses for each spurious Alert in its remediation plan, clarifying the meaning for each status, and that it be applied consistently.

ACTION OPSG 30/09: BEIS to raise at the Release 2.0 Testing meeting whether the R2.0 EDMF Firmware has been tested in regard to the 8F12 Alerts.

ACTION OPSG 30/10: DCC to present proposals on emergency workarounds/mitigations that it may need to utilise to reduce Alerts to protect the overall DCC Service.

ACTION OPSG 30/11: DCC to share DSP Capacity predictions demonstrating how SECMP0062 'Northbound Application Traffic Management - Alert Storm Protection' and CH firmware upgrades will affect capacity utilisation.

7. CH Exceptions

The DCC presented its update on the CH Exceptions.

The DCC outlined that it is making good progress with its investigations. A LS member said that it has an aged Problem Record with the DCC regarding incomplete CH installations: the DCC noted that it will investigate further. SECAS reminded the DCC and OPSG members that CSP N continues to not raise CH exceptions as Incidents with Service Users. This has been highlighted as a risk: if Incidents are not raised then Users are unaware that they are contributing to more CH exceptions.

The largest CH Exception remains "No or Incomplete Address details", however it has since been identified that primarily one Service User is responsible for these exceptions. The DCC's Service Managers will be working with the User to understand and agree the best approach for remediation.

The OPSG requested that the DCC provide a detailed summary of each CH exception type which includes the outcomes of work to date and action plan for the April meeting (OPSG_31).

The OPSG **NOTED** the update on CH Exceptions.

ACTION OPSG 30/12: The DCC to investigate an aged Problem Record raised by a Large Supplier (RH) regarding CH Exceptions.

ACTION OPSG 30/13: The DCC to provide a detailed summary which includes the outcomes and action plan for CH Exceptions for the April meeting (OPSG_31).

8. Meter Firmware OTAs

The DCC presented the meter firmware Over the Air (OTA) updates from CSP N and CSP Central & South (C&S).

The DCC reported good progress by CSP C&S, which has now achieved the target service level. The DCC reported that CSP N continues to fail to meet the target service level, having failed to achieve the end of December target in its remediation plan. CSP N now says it plans to meet the target service level in May.

The OPSG queried CSP N's "Go to Green" high level plan for February and asked if there is a correlation between its gradient of RAG statuses and its services levels, or whether it simply indicates "work in progress". The DCC agreed to confirm this with CSP N.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

ACTION OPSG 30/14: The DCC to confirm CSP N's OTA Performance for February, and whether there is a correlation between the gradient of the RAG statuses on CSP N's "Go to Green" plan and its service levels.

9. Traffic Logs

The DCC presented an overview of the retention of traffic logs during an Incident. This review had been prompted by an OPSG request and a lesson learnt from the national power outage in August 2019: DCC service providers had not retained sufficient data to allow subsequent analysis of traffic on the network resulting from that occurrence.

The DCC reported that it had reviewed and amended its policy on the retention of traffic logs. The OPSG requested that the DCC provide a report summarising the changes it had made, including changes to templates and decision trees.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

ACTION OPSG 30/15: DCC to provide a summary of the changes to templates and decisions trees in regard to Network Logs.

10. Operational Metrics Project

SECAS presented an update on the Operational Metrics Review Project.

SECAS noted that the final report will be provided to members for review on 7 April. There will be a briefing session for SEC Parties on 5 March.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

11. SEC Releases 2020: June and November

SECAS and the DCC presented an update to the upcoming June 2020 and November 2020 SEC Releases.

DCC proposed that the June 2020 SEC Release date be moved from 25 June to 6 May. This will be done concurrently with the SMETS1 Core 1.1 Release. A LS member raised some concerns on the limited time to prepare for the SEC Release. A Small Supplier member noted that there is a benefit of the date being brought forward however it may need to go back to the SEC Working Group to assess that there will be no impact on Users, particularly due to the introduction of [SECMP0053 'Amend Target Response Times for Service Requests Critical to Installation and Commissioning Processes'](#): as this may require User system or process changes. The OPSG requested that DCC and SECAS confirm with Users the impact, if any, on Users of the changes proposed to the implementation date of the June release.

The OPSG agreed that it will carry out a preliminary review of readiness on 7 April and a final review on 27 April. The OPSG asked that the schedule for the November 2020 Release preparatory work be amended to include preliminary reviews by the OPSG.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

ACTION OPSG 30/16: The DCC and SECAS to confirm with Users whether Users would be impacted by a change to the June 2020 Release date.

ACTION OPSG 30/17: The DCC to present its statement of readiness for the June 2020 Release (which will also include contingency plans and assurances regarding concurrent implementation of SMETS1 Core 1.1 Release and the June 2020 Sec Release) for preliminary consideration at the 7 April OPSG meeting (OPSG_31).

ACTION OPSG 30/18: SECAS to add the June 2020 Release decision to the agenda for the OPSG Reporting meeting on 27 April (OPSG_31x).

ACTION OPSG 30/19: SECAS to revise the planned schedule of actions leading to the November 2020 Release to add reports to the OPSG (on progress towards readiness) at least three months and one month before the Go-live decision.

12. New Draft Proposals and Modification Proposals

SECAS presented the new Draft Proposals and Modification Proposals, and the OPSG highlighted that it had an interest in the following:

- [DP113 'Unintended Data Disclosure when using SR8.2'](#),
- [DP116 'Service Request Forecasting'](#)
- [DP117 'Bulk CH returns'](#)

The OPSG **NOTED** the Modification Proposals.

13. Performance Measurement Methodology - Consultation Approach

The DCC presented an update on the consultation approach to the Performance Measurement Methodology (PMM).

The DCC confirmed that this consultation will cover all the current and future SMETS1 Service Providers (S1SP) where contractual agreements have been formalised; this will address the

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outstanding OPSG and SEC Panel action on the DCC (SECP74/06). The DCC stated that any changes to the PMM going forward, will be brought to OPSG first for discussion and comment before being issued to industry.

The DCC confirmed that it will issue the consultation on SMETS1 additions to the PMM in March 2020.

The OPSG requested that the DCC confirm when the final responses to the December PMM consultation will be provided; this was a separate consultation that was unrelated to the SMETS1 additions (DCC PMM v2.3).

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

ACTION OPSG 30/20: DCC to confirm when a conclusion to the PMM consultation responses will be provided. This relates to the PMM Consultation that opened in December.

14. Release Management Policy – Consultation

The DCC presented the Release Management Policy to be issued to industry, including updates from the consultation.

The OPSG noted that a summary of the consultation responses and how they had been addressed had not been provided.

A DNO member asked when the consultation took place as they did not recall a notification. An Other member reiterated this sentiment and queried that if this took place over six months ago, why it has taken so long for it to be discussed at the OPSG.

The OPSG asked the DCC to confirm when the consultation was sent and requested that the DCC reissue the outcome of the consultation.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

ACTION OPSG 30/21: The DCC to confirm when the outcome of the Release Management Policy consultation was provided, and reissue this to OPSG members, together with a summary of issues raised and how they had been addressed.

15. OPSG Issues Log

SECAS presented the following topics seen as candidates for addition to the OPSG Issues Log:

1. The DCC system often times-out before the Devices have had time to receive/respond when Parties are replacing the Certificates via DCC Service Requests. In many cases the device has successfully replaced the Certificates, but the party receives a negative response from the DCC.
2. The lack of Dual Band CHs is a concern and there is no real clarity of when chipset issues will be resolved.
3. The stability of the Home Area Network (HAN) is often disrupted by the CH reboot every nine days, a condition which throws the Prepayment Meter Interface Device (PPMID) off the HAN and results in manual re-join processes – a growing problem and a cause of a significant number of 8F3E Alerts.

4. There are issues connecting Elster gas meter to WNC CHs during installation resulting in E21 responses in up to 20% of installs.
5. Lack of defect fixes for the Gas Proxy Function (GPF) within EDM CHs have stopped the ability to rollout prepayment functionality to customers in the North.

The OPSG **AGREED** that all of the Candidate Issues should be added to the OPSG Issues Log.

16. CodeWorks - get involved

SECAS informed members that they will shortly receive log in details to access CodeWorks, a digitalised version of the SEC.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

17. Customer Perspective

None proposed.

18. Any Other Business (AOB)

The OPSG **NOTED** the following:

- a) SECAS presented the dates for governance steps for the upcoming SEC Releases, including dates for the OPSG to review readiness, assess status of the Live Services Criteria (LSC) and provide a recommendation to the Panel
- b) Ofgem invited OPSG members to attend an Operational Performance Regime (OPR) workshop at the end of March, outlining that stakeholder participation is essential to help develop the forthcoming report that will be issued to industry.
- c) The DCC outlined that it has a business continuity plan to manage the business implications of the Corona Virus. This planning has included ensuring that service providers all have appropriate business continuity plans in place. These plans include dealing with staffing issues.

The DCC also confirmed that planning had included reviewing the supply chain, with a time horizon of eight months: DCC confirmed that no issues had been identified. The OPSG requested that the DCC confirm the stock levels of Production and Test Communication Hubs in this plan.

[Post Meeting Note: After the meeting, the OPSG Chair asked DCC to present a monthly update on the business continuity plans, including whether any of the plans had been invoked by DCC or its service providers. DCC agreed to do this. The Chair also notes that members may raise operational matters relating to the Corona Virus at the OPSG, especially where there may be benefits from discussion and coordination.]

ACTION OPSG 30/22: DCC to confirm Production and Test Communication Hub stock levels due to the risk of Corona Virus on the production chain in its business continuity plan and provide an update to the OPSG.

The OPSG Chair noted that it was Tim Hall's last meeting and, with the support of Members, thanked him for his contributions to the OPSG since its inception.

Next Reporting Meeting: 23 March 2020

Next Main Meeting: 7 April 2020