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Operations Group Meeting 31

7 April 2020, 10:00 – 17:00

Teleconference

OPSG_31_0704 - Draft Minutes

Attendees:

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

Representing	Other Participants
DCC	Steve Stathakis
	Wendy Liddell
	Chris Thompson (Part)
	Rob Richards (Part)
	Del Kang (Part)

	Darren Robbins
	Graeme Liggett
	Nicholas Ives (Part)
	Ian Tomkins (Part)
	Jason Hynes (Part)
	Dominic Butt (Part)
	Penny Brown (Part)
	Gav Parrott (Part)
SECAS	Huw Exley
	Damian Bevan (Part)
	Abhay Soorya (Part)
	Abigail Hermon (Part)
	Joey Manners
	Veronica Asantewaa (Meeting Secretary)
TABASC	Julian Hughes
BEIS	Natasha Free
	Eleanor Taylor

Apologies:

Representing	Name
Other SEC Party	Tom Woolley
Small Supplier	Simon Dowse

1. Previous Meeting Minutes

The Chair invited Operations Group (OPSG) members to comment on the Draft Minutes from OPSG_30.

The OPSG **AGREED** that the minutes from OPSG_30 would be published as final.

2. Panel Feedback Report

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

- A centralised service for sharing information about issues was approved and will be discussed at the May meeting (OPSG_32).
- The Panel endorsed the role of the OPSG in overseeing the monitoring and resolutions of superfluous Alerts as recommended by the Smart Metering Design Group (SMDG).

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

3. Actions Outstanding

SECAS presented the actions outstanding table from OPSG_30. 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	30/04/2020	DCC
<p>A Large Supplier (LS) member noted that this was due to be discussed on 17 March but due to Covid-19, the agenda was changed to accommodate the DCC's update on the current situation.</p> <p>However, the DCC stated that the business case for Production Proving will be published on the DCC's Customer Portal at the end of April.</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	30/04/2020	DCC
<p>The DCC noted that the update for this action is the same as action 16/02, in which the Change Co-ordination proposal (formerly Ecosystems Management Framework) will be published on the DCC's Customer Portal at the end of April. A LS member noted that login details are required to access the Portal. The LS member also queried why a business case for Change Co-ordination was needed as there is a SEC Modification in place. The DCC explained that the business case was used as a foundation to the SEC Modification to provide more visibility of the process and confirmed that the Modification will still be in place.</p> <p>Action Status: Open</p>					
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	07/04/2020	N/A	DCC
<p>The DCC provided slides for this action in the CGI Capacity Uplift Summary. The OPSG Chair asked if the costs incurred were simply brought forward, and would have been incurred subsequently in any case, as traffic increased. The DCC confirmed that this was correct.</p> <p><i>[Post meeting note: A LS member enquired subsequently whether any additional continuing operational costs had been incurred earlier than would otherwise have been the case.]</i></p> <p>Action Status: Closed</p>					

Action ID	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
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	07/04/2020	05/05/2020	DCC
<p>The DCC noted that in some cases, it is necessary that changes to the Production and Disaster Recovery (DR) environments are implemented at the same time. The DCC explained that it has measures in place to ensure the Production Proving and DR changes are applied safely. The DCC performs regular failover and DR tests and have not seen any adverse issues.</p> <p>The OPSG Chair requested that the DCC provide this information in writing for the next meeting (OPSG_32).</p> <p>Action Status: Open</p>					
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.	03/03/2020	07/04/2020	N/A	BEIS
<p>BEIS confirmed that this was not part of the Release 2 testing remit, however emphasised that the action was still progressed. BEIS explained that Alerts testing was not the primary purpose of User Interface Testing (UIT). However, BEIS raised this with the DCC and the Release 2 UIT participants, requesting that they incorporate Alerts tracking into the remaining one and a half weeks of UIT testing, and to report any observations.</p> <p>Although no further observations were noted by participants, this has now formed a core part of the metrics tracking in the recent Over the Air (OTA) pilot deployment.</p> <p>Action Status: Closed</p>					

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

4. Covid-19 Update

The DCC provided an update on its current operational status during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The DCC reported that they and their Service Providers continue to operate without problems. The DCC is meeting regularly with Service Users and its Service Providers to monitor the situation for any change. Business continuity arrangements have been put in place and critical staff identified. A LS member asked the DCC to provide the numbers of critical staff in its organisation.

The DCC explained that some DR tests for Communication Service Providers (CSPs), as well as SIE and DCO physical resilience testing, have been postponed until later in the year to minimise operational risk. The DCC have sent any Parties affected by this a legal statement stating that this does not waive their rights to ensure that the system is fit for purpose. The Users can still request that

the DCC to retest the system at a later date. The DCC confirmed that there is no other key Disaster Recovery testing scheduled before June, except for the SMETS1 Secure Middle Operating Capability (MOC) cohort which could pose a risk to the Secure Go Live.

The OPSG supported the decision to defer and replan DR testing, and requested that the DCC produce a revised plan as soon as it is practical to do so.

The DCC confirmed that it has started considering a Phase 2 approach to the Data Service Provider (DSP) queue management process and will share this with the OPSG and the Technical and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) soon.

ACTION OPSG 31/01: The DCC to provide the number of critical staff in its organisation for business continuity.

ACTION OPSG 31/02: The DCC to produce a revised plan for Disaster Recovery testing as soon as practically possible.

ACTION OPSG 31/03: The DCC to provide details of the Phase 2 approach to the queue management process to the OPSG and TABASC.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update

5. OPSG Issues Log

SECAS presented an update on the actively monitored Issues on the OPSG Issues Log.

A Distribution Network Operator (DNO) member noted that the issue regarding the 'Incorrect DNO Certificates' is still ongoing and they are working closely with the DCC to finalise the report. The DNO member noted the DCC now has a Supplier to test that this is fit for purpose.

The DCC and OPSG questioned the dates on the 'Lack of R2 Dual Band Hubs' issue. The OPSG noted that some items in the OPSG Issues Log are actively overseen at other forums (the IMF in the case of Dual Band Hubs). The OPSG noted that in such cases the OPSG Issues Log must accurately reflect the information published at the forum having oversight.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

6. IOC Aclara Live Service Criteria

The DCC presented its statement of readiness and status of the Live Service Criteria (LSC) for the SMETS1 Initial Operating Capability (IOC) for Aclara Device Model Combinations (DMC), to be added onto the Eligible Product Combinations List (EPCL).

The OPSG noted the current exceptional situation presented by Covid-19, and the implications for the assessment of the service against the relevant LSCs. The OPSG highlighted that due to the pandemic's potential impact on installation rates, DCC Systems are not being exposed to the levels of usage normally expected. The DCC is currently operating under its Business Continuity protocol, with further information on mitigations and assurance under LSC 9.

6.1 Component Readiness

Changes to the DCC System

The DCC noted that all components within the DCC Systems are marked as complete meaning that they were built, tested, deployed and ready for live operation.

A DNO member highlighted that for the past week the DCC has not been providing any SMETS1 post migration reports: the DNO member was concerned that Users had not been notified and an Incident had not been raised. The DCC noted that a fix had been implemented and this will be reviewed. The DCC also emphasised that this was not due to the Migration Control Centre (MCC) SMDR tool.

6.2 Residual Risks

The OPSG considered the residual risks that the DCC had identified in its preparations for IOC, and in its assessment of readiness against the LSC. [The DCC has retained the numbering from the Final Operating Capability (FOC) LSC submission which has left gaps in the numbering for risks which have been fully mitigated].

1. Lack of end to end capacity testing

This risk is unchanged from previous SMETS1 LSCs. The DCC stated that there was an open Severity 3 (formerly Severity 2) Defect with Aclara Devices relating to post commissioning, in which the management client key is successfully rotating, however the connection is open when it should be closed, and the verification fails. Aclara has provided the DCC with details of a fix whereby the connectivity times out after five minutes. The workaround will be implemented as part of a maintenance release on 5 May, however the DCC explained that it will not add the affected Aclara Devices to the EPCL until the workaround has been introduced to Production. Once implemented, the DCC will use the pacing strategy to migrate Devices in small volumes to ensure the solution is proven in Production. The OPSG **AGREED** that this risk is acceptable.

2. Migration of Active meters could impact consumers

The OPSG made no further comments and **AGREED** that this risk is acceptable.

3. Auxiliary Load capability

As with the other IOC Live Services Criteria, there are concerns that consumers could be impacted by this issue. However, the DCC, SMETS1 Service Providers and Suppliers are working closely to identify consumers with Auxiliary Load circuits to ensure that they are excluded from migration. The DCC stated that this issue will be resolved by the SMETS1 Core 1.1 Release, currently scheduled for deployment 6 May 2020. A LS member raised concerns regarding the approach to pacing strategy once this has been resolved due to the potential impact on energy consumers. The OPSG **AGREED** that this risk could be accepted in the short term while implementing a prudent pacing strategy and careful monitoring by the DCC.

5. Impact of Alert Storms in SMETS2

The DCC stated that for SMETS1 it has observed an average of 2.3 Alerts per installation per day with a total of 180,000 Alerts per day. This is not considered significant when compared with a total of over 50 million per day currently being experienced with SMETS2 Devices.

The DCC is closely monitoring the level of Alerts and this forms part of the daily 'Go/No Go' decision taken prior to starting any migrations each day.

The OPSG **AGREED** that this risk is acceptable along with the proposed mitigation of close monitoring.

6.3 LSC Review

The OPSG considered each of the LSCs within its scope, taking into account the DCC submission and earlier discussions at the meeting. The OPSG reached a view on whether it accepted the DCC statement of readiness for each LSC, taking account of the remaining actions to be completed. This view was summarised in a RAG status.

LSC 1: SMETS1 Migration Services ready including early migration support for relevant Device Model Combinations

The OPSG **AGREED** to accept the readiness statement provided by the DCC.

The OPSG agreed that the status for this LSC was **GREEN**.

LSC 2: Service Operations capability ready

The OPSG **AGREED** to accept the readiness statement provided by the DCC.

The OPSG agreed that the status for this LSC was **GREEN**.

LSC 3: SMETS1 Service and Migration can operate at the requisite volumes to support migration and operation of the relevant DMC and operating capability, in parallel with all SMETS2 activity

The OPSG noted that due to Covid-19, the SMETS2 activity is significantly reduced with new installations effectively suspended. The OPSG **AGREED** to accept the readiness statement provided by the DCC.

The OPSG agreed that the status for this LSC was **GREEN**.

LSC 6: Pre-existing services remain stable for SMETS2 and SMETS1 prior to operating capabilities

The OPSG noted the reduction in the number of Incidents since January. A DNO member highlighted the issue of missing SMETS1 reports (as mentioned in Component Readiness, Section 6.1 above), which has now been resolved. The OPSG noted that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the DCC systems are not experiencing the usage that would be expected in business as usual.

The OPSG **AGREED** to accept the readiness statement provided by the DCC.

The OPSG agreed that the status for this LSC was **GREEN**.

LSC 7: Any lessons learnt from prior operating capabilities are incorporated into live process

The OPSG **AGREED** to accept the readiness statement provided by the DCC.

The OPSG agreed that the status for this LSC was **GREEN**.

LSC 8: No detrimental impact to consumers' experience expected

The OPSG outlined that LSC8 (impact on consumer experience) was previously Amber due to the risk to consumers with Auxiliary Load circuits. The DCC will mitigate this by not migrating impacted Devices until it can introduce the fix as part of Core 1.1, scheduled for May 2020. The OPSG requested that the DCC consider the possibility of energy consumer impact when planning the pacing strategy for Auxiliary Load circuits installations, and with this qualification agreed that this LSC should be assessed as Green.

The OPSG **AGREED** to accept the readiness statement provided by the DCC.

The OPSG agreed that the status for this LSC was **GREEN**.

LSC 9: Assurance of required Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

As mentioned under agenda item 4, many DR tests have been postponed due to Covid-19. The OPSG acknowledged that the DCC has difficulty rescheduling these tests due to the current situation. The OPSG requested that the DCC provide information on the implications of the postponement and a revised plan as soon as practically possible.

The OPSG **AGREED** to accept the readiness statement provided by the DCC.

The OPSG agreed that the status for this LSC was **AMBER**, but agreed that this should not delay the planned migration.

ACTION OPSG 31/04: The DCC to consider the impact on energy consumers when planning the pacing strategy for Auxiliary Load circuits.

6.4 Recommendation

The OPSG **AGREED** to endorse the recommendation to the Panel to add IOC Aclara DMCs to the EPCL.

7. June 2020 Preliminary Review

The DCC presented the scope of the June 2020 SEC Release for OPSG consideration.

The OPSG raised concerns that the DCC was making SSI changes as a result of [SECMP0062 'Northbound Application Traffic Management – Alert Storm Protection'](#), without following the appropriate governance steps for the SSI or involving Users. A DNO member noted that there is limited time for this to go to consultation to see if the new changes are fit for purpose. The OPSG asked that the DCC proposes how this failure should be rectified and the lessons learnt.

The DCC also confirmed that the Performance Measurement Report (PMR) for [SECMP0053 'Amend Target Response Times for Service Requests Critical to Installation and Commissioning Processes'](#) has been updated.

A LS member queried when, now that the majority of testing is occurring in System Integration Testing (SIT)-A and UIT-A, functionality testing will begin in UIT-B to make sure that there is no negative impact with FOC and other testing being performed in UIT-B. The DCC confirmed that for SIT-B, this will begin on 28 April and for UIT-B 30 April.

The OPSG reviewed an informative initial report of progress towards readiness: no problems were reported by the DCC. The OPSG requested that the DCC consider and include in their report the residual risks of the June 2020 Release.

ACTION OPSG 31/05: The DCC to investigate whether the SSI changes have gone through the SSI governance process, and if not, propose an approach to rectify this, and to identify the lessons learnt.

ACTION OPSG 31/06: The DCC to consider and report the residual risks for the June 2020 Release.

8. Major Incidents

There were no Major Incidents this month.

9. DCC Operational Update

The DCC presented an update on its Operations.

The DCC stated that the volumes for Category 2 Incidents had been misreported in February and March. The DCC will update the report and circulate with the correct volumes.

A LS questioned the data presented on Problems and Change Management including average age of Problems. A LS asked whether the MOC and FOC dates are considered within the Forward Schedule of Change. The DCC noted that it will investigate and redistribute, if necessary.

The DCC stated that there has been a steady change success rate and expects the change coordination activity to decrease over the coming months.

A DNO member raised concerns over duplicate DSP34 and N13 Alerts in the system. The DCC noted that it will investigate.

The DCC noted that since the migration of Morrisons Data Services (MDS) MOC Devices, it has seen an increase of 8F01 Alerts; therefore, these migrations have been paused whilst this is investigated. A LS asked the DCC whether there were any lessons learnt or improvements from the current SMETS1 migrations regarding the configuration process and validation. The DCC stated that this is an agenda item for the Design Authority meeting on the 8 April 2020 and outputs will be shared with members.

ACTION OPSG 31/07: The DCC to investigate duplicate DSP34 and N13 Alerts in the system.

ACTION OPSG 31/08: The DCC to investigate Problem and Change Management data provided in DCC Operational Update graphs (Average age of problems and MOC and FOC on Forward Schedule of Change).

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

10. Spurious Alerts

The DCC presented an update on the Alerts.

8F12

The DCC outlined that 8F12 Alerts will have a major impact on the lifespan of Communication Hubs (CHs); the DCC will begin to produce reports for Users to predict the life-expiry date for individual CHs based on 8F12 Alert volumes. The OPSG asked whether the DCC will continue this reporting post resolution of 8F12s as a general report on CH expected expiry. The OPSG requested the DCC to confirm if all Devices connected to an expired CH will need to be replaced, or whether just a Trust Centre Swap Out (CH Replacement) will be required, and how it will inform Users.

The DCC believes it has identified a root cause of 8F12 Alerts and will discuss this at the Technical Specifications Issue Resolution Sub-Group (TSIRS), and with relevant manufactures for confirmation. The DCC noted that there are some indications that the Release 2.0 CH firmware upgrade may have produced an improvement in the 8F12 Alerts; out of the chatty devices upgraded, 13 out of 14 had stopped alerting after the upgrade. However, it is too early to confirm this definitively due to the sporadic nature of the alert behaviour, and the limited evidence so far available.

8F3E

The 8F3E alerts have recently plateaued in growth, however this may be correlated to the reduction in installations. The DCC noted that a CH firmware fix is subject to operational acceptance on 8 April 2020 with a Pilot to follow shortly after. The DCC believes this fix will resolve up to 50% of the 8F3E alerts in CSP C&S. The DCC has worked with Service Users to identify candidates for the pilot and will monitor any change in alert behaviour throughout the Pilot.

ACTION OPSG 31/09: The DCC to confirm whether all Devices connected to an expired CH will need to be replaced, or just a Trust Centre Swap Out (CH Replacement) will be required, and how it will inform Users.

ACTION OPSG 31/10: The DCC to confirm how information about expired CHs will be shared.

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

11. Excluded Alerts - SECMP0062

The DCC presented the excluded Alerts that will be incorporated into [SECMP0062 'Northbound Application Traffic Management - Alert Storm Protection'](#).

The OPSG expressed concerns about changing at short notice the list of excluded alerts and the configuration parameters for this process from those agreed during the Modification Process. The governance process for making such changes has not yet been set out.

The OPSG (including Supplier members) noted that it was anticipated that installation and commissioning activity would be extremely low for the immediate future, and therefore that the risk of impact on installation identified by DCC would not crystallise immediately.

Therefore the OPSG:

- Did not agree that type 8F12 alerts should be added to the Exclusion List
- Did not agree that the proposed changes to the configuration parameters should be made
- Asked that, in the absence of any urgent requirements to the contrary, the appropriate governance process should be set out, and then applied to the proposed changes.

12. CSP Audits

This agenda item was deferred to the May meeting (OPSG_32).

13. CSP N Capacity/Network Modelling

This agenda item was deferred to the May meeting (OPSG_32).

14. On Demand Read Requests

This agenda item was deferred to the May meeting (OPSG_32).

15. Work Package - Q1 2020 submission (Apr - Jun)

SECAS presented the OPSG Quarterly Work Package and clarified the activities and estimated costs for the SECAS core team and project resource for the period of April – June 2020.

The OPSG **RECOMMENDED** the Quarterly Work Package for SECCo Board approval.

16. Operational Metrics Project

SECAS presented its final update on the Operational Metrics Review Project.

The OPSG noted that the previous draft of the report had been distributed to all SEC Parties for comment, and that responses had been supportive. (Details of all responses received and how they had been addressed in the revised draft had been published).

The OPSG noted a number of comments made by the DCC.

In particular, it was noted that DCC had expressed concerns about the cost and practicality of reducing the time allowed for producing the PMR Report. The OPSG did not ask that this be changed in the report, noting the difficulties that current lengthy elapsed time causes, and noting that it could be considered during the modification process.

The Chair also asked why the DCC's written response had apparently questioned whether the project report was sufficiently focused on User requirements, despite this having been the principal driver for the project. However, DCC were not able to expand on their written comment.

The OPSG reviewed and endorsed the recommendations of the report, except as noted below.

Recommendation 4.3: Number of Incidents

A LS member highlighted that having targets for the number of Category 1 and 2 Incidents will give a perverse incentive to the DCC, and Incidents may be categorised incorrectly. A Small Supplier (SS) member noted that important targets were those for the resolution of incidents and the restoration of service. The OPSG Chair noted that the DCC will continue to report the number of Category 1 and 2 Incidents, which will be used as an indicator instead of a target measure.

Recommendation 4.5: Management of CH Exceptions

A LS member suggested that DCC should consult users on the proposed process for managing exceptions. The views from the OPSG could be considered as part of this. A LS member also mentioned this will provide a better approach to the exception list so that new exceptions are clearly defined. The DCC noted that it will review the proposed process.

The OPSG noted that the above recommendations will be adjusted in the final report.

OPSG members were invited to provide any final comments to SECAS by the end of the following day.

[Post meeting note: One comment was received and actioned to make a grammatical change to the report.]

ACTION OPSG 31/11: The DCC to outline the approach for additions/removals of Exceptions, through the PMEL forum and how the OPSG will contribute.

The OPSG:

- **ENDORSED** the Recommendations in the report (subject to the changes noted above); and
- **AGREED** that the report should be sent to the Panel.

17. Customer Perspective

A LS member presented this month's customer perspective.

A LS member highlighted that they are yet to see the CSP triage audit from the CH returns process, as many CHs due to be returned have passed the 90-day window, which in turn result in them being discarded. The DCC stated that it has stopped the CH returns process due to Covid-19 and the operational risks.

A LS member also raised issues with CH deliveries, in which the majority of Suppliers reached warehouse storage capacity and want to suspend CHs being delivered and consider other options to manage this. The DCC noted it is working with BEIS to explore its options as it still needs to keep the supply chain open. A session will be held at the next SMDG meeting to discuss this further.

The OPSG **NOTED** the Customer Perspective.

18. Any Other Business (AOB)

SECAS requested that the OPSG send any further comments on [DP123 'IVP realignment of SMETS2 v2.0 and v3.1'](#) to SECAS by 16 April.

ACTION OPSG 31/12: The OPSG to send any further comments on [DP123 'IVP realignment of SMETS2 v2.0 and v3.1'](#) to SECAS by 16 April.

Next Reporting Meeting: 27 April 2020; Next Main Meeting: 5 May 2020.