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# Panel Release Management Policy

Approved

9<sup>th</sup> February 2018

V2.0

## Change History

VERSION	STATUS	ISSUE DATE	AUTHOR	COMMENTS
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0.2	Draft	14/09/2015	SECAS	Revised following consultation
1.0	Approved	11/12/2015	SECAS	Final for publication
1.1	Draft	15/11/2017	SECAS	For Consultation
1.2	Draft	02/02/2018	SECAS	Revised following consultation
2.0	Approved	09/02/2018	SECAS	Final for publication

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## 1. Scope of Policy

The following matters are subject to the Panel Release Management Policy:

- The setting and prioritisation of implementation timetables and implementation dates;
- The frequency of SEC Releases; and
- The implementation of all approved Modification Proposals.

### 1.1 Secretary of State Directions

The majority of modifications to the Smart Energy Code will be made via approved Modification Proposals. However, the SEC does allow for amendment via directions from the Secretary of State in accordance with powers outlined within the Energy Act 2008.

Directions from the Secretary of State will typically be achieved through a signed direction letter, or Statutory Instrument, from the Secretary of State that will specify an effective date for any such amendments.

Whilst such changes may be delivered at the same time as a scheduled SEC Release or form a standalone release, this policy does not detail the delivery of such changes as it is anticipated that the Authority will determine a suitable release strategy in collaboration with the SEC Panel.

## 2. Frequency of Releases

### 2.1 Scheduled Releases

There will be three scheduled releases of SEC content per year. Two of these scheduled releases will allow modifications that impact both DCC systems and SEC documentation and will be referred to as 'SEC System Releases'. It is possible for a SEC System Release to contain no DCC system-impacting modifications. The third scheduled release will not impact the DCC systems, and will allow only modifications that impact just SEC documentation. Whilst such a release may have a User impact, these are referred to as 'SEC Documentation Releases'.

The scheduled release cycle will be:

Release	Timing of Release	Type
February	Last Thursday	SEC Documentation Release
June	Last Thursday	SEC System Release
November	First Thursday	SEC System Release

### 2.2 Ad-Hoc Releases

Where it is not appropriate or efficient to implement a modification in a scheduled SEC Release, additional ad-hoc releases of new SEC content may occur.

An Ad-Hoc Release may implement documentation only changes and/or changes that have an impact on the DCC System.

The process for developing and delivering an Ad-Hoc Release is the same as that of a scheduled release.

### 2.3 Naming convention

Scheduled and ad-hoc releases to the SEC and supporting documentation will be referred to as SEC Releases. Each SEC Release will be titled after the date at which the release contents will go-live, e.g. June 2019 SEC Release.

## 3. Setting implementation dates

### 3.1 Setting dates

The implementation date for a Modification Proposal will be set by the SEC Panel when the Modification Report for that proposal is presented to the Panel. Should a Modification Proposal be approved by the Authority it will be implemented on the date set by the Panel.

In setting the implementation date the Panel will take into consideration:

- The views of the Proposer, Working Groups, SEC Parties, the DCC and any relevant Panel subcommittee;
- The requested lead time from impacted SEC Parties;
- The requested lead time from the DCC;
- The complexity and urgency of the modification;
- The size and scope of existing releases delivering approved modifications; and
- Any potential efficiencies that may be achieved in delivering a modification in a specific release.

In setting the implementation date, the Panel will be able to account for the priority of a Modification Proposal relative to other targeted or approved Modification Proposals in a release. Where necessary, the Panel may request the Authority revises approved implementation dates for other modifications in response to a change in priorities.

### 3.2 Fall back dates

When setting a release date, the Panel will ensure that the Modification Report, where appropriate, contains a 'decision by date' and a 'fall back date'. As such, release dates will be constructed in the following format:

- SECMPxxxx will be implemented in the
  - mmm/yyyy SEC Release if a decision to approve is made on or before the xx/mmm/yyyy; or
  - mmm/yyyy SEC Release if a decision to approve is reached after xx/mmm/yyyy, but on or before xx/mmm/yyyy.

## 4. Release Implementation Documentation

### 4.1 The Release Implementation Documentation

Once a Modification Proposal has been approved by the Authority it will fall into a SEC Release. In order to track the implementation approach, impacts, costs and progress of a SEC release, a Release Implementation Document (RID) will be drafted.

Each SEC Release will have its own RID. The Panel will have oversight of each RID, which will evolve as the scope of a release develops until it is finalised. The Panel shall approve the RID and any subsequent amendments.

Once a modification has been approved for inclusion as part of a release, a draft RID will be produced and published on the SEC Website. This draft RID will be updated as each subsequent modification is approved, until it is baselined in line with section 5.2 of this document.

#### 4.2 Party interaction

SEC Section D10.4 requires each Party to co-operate with the Panel to ensure that approved Modification Proposals are implemented by the respective implementation date. Therefore, the RID will indicate where support from Parties or specific party categories are required to aid the successful implementation of a release.

Each RID will be published on the SECAS website, and made available to Parties. Any Party that wishes to comment on the RID, may do so by notifying the SECAS helpdesk. The Panel will consider the comment or query and act accordingly.

#### 4.3 Content of the Release Implementation Document

The RID will contain details of:

- Each Modification Proposal that has been approved for inclusion as part of the SEC Release;
- The impacts that each modification will have on each Party Category and on the DCC systems;
- A list of the other SEC related documentation (such as SECAS Guidance documents, Design Notes etc) that will need to be amended as part of the implementation of the SEC Release;
- The timescales and activities associated with implementing the content of the SEC Release, including timescales for the commencement and completion of DCC and User testing phases;
- The DCC testing approach (proposed by the DCC) that sets out the testing activities that will be undertaken to deliver each approved Modification Proposal within the SEC Release;
- The required level of User testing and details of how the DCC shall support Users with testing;
- The SEC Release acceptance criteria that shall be agreed by the Panel that will need to be met before the release can Go Live;
- The central cost of implementation (i.e. the cost for both SECAS and the DCC to implement the SEC Release). The following categories of costs will be published in the RID:
  - I. Implementation costs – The one-off cost to deliver the full set of changes on the specific release date. This may include any new hardware or environments required by the DCC.
  - II. Ongoing costs – any costs that would be incurred on an enduring basis following the implementation of any modifications in order to deliver the intent of that/those modification(s).
  - III. Release overheads – the estimated cost of delivering a SEC Release as a project. This cost would include such activities as project management.

## **5. Finalising the Release Scope**

### **5.1 Release ‘cut-off’ dates**

To allow for certainty over the scope of a SEC Release, and to provide sufficient time for Users to prepare for the implementation date, a ‘cut-off date’ for the inclusion of Modification Proposals to a SEC Release will be applied.

The cut-off date for Modification Proposals that impact the DCC and/or User systems will be set at 12 months prior to the implementation date of a release. For example, a system impacting modification targeted at the June 2020 Release, would need to be approved for implementation by June 2019.

For Modification Proposals that only impact SEC documentation, and not DCC systems, the cut-off date will be set at six months prior to the release implementation date.

There may be occasions where applying the cut-off dates set out above would not be the most efficient way to deliver change. In this situation, the Panel can choose to approve the Modification Proposal for that Release, as long as the lead time for that Modification Proposal is shorter than the time remaining before implementation. Any rationale for including this Modification Proposal after the cut-off date will be clearly provided in the Modification Report and communicated to all SEC Parties.

For example, if a modification that impacts the DCC Systems had a lead time of only six months and it was approved 11 months before a particular release (one month after the cut-off date), the Panel could still elect to include that modification in that release, if it believed it was right to do so.

Equally, the lead time to implement a modification may preclude it from being included in the next available SEC Release even if the cut-off date had not yet passed when it was approved.

For example, a modification that impacts the DCC Systems has a lead time of 20 months. The modification is approved 13 months before a particular release (one month before the 12-month cut-off date). This Modification could not form part of that release since, despite being approved before the cut-off date, the lead time would prohibit its inclusion.

### **5.2 Baselineing the RID**

Over time the Panel will be presented with an evolving copy of the RID for a specific release and will approve any amendments to that document.

When the cut-off dates for a release are reached, the RID will be presented to the Panel to be signed off. This version of the RID will include all the information as set out in section 4.3 of this document.

The baselined RID will include the final costs of the SEC Release. These costs will be an amalgamation of the costs presented in each individual Modification Report. It is assumed that the costs of a SEC Release will lower than the sum of the costs quoted in each Modification Report since there should be synergies and efficiencies with delivering Modifications together in a release. The final RID will include rationale for any difference between the previously published costs and the final amalgamated release costs.

Once the RID has been signed off, it will be baselined. Any further changes through Modification Proposals subsequently approved will be managed as exceptions within the release implementation project.

### **5.3 Amending the Release Scope or Date**

Once a modification has been approved for inclusion in a SEC Release, it may become necessary to move the modification to a subsequent release or delay its implementation date by a period of time.

In such a circumstance, the Panel may issue a request to the Authority to delay the implementation of a Modification Proposal. The provisions and process to allow the Panel to request moving implementation dates are set out in Section D of the SEC.

### **5.4 Communication Strategy**

In order to keep SEC Parties informed of the development of SEC Releases the following communication will be issued by SECAS:

- Notification of the approval of a Modification Proposal for a scheduled (or ad-hoc) release within 1WD of a decision;
- Notification 12 months and 6 months prior to the release implementation date highlighting cut-off dates and the scope of any release; and
- A notice one month prior to the release implementation date notifying Parties of imminent go-live.

In addition to issuing the notifications set out above, each Modification Proposal will have its own page on the SEC Website which will provide a means to track the progression throughout the process. It will provide details of targeted and then approved implementation dates. This information will also be reflected in the Modification Register.

Each SEC Release will also have its own release page on the SEC Website, setting out the content of a release as it develops. It will also provide the associated cut-off dates for the inclusion of further Modification Proposals into that scheduled release.

### **5.5 Release Notes**

As part of the outcome of testing of a Modification or suite of Modifications for a release, any associated DCC Release Notes will be provided by the DCC and made available on the respective release page on the SEC Website.

## **6. Panel Sub-Committee Support**

### **6.1 Testing Advisory Group**

When required, the Testing Advisory Group (TAG) will be utilised to review and comment on Modification Testing at a modification specific level.

The TAG will also be utilised to review and comment on the approach for release level testing, testing progress and testing outcomes, to aid the Panel in any decisions that are required. A timetable of when TAG input is expected will be included as part of the wider implementation approach timescales in the RID.

Users will be kept informed as to what type of testing will be required and when it will take place, in line with the approach set out in the RID. This information will be communicated to Users via email and through the SEC Website. In addition, any supplementary testing information will be made available on the respective release page on the SEC Website.



## 6.2 Operations Group

When required the SEC Operations Group will provide a view on the impact a release will have on the operational environment and the timing and duration of any required outages. These views will form part of the RID for a release and will help shape any decisions the Panel need to make.

In addition, the Operations Group will help review the Panel's acceptance criteria and will assist the Panel with the SEC Release go-live decision.

## 7. Release Go-Live

At least one month before a go-live date the Panel will be presented with sufficient information to make a go-live decision for the SEC Release. The specific information required and the Acceptance Criteria for each Release will be set out in the RID. Before the Panel review the information, input must have been sought from the Operations Group and TAG. Other Sub-Committees may be consulted on depending on the scope of the Release.

## 8. Change Freeze

Circumstances may arise that would cause the Panel to consider introducing a period of change freeze; so that no Modification Proposals can be implemented over a set period of time.

If the Panel needs to introduce a period of change freeze, they will first consult with SEC Parties. The consultation will set out the rationale for the change freeze and details of the intended period. The Panel will consider the consultation responses when reaching a decision on whether or not to introduce a change freeze.

## 9. Configuration Management of SEC Documents

Version control of the SEC will follow the approach that the first release of the calendar year, typically the scheduled February release, would be an integer increase to the version of the main Code document<sup>1</sup> (i.e. vX.0), with the other two releases and any ad-hoc releases during the remainder of the year being decimal increments (i.e. v0.X).

All other SEC Subsidiary Documents will have an individual version number applied, which will be increased whenever an approved Modification Proposal or Secretary of State directed change to the Subsidiary Document is implemented.

To aid SEC Parties in keeping track of the current status and versions of the SEC, and any valid versions of SEC Subsidiary Documents, a document register will be produced and maintained setting out the current:

- version of the SEC;
- version of each individual SEC Subsidiary Document; and
- active versions of SEC Subsidiary Documents where there is more than one valid version in operation.

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<sup>1</sup> all SEC Sections and Schedules  
Panel Release Management Policy  
v2.0

Where applicable the effective from and effective to date of any documents will be indicated. The document register will be published on the SEC Website.



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