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DP137

‘Sharing Information on Defects and Issues’

Modification Report

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Managed by



About this document

This document is a draft Modification Report. It currently sets out the background, issue, and progression timetable for this modification, along with any relevant discussions, views and conclusions. This document will be updated as this modification progresses.

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1. Summary

This Modification Proposal has been raised by Ralph Baxter of Octoenergy.

Currently, there is no approach allowing Smart Energy Code (SEC) Parties and the Data Communications Company (DCC) to share information on known issues and Devices (except Communications Hubs) except via forums due to the commercially sensitive information surrounding the Devices. Though some Suppliers may have information to support the resolution of some Device issues, there is no accessible means to share such information across the industry. Consequently, the lack of an industry approach to tackling issues and defects posed by Devices and Device Combinations means that issue fixes are slow for the end energy consumer.

This modification intends to develop an approach to share information between SEC Parties relating to issues and defects affecting Devices and Device Model Combinations.

2. Issue

What are the current arrangements?

Currently, there is no approach which allows Smart Energy Code (SEC) Parties and the Data Communications Company (DCC) to share information on known issues and Devices (except Communications Hubs) except via forums such as the DCC's Top Issues Forum. However, this forum operates without the recording of the issues and resolutions discussed to adhere to commercial sensitivity despite this hindering the ability for relevant information to be shared to wider stakeholders.

However, such information cannot be shared beyond forums such as the Top Issues Forum and is only made privy to the investigative SEC Parties. Being able to share such information would help ensure that relevant information is available to all SEC Parties.

What is the issue?

Due to the current arrangements, there is no current methodology or approach for the DCC or SEC Parties to access, share and understand defects that relate to specific Devices or Device Model Combinations (except Communication Hubs). Consequently, it is not possible for SEC Parties to easily share knowledge about the behaviour of Devices when paired in various combinations which means that information is siloed and limits the industry in the provision of workarounds or fixes.

What is the impact this is having?

In the past few years, the lack of shared information has led to the industry facing issues that are not quickly resolved due to the commercially sensitive information associated with Devices. Following deployment of Devices into the field, the industry has recognised that Devices behave differently depending on the combination of devices and firmware versions within a Home Area Network (HAN). Due to the commercial sensitivities regarding each manufacturers' Device, issues are not openly discussed.

Consequently, when a Supplier gains a Device following a Change of Supply (CoS), it may not operate in the same manner as the Devices that the Supplier installed itself due to the differing Device Model Combinations in the field. The variations of Device Model Combinations continues to grow across industry as the rollout continues. Therefore the ability to share reliable and up to date information has increasing significance to ensure devices maintain interoperability.

The lack of shared information means that if the DCC is aware of a particular Device behaviour, then this information can only be shared by engaging with the relevant Supplier directly to ensure the issue is fixed. This is a hindrance to the industry because solutions are not openly shared, which reduces the industry's ability to investigate and resolve Device and system issues. The lack of an industry approach to tackling issues and defects posed by Devices and combinations of Devices means that progress in providing fixes and workarounds for such problems is slower than it could be if the information were easily shared.

3. Assessment of the proposal

Observations on the issue

The SEC Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) has developed a Principles and Process document to address this issue. However, the DCC suggested that to implement a solution it would be necessary to progress a SEC modification, an approach which was endorsed by the Panel.

Appendix 1: Progression timetable

The Draft Proposal was raised on 20 July 2020 and will be presented to the Change Sub-Committee for initial discussion on 28 July 2020. Following this, input will be sought from the Panel Sub-Committees and Parties before the Change Sub-Committee makes its final recommendations on the issue.

Timetable	
Event/Action	Date
Draft Proposal raised	20 Jul 2020
Presented to CSC for initial comment	28 Jul 2020
Input sought from Sub-Committees and Parties	Jul – Aug 2020
Presented to CSC for final comment and recommendations	25 Aug 2020

Appendix 2: Glossary

This table lists all the acronyms used in this document and the full term they are an abbreviation for.

Glossary	
Acronym	Full term
CoS	Change of Supplier
DCC	Data Communications Company
SEC	Smart Energy Code
SECAS	Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat