Operations Group Meeting 35

4 August 2020, 10:00 – 16:15

Teleconference

OPSG_35_0408 - Final Minutes

Attendees:

Category	Operations Group Members
Operations Group Chair	Dave Warner
DCC	Steve Stathakis
	Alex Henighan
Network Parties	Gemma Slaney
	Matthew Alexander
Large Suppliers	Tony Shanahan
	John Noad
	Rochelle Harrison
	Martin Christie *(Alternate for Zoe Marklew)*
	Mark Morrison
	Paul Clark
	Ed Webber
	Ralph Baxter
Small Suppliers	Kate Frazer
	Kate Barnes
Other SEC Parties	Geoff Huckerby
	Elias Hanna
	Tom Woolley

Representing	Other Participants
DCC	Wendy Liddell
	Darren Robbins
	Joanne Glynn (Part)
	Ian Brown (Part)
	Penny Brown (Part)
	Chris Thompson (Part)

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	Steve Hardy (Part)
	Helen Metcalfe (Part)
	Paul Weatherly (Part)
	Ro Crawford (Part)
	Jason Hynes (Part)
	Jim Henton (Part)
	Clive Hallam (Part)
	Graeme Liggett (Part)
	Nicholas Ives (Part)
	Allan Atack (Part)
	Gav Parrot (Part)
	Steve Barcroft (Part)
	Moses Ndukwe (Part)
	Alan Simmons (Part)
	David Higginson (Part)
	Andrew McVinnie (Part)
Arqiva	Rob Puryer (Part)
SECAS	Huw Exley
	Joey Manners
	Veronica Asantewaa (Meeting Secretary)
TABASC	Julian Hughes
BEIS	Natasha Free
	Dan Chambers

Apologies:

Representing	Name
Small Suppliers	Simon Dowse
Lage Suppliers	Rob Short

1. Previous Meeting Minutes

The Chair invited Operations Group (OPSG) members to comment on the Draft Minutes from OPSG_34.

The OPSG **AGREED** that the minutes from OPSG_34 would be published as final.

2. Panel Feedback Report

SECAS provided the OPSG with highlights from the July SEC Panel meeting.

CSP N Reporting & Performance

The SEC Panel agreed to notify Ofgem of the DCC and Communication Service Provider North (CSP N) failures in performance and reporting. The SEC Panel agreed to formally request a remediation plan from the DCC specifying a date for achieving the SLA. This will be reviewed by the OPSG and then reported back to the SEC Panel.

Terms of Reference Project Brief

The SEC Panel was provided with an approach to review and update the Terms of Reference (ToR) for Sub-Committees.

The SEC Panel approved the scope of this project. SECAS will consider using more general wording which would apply to a wider range of operational activities in the OPSG ToR to reduce the need for future editing. There will be engagement with the OPSG during this project.

SMETS1 MOC Secure EPCL Recommendation

The SEC Panel approved the recommendation for MOC Secure subject to OPSG and Security Sub-Committee (SSC) conditions. BEIS and the DCC subsequently postponed migration due to further information on defects and further SMETS1 Incidents.

Network Evolution

The SEC Panel requested that the DCC provide a cost benefit analysis of the network evolution plans.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

3. Actions Outstanding

SECAS presented the OPSG Actions Outstanding. 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 34/08	The DCC to provide a graph showing the end to end capacity for of the DCC system and also capacities of components (e.g by Service Provider (CSPs and DSP)).	07/07/2020	04/08/2020	01/09/2020	DCC
The OPSG noted that the graph does not show the end to end capacity, and also that capacity and usage was expressed in terms of "CPU cycles" rather than service transactions which would be more meaningful for Users. **Status: Closed.** (This action will be closed and replaced by action OPSG 35/07).					

Action ID	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
OPSG 34/10	The DCC to share the Terms of Reference of the audit on CSP performance with the OPSG.	07/07/2020	04/08/2020	N/A	DCC
The OPSG will review the ToR and provide any further comments to SECAS in five working days. **Status: Closed.** (This action will be closed and replaced by action OPSG 35/01).					
OPSG 34/11	The DCC to include the data reported to the OPSG in the Terms of Reference of the audit, not just the data reported to DCC by Service Providers.	07/07/2020	04/08/2020	01/09/2020	DCC
The OPSG Chair highlighted that given the current failures in performance reporting, reference to the 2018 audit is not sufficient, and will need a further response from the DCC. **Status: Open.**					
OPSG 34/17	The DCC to investigate whether they have sufficient capacity on the SharePoint for the execution of SIP3	07/07/2020	04/08/2020	01/09/2020	DCC
A Large Supplier (LS) noted that all large reports are deleted after seven days. They highlighted that this is not useful and could lead to reports being missed by Users. The OPSG Chair questioned the current report generation capacity. The OPSG Chair highlighted that the DCC will need to explain the capabilities of SIP3 in a User-friendly way. The DCC noted it will address the concerns raised. **Status: Open.**					
OPSG 34/19	The DCC to circulate slides on the SRV4.10 packet size issue to OPSG members.	07/07/2020	04/08/2020	01/09/2020	DCC
SECAS noted that it has shared the information the DCC provided on this action with the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC). SECAS asked the OPSG to review whether it had experienced increased failures with historical meter reads, for discussion at the next meeting (OPSG_36). **Status: Open.**					
OPSG 34x/01	The DCC and SECAS to discuss MCC migration and reporting issues faced by DNO members.	10/07/2020	04/08/2020	N/A	DCC

Action ID	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner

A DNO member noted that it will review the new reporting once it has been developed to see if it is fit for purpose.

Status: Closed (This action will be replaced by action OPSG 35/02).

ACTION OPSG 35/01: The OPSG to review the ToRs for the audit on CSP performance reporting and provide any further comments to SECAS in five working days.

ACTION OPSG 35/02: DNO members to review the newly developed MCC reporting by the DCC and consider whether it is fit for purpose.

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 DCC and its Service Providers continue to maintain operational services at a Green status. The OPSG Chair was surprised Service Providers are reported as running at Green when DCC reporting has highlighted under performance of Service Providers as well as the missed BMax milestone. The DCC noted that in future reports it mentions any material of Service Provider difficulties caused by Covid-19.

The DCC informed the OPSG that its staff are returning to the offices on a voluntary basis. A LS asked if staff are returning to the London office to which the DCC confirmed that all DCC offices are open and available for staff to return. The DCC is currently using a desk booking system and a 'Safe and Well' tracker to ensure staff safety. All staff have been completing return to office training.

The DCC highlighted that SMETS2 installations continue to increase and are now up to 65% of pre Covid-19 volumes.

ACTION OPSG 35/03: The DCC to include any material of Service Provider difficulties in the Covid-19 Update.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

5. OPSG Issues Log

SECAS provided a brief update on the OPSG Issues Log. No further comments were raised by members and a detailed update will be provided at the next meeting (OPSG_36).

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

6. DCC Operational Update

The DCC presented an update on its operations.

The DCC informed the OPSG that Prepayment vends have increased more than expected, and the situation will be monitored closely. A LS member highlighted that this may be due to a corresponding increase in Pre-Payment installations and that energy consumers initially top up with smaller and more frequent payments until they feel more at ease with the Device.

The OPSG Chair requested that the DCC provide a view of the numbers and severity of Problems which relate to the defects that have been brought into the production environment. The DCC agreed to provide such a view. The Chair noted that this view would be helpful in upcoming Live Service Criteria (LSC) discussions.

The DCC presented a view of the average age of Open problems over the last six months. The OPSG Chair requested further information on the age of critical Problems.

The DCC highlighted that it performed 288 successful changes in July with only one adverse impact. This was the largest volume of change completed in a month to date. The OPSG questioned why there was a large difference between the completed changes and the scheduled changes. This suggested that a large number of changes are being identified and scheduled late. The DCC noted that the issue was twofold. A large number of Operational changes have to be completed at short notice and therefore cannot be tracked on the FSC.

Also, the graph presented omitted some changes included on the FSC, such as the November Release. The DCC acknowledged the error and agreed to update the graph. SECAS agreed that it will discuss improvements with the DCC, and the Chair noted that the DCC should present an agenda item at a future meeting on its approach to different types of change.

SMETS1

The DCC confirmed that the total migrations at the end of July was 663,519 with 95.8% successfully enrolled.

The DCC highlighted that it has recently paused migrations due to a Category 2 Incident and is planning to resume migrations soon.

SECAS mentioned that the biggest proportion of migration failures were related to gas communications, and queried whether there was an agreed approach to these. The DCC explained that any rejected migrations are triaged. If an installation cannot be migrated after the agreed number of retries, then the DCC will highlight this to BEIS. BEIS and DCC will then consider and agree guidance for Suppliers on the next steps.

The DCC was reviewing the options for remapping the alert code which currently does not distinguish between incorrect polarity and reverse flow. The OPSG requested that the DCC provide an update on the output of this review and whether there are any lessons for consideration of future SMETS1 cohorts. The DCC reiterated that there were no safety implications of the current mapping. The OPSG Chair reiterated concerns as to whether an appropriate industry forum has not considered and confirmed whether there are safety implications related to these Alerts.

A LS member noted that their migrations had been throttled from 37,000 to 30,000 for the week commencing 10 August and asked why this had occurred. The LS member was concerned by the impact to Suppliers when DCC slow or halt migrations and requested more information on how the DCC approach and communicate this.

SECAS questioned whether there was an intention to include SMETS1 operational reports for Pre-payment Devices. The DCC informed the OPSG that it would look to include them going forward. A LS endorsed the request noting that migration of prepayment Devices for the MOC Secure cohort is one of the biggest operational risks to Users. The DCC noted it has the ability to track prepayment

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Devices via the Early Life Support (ELS) team which is closely monitored to ensure correct behaviour. The OPSG asked DCC to propose more comprehensive reporting on SMETS1 and SMETS2 meters operating as prepayment, recognising that as numbers increased it would be important to identify any systemic operational issues in this area.

The DCC agreed to include Prepayment operational reporting in future DCC Operational Updates.

ACTION OPSG 35/04: The DCC to propose a design for SMETS1 andSMETS2 operations report for Pre-payment Devices.

ACTION OPSG 35/05: The DCC to add a graph showing the total number of open Incidents to the DCC Operational Update.

ACTION OPSG 35/06: The DCC to update the FSC graphs used in the Operational Update to include all scheduled changes.

ACTION OPSG 35/07: The DCC to present its approach to different types of change – including user affected, scheduled, and short notice operational updates at a future OPSG meeting.

ACTION OPSG 35/08: The DCC to confirm whether an appropriate forum has reviewed and assessed the safety implications related to the SMETS1 incorrect polarity and reverse flow Alerts.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

7. Spurious Alerts

The DCC presented an update on spurious Alerts.

The DCC noted that three Independent Distribution Network Operators (iDNOs) will need to update the configurations on Devices to suppress the 8014/8015 Alerts. However, as these iDNOs are not DCC Users yet and cannot change the configurations, there are a subset of these alerts that cannot be resolved. DCC, BEIS and SECAS are discussing the approach to resolving or managing this issue.

The DCC noted that the remaining 8014/8015 alerts are awaiting firmware upgrades from Suppliers to resolve. However, Suppliers have not received the firmware from the meter manufacturers. An Other SEC Party suggested that the DCC engage directly with the Meter Asset Provider (MAP) of these assets as they may be able to provide a faster resolution for these types of issues.

The OPSG noted the overall reduction of spurious Alerts (in particular 8F3Es), and the promising prospects for continued improvement (in particular the reduction of 8F12s). The DCC noted that the process going forward would include the monitoring of spikes in Alerts on the network and identifying whether any additional remediations are required. The DCC and SECAS are intending to present the lessons learnt and an enduring approach to the management of Spurious Alerts at a future OPSG meeting.

Capacity Forecasting

The DCC presented its view on capacity forecasting.

The OPSG noted that the forecast Data Service Provider (DSP) usage for a year's time was triple that currently. The OPSG expressed concern that this was a considerable increase and questioned how this had been modelled. The DCC noted that this has been modelled on the enrolment of all SMETS 1 meters and the forecast SMETS2 installations that would increase traffic levels. However, the OPSG maintained that this figure seemed high. The OPSG agreed that without a view of the source assumptions and data it was impossible to usefully review this figure. The OPSG noted that the graphs presented do not demonstrate the end to end capacity, as per OPSG action 34/08. The OPSG

Chair noted that it had previously been agreed that there would be a capacity update on a quarterly basis and there is further work to be done around the topic. It was agreed there would be a separate agenda item on the issue at a future meeting.

The DCC confirmed that the forecast provided for CSP N did not consider the reduction in alerts or the introduction of modifications such as [SECMP0062 'Northbound Application Traffic Management - Alert Storm Protection'](). The DCC will ensure the modelling is updated for future meetings.

The OPSG Chair noted that what was required was a forecast reflecting service traffic (rather than CPU usage); which would need to be derived from traffic profiles. A DNO member noted the need to also present utilisation in terms of peak usage in a period., The DCC agreed to provide this at the next meeting OPSG_36).

> **ACTION OPSG 35/09**: The DCC to provide a view of end to end capacity showing a forecast reflecting service traffic, using traffic profiles and to reflect peak usage.

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

8. Major Incident Review

SECAS presented a review of Major Incident INC000000599486.

The DCC outlined that the root cause of the Incident was a memory leak within the HSM module. This resulted in the failure of SMETS1 Service Requests and Responses across the platform.

SECAS and the OPSG questioned why the Incident was not raised to a Category 1 Incident sooner (for example, when it was confirmed that 90% of Service Requests were failing). The DCC explained that the level of Service Request failures increased steadily at first but then increased quickly causing difficulty categorising the Incident. SECAS added that the DCC view was that until an entire service is down, SMETS1 in this case, the DCC would not escalate to a Category 1 Incident. However, the DCC agreed that lessons could be learned from this Incident categorisation process.

The DCC informed the OPSG of challenges with the initial engagement with the DCO Service Desk during this Incident. The DCC explained that it is working with the Service Provider in addressing rules of engagement, escalation paths and response times and this will be included in the ongoing DCO stability plan.

The DCC explained that there is now regular engagement at senior management level with its Service Providers to address these issues.

The DCC agreed to amend the report to reflect the concerns raised, and the OPSG will provide any further comments within five days of the report being recirculated.

> **ACTION OPSG 35/10**: The DCC to make the requested amendments to the Major Incident Review Report for Incident INC000000599486 and recirculate this to members.
>
> **ACTION OPSG 35/11**: The OPSG to provide any further comments to the Major Incident Review Report for Incident INC000000599486 within five days of the report being recirculated.

The OPSG **NOTED** the Major Incident Review and **AGREED** that the report should be published after SECAS confirms that the requested amendments have been made.

9. SMETS1 Major Incident Summary and Service Status

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The DCC presented its summary of SMETS1 Major Incidents and Service status.

The OPSG Chair proceeded discussion by noting that BEIS was not requesting a formal statement from the SEC Panel on the latest SMETS1 MOC Secure go-live decision. However, BEIS will consider any views from the SEC Panel and its Sub-Committees.

The OPSG raised concerns with the timescales available to demonstrate the stability of the service before the first EPCL entry for MOC Secure is made. The DCC envisaged a minimum of five days of Incident free running. However, OPSG members had previously indicated they did not consider this to be adequate in the current circumstances. The DCC said that the current schedule does not plan for any Secure migrations before 24 August, allowing sufficient time to prove service stability.

The DCC presented its current schedule which proposed deploying the SMETS1 MOC Secure code on the weekend of 15 August subject to operational acceptance. The DCC noted that it will provide an update to the OPSG following the operational acceptance decision. Subsequently, BEIS will then consider approval of the EPCL entry. BEIS noted the reason for the delay in EPCL entries was the concern regarding the stability of the service, and also information on defects that had come to light. The OPSG noted the Go Live criteria of five days of stable service; the OPSG reiterated that this was not a sufficient timeframe to prove stability and had previously suggested a minimum of 10 days.

The DCC noted that all SMETS1 migrations have been halted since 28 July 2020. The DCC outlined that since the introduction of the Network Database (NDB) on 14 July 2020, the SMETS1 Service and SMETS1 Migration solution have been segregated, but they had taken the position to stop migrations as a precaution. The DCC is deploying enduring code fixes to the NDB on 4 August 2020, but is confident that SMETS1 migrations should not be impacted by the recent incidents. BEIS noted the current timeline would allow for small volumes of migrations to recommence week beginning 10 August, followed by the SMETS1 MOC Secure Code deployment. The OPSG showed concern that this did not provide an opportunity to demonstrate satisfactory stability.

A LS member further queried why an Incident on 27 July caused migrations to be paused on 29 July for a period of [10] days and what led the DCC to this decision. The LS noted that pausing migrations could significantly impact Users, especially when migrations include Pre-payment installations. The DCC explained that it has always used the same governance process to decide on pausing migrations, and the decision is based on the daily go/no-go call between the DCC and its Service Providers. A LS member commented that when migrations are stopped for long periods of time, User input and engagement would be useful. The OPSG noted that this will be even more important when sustained high levels of migrations are planned.

The DCC stated it will consider this option.

The OPSG **NOTED** the summary.

10.   CSP N Performance & Reporting

This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting (OPSG_35x).

11.   Aged Incidents & CH Exceptions

The DCC presented an update of Aged Incident and Communications Hub (CH) Exceptions.

Aged Incident

The DCC reported a slight increase in the volume of Aged Incidents since the previous report (approx. 4%). Incorrect CH Variant and Incorrect Credentials remain the largest category of Aged Incidents. The DCC continues to work with its Service Providers and Service Users to identify and resolve the underlying root causes and behaviour.

The DCC briefly presented a revised approach to managing Incidents related to Incorrect CH variants. The DCC proposed that new Incidents for "Incorrect CH Variant Installed" should only be raised where a SKU2 Device is installed at a site requiring a 'Gateway Hub' in the SM WAN Coverage Checker. This will reduce Incidents by 40% and make it clearer for Users to understand when site visits will need to be made. A LS member asked when the Incidents raised against a Gateway Hub will become available. The DCC noted that it is working with CSP Central and South (C&S) and will provide a list of Incidents that will be cancelled in the next few weeks. The OPSG questioned whether this proposal would contradict the requirements outlined within the Smart Energy Code (SEC). The DCC will work with SECAS to confirm that this proposal is in line with SEC requirements, and DCC will subsequently formally present full details of the proposal.

Regarding the "PCO Certificate Replacement Failure" Incident, the DCC will present a detailed proposal at the next meeting (OPSG_36), on the correct timing to raise an Incident to give a better representation of were the true failure is.

CH Exceptions

The DCC continues to host workshops with the CSPs on CH exceptions. The DCC will present changes to the definition of Exceptions and how these will be tracked at future OPSG meetings. Regarding the CH exception "No Incident for Outage", the DCC is working on improving how the information from CSP N is validated. A LS member agreed that more investigation is needed, as the quoted number of 260,000 Exceptions is still very high; further, this number appeared inconsistent with other reported figures. The DCC noted that if successful communication has been observed on these hubs, then the incident will be closed, but it is thought that the CSP N still classifies this as an Exception for performance reporting. SECAS highlighted the need to validate and confirm this position as it appeared to indicate that over half of the CHs installed in the North are excepted from performance reporting. The DCC noted this continues to be investigated.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

12. Incorrect or No DNO Credentials

The DCC presented an update on the work being done to reduce Incorrect or No DNO credentials on CHs.

The DCC noted that the volume of incorrect or no DNO credentials has increased as installation activity has increased. The DCC noted that 84% of current incorrect credentials are fixable by Service Users. The DCC is planning a workshop with Users to review remediation approaches. The DCC will provide Users with a list of the CHs that cannot be fixed, and the reasons why they cannot be. A DNO member requested that all instances of this Exception be recorded and presented on a graph at a future OPSG meeting.

ACTION OPSG 35/12: The DCC to provide the OPSG with a graph which breaks down the volume and categorisation of the fixable and unfixable incorrect DNO credentials.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

13. SEC Release - November 2020

The DCC presented a progress report on the November 2020 SEC Release.

The DCC noted that the approved Go-Live date for the Release is now 29 November 2020. The DCC confirmed that at present, it had not identified any issues and therefore the status for all activities is Green.

The DCC explained that it will be making two low impacting changes to the SSI and plans to issue a consultation on these changes in line with the governance process. A DNO member requested that the DCC define the "F" and "G" identifiers to ensure that these are aligned with industry usage.

ACTION OPSG 35/13: The DCC to define the F" and "G" identifiers in the SSI changes of the November 2020 SEC Release, to ensure that these are aligned with industry usage.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

14. Interoperability Checker Service

The DCC presented progress on the Interoperability Checker Service.

The Citizens Advice Bureau will be providing a service to Energy Consumers that will confirm whether their meter is SMETS1 or SMETS2 and how Suppliers are currently supporting SMETS1 enrolled Devices. The Suppliers will provide information for the Interoperability Checker to confirm which Device types (mainly SMETS1 meters) they are capable of operating in Smart mode. However, there is no regulatory obligation on Suppliers to provide this information.

The DCC explained there will be a soft launch of the Interoperability Checker Service in October 2020, provided through the Citizens Advice website. The OPSG suggested having a trial period before the full launch.

The OPSG Chair queried what would happen if a Supplier goes out of business, and how up to date information would be maintained in this instance. The DCC noted that these Suppliers will go through the Supplier of Last Resort (SoLR) process and SharePoint will be updated to allow the 'new Supplier' to take over the SEC Party IDs. The new Supplier will need to refresh the Interoperability Data submission and the DCC will be in contact to provide support during this process.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

15. Network Evolution: CH & N

The paper for this item was not circulated in time to allow the OPSG to review it before the meeting.

The OPSG agreed to review the documentation provided and provide initial comments to SECAS within five working days.

ACTION OPSG 35/14: The OPSG to review the circulated slides and give initial comments to SECAS within five working days.

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

16. New Draft Proposals and Modification Proposals

SECAS presented New Draft Proposals and Modifications Proposals of interest to the OPSG.

The OPSG noted interest in Modifications DP136 'Enduring ICHIS Compliance Related to RF' and DP137 'Sharing information on Defects and Issues'.

The OPSG **NOTED** the Modification proposals.

17. Customer Perspective

DCC Other User Triage Process

It was noted that SECAS and the DCC held a workshop to discuss the issues Other Users (OU) are facing with the DCC triage process. The initial workshops were to understand the requirements for OU's for engaging with the DCC on issues. The DCC noted that investigations are still ongoing and there will be an update provided at a future meeting.

18. Any Other Business (AOB)

The OPSG Chair noted that it was Steve Stathakis and Courtney O'Connor's last meeting, and with the support of Members, thanked them for their contributions to the OPSG.

Next Reporting Meeting: 24 August 2020

Next Main Meeting: 1 September 2020

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