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DP163 'T3 Aerials Requirements Removal'

Modification Report

Version 0.1

12 May 2021



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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Contact

If you have any questions on this modification, please contact:

Harry Jones

020 7081 3345

harry.jones@gemserv.com

1. Summary

This proposal has been raised by Rochelle Harrison from Centrica.

The Smart Energy Code (SEC) currently states that in the event of the Data Communications Company (DCC) being unable to provide Smart Meter Wide Area Network (SM WAN) coverage to a Supplier Party, a T3 aerial is deployed and installed to improve the coverage so that smart metering functionality is available. The Proposer believes that the T3 aerials have a variety of problems which include additional processing costs, time spent on site in order to install the unit and that there is no guarantee that the T3 aerials will solve the coverage issue.

2. Issue

What are the current arrangements?

The SEC currently states that in the event of the DCC being unable to provide SM WAN coverage to a Supplier Party, a T3 aerial is deployed and installed at the affected premise to improve the coverage so that smart metering functionality is available.

Obligations surrounding using the T3 aerials sit within SEC Appendix H 'CH Handover Support Materials' in Sections 1.4 and 7.4 and broadly throughout SEC Appendix I 'CH Installation and Maintenance Support' where a Special Installation Mesh Communications Hub (CH) is required for installation. These Special Installation Mesh CHs can use any of a T1/T2/T3 aerials and an M1/M2 aerial.

What is the issue?

The Proposer believes that the T3 aerials have a variety of problems which include:

- additional processing costs;
- time spent on site in order to install the unit whilst simultaneously having a Telefonica engineer present to do so presenting logistical difficulty; and
- there is no guarantee that the T3 aerial will solve the coverage issue.

These combined issues call into question the suitability of the T3 aerials. Suppliers have to undertake significant efforts to address the SM WAN coverage issue and are looking for an alternative that would present fewer challenges logistically and financially.

What is the impact this is having?

The Proposer has stated that the large amount of effort to install a T3 aerial with no guarantee that the coverage would be improved, is a significant barrier. According to the Proposer, there have only been 2 known cases of installing T3 aerials, where one was successful and the other didn't solve the connectivity issue. The installation requires drilling into walls; if the installation doesn't provide additional coverage the site has then been potentially damaged or altered for no benefit.

Impact on consumers

The Proposer believes that consumers could be adversely affected by having to install Devices that, although potentially solving coverage issues, could contradict planning laws and could negatively impact area of outstanding natural beauty. This would be likely as the areas that would need improved coverage are areas such as national heritage sites and premises close to national parks.

Appendix 1: Progression timetable

The Draft Proposal was raised on 12 May 2021. Following this, it will be raised at the Change Sub Committee (CSC) on 25 May 2021 before being taken to the relevant Panel Sub Committees for review and input. The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) anticipates this will be limited to the Operations Group. After this assessment, it will return to the CSC in June for either an update or decision to be progressed to a Modification Proposal.

Timetable	
Event/Action	Date
Draft Proposal raised	12 May 2021
Presented to CSC for initial comment	25 May 2021
Presented to Operations Group for comment	1 Jun 2021
Presented to CSC for decision	29 Jun 2021

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
CH	Communications Hub
CSC	Change Sub Committee
DCC	Data Communications Company
SEC	Smart Energy Code
SECAS	Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat
SM WAN	Smart Metering Wide Area Network