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MP170 'Firmware updates to Point to Point Alt HAN Devices'

November 2021 Working Group – meeting summary

Attendees

Attendee	Organisation
Ali Beard	SECAS
Kev Duddy	SECAS
Joey Manners	SECAS
Tim Newton	SECAS
Rainer Lischetzski	SECAS
Anik Abdullah	SECAS
Chun Chen	DCC
Easton Brown	DCC
David Walsh	DCC
Michael Walls	Ofgem
Andrew Firth	AltHANCo
David Jones	AltHANCo
Sarah-Jane Russell	British Gas
Lynne Hargrave	Calvin Capital
Ed Rees	Citizens Advice
Julie Geary	E.ON
Daniel Davies	ESG Global
Terry Jefferson	EUA
Alastair Cobb	Landis + Gyr
Ralph Baxter	Octopus Energy
Isabelle Smith	Octopus Energy
James Doyle	Outfox the Market
Emslie Law	OVO Energy
Mafs Rahman	Scottish Power
Elias Hanna	Smart ADSL
Eric Taylor	SMETS Design Ltd
Matthew Alexander	SSEN
Gemma Slaney	WPD
Kelly Kinsman	WPD

Overview

The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) provided an overview of the issue identified by [MP170 'Firmware updates to Point to Point Alt HAN Devices'](#), the solution options and a summary of the Data Communications Company (DCC)'s Preliminary Assessment.

Working Group objectives:

- **Agree** the Preliminary Assessment delivers the business requirements
- **Agree** that option 1 should be progressed
- **Agree** that the business case justifies these proposed costs

Issue

- Without Over-The-Air (OTA) firmware updates to Alternative Home Area Network (Alt HAN) Point to Point (P2P) Devices fixes to defects can only be resolved by onsite exchanges
- Security defects would not be able to be resolved immediately
- New innovation and functionality would not be cost effective to develop

Possible solution option 1

- The Alt HAN Device to join the Home Area Network (HAN) as a Prepayment Meter Interface Device (PPMID)
- This solution enables the re-use of functionality for OTA firmware updates brought in by SECMP0007
- Service Users would be able to differentiate between PPMIDs and Alt HAN Devices, although the Communications Hub would not

Possible solution option 2

- The Alt HAN Device to join the HAN as a Consumer Access Device (CAD)
- This solution relies on Communications Hub firmware changes to support this

Preliminary Assessment summary

- The DCC have noted a preference for Option 1 based on the cost and complexity of solution, with a cost of £636,500 for Design, Build and Pre-Integration Testing (PIT)
- Implementation will take three months up to the end of PIT
- The total cost for a Full Impact Assessment (IA) is £86,007 and would be expected to be completed in 40 Working Days.

Working Group Discussion

SECAS (KD) presented a brief overview of the background to the modification, noting that two possible solutions, referenced above, had been raised to deliver the business requirements.

SECAS detailed the high-level summaries from the DCC Preliminary Assessment for both of these options and identifying the main changes that are required to deliver each solution. It was noted that the Proposer, the DCC and its Service Providers consider Option 1 to be preferable in terms of cost, complexity and implementation timescales.

A Working Group member (RB) stated that he was a strong supporter of the modification. They mentioned that it was imperative due to potential future situations where the Security Sub-Committee (SSC) could be faced with a security decision that would effectively cause the Alt HAN part of the smart infrastructure to fail due to there being no OTA capability.

Another Working Group member (EH) echoed this stance about the need for OTA firmware updates but highlighted that Option 1 created problems. They observed that there could be further implications of treating an Alt HAN Device as a PPMID, stating that the Devices would not meet certain criteria that are required of PPMIDs that is detailed within the Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specifications (SMETS). They suggested that the Alt HAN Device should be defined within SMETS or should utilise Wi-Fi as opposed to updating across over the Smart Metering Network.

The Proposer countered that this had been considered as part of the Device development and was not a viable option for them. They noted that a solution would have to be delivered via the DCC User Interface Specifications (DUIS).

SECAS questioned whether the Service Level Agreements (SLA) would be the same as for PPMIDs. The DCC noted this would be explored as part of the Impact Assessment, with the Proposer also commenting that the expectation would be to match PPMIDs wherever possible.

SECAS highlighted the cost given for Option 1 in the Preliminary Assessment was £636,500, with an expected implementation of three months up to the end of PIT. The Impact Assessment will cost £86,007 and would be expected to be completed in 40 working days.

Although Option 2 does not have specific costs apportioned, the DCC and its Service Providers note the costs will be high and would require a far longer implementation time.

A Working Group member (MR) questioned the costs and queried whether the existing service requests could already be used to deliver the firmware updates as is (just using the Global Unique identifier (GUID)), acknowledging that they wouldn't be able to distinguish the Alt HAN Devices from genuine PPMIDs. The DCC noted that, whilst this was theoretically possible, the differentiation of Devices was referenced in four business requirements and was therefore crucial to the solution. The Data Service Provider (DSP) must be able to differentiate between the Devices which requires changes to their system and updates to DUIS. Two Working Group members (JD and DD) confirmed that Suppliers would need to identify which Devices were PPMIDs and which were not.

Another Working Group member (EH) also commented that the DCC costs should not be considered in isolation. They highlighted that any changes to the Alt HAN Devices will have different design and development costs, and these should be considered along with the DCC costs. The Proposer advised that they were currently impact assessing this on their own Devices, and although they could not share specifics, confirmed Option 1 was also lower cost on their Device development.

SECAS concluded by asking the Working Group to provide views on whether the DCC PA covered all the business requirements; that option 1 should be progressed and that the business case justifies the potential costs.

One Working Group member (SR) stated they required further input internally before providing a view. The remaining members provided no further comments.

Next Steps

The following actions were recorded from the meeting:

- SECAS to gain further feedback from the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC)
- SECAS to draft legal text
- SECAS to issue Refinement Consultation