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

January 2022 Working Group – meeting summary

Attendees

Attendee	Organisation
Ali Beard	SECAS
Khaleda Hussain	SECAS
Bradley Baker	SECAS
Joe Hehir	SECAS
Kev Duddy	SECAS
Mike Fenn	SECAS
Rainer Lischetzki	SECAS
Abhijit Pal	DCC
David Walsh	DCC
Sasha Townsend	DCC
David Jones	AltHANCo
Matthew Davies	AltHANCo
Irmeen Khan	AltHANCo
Emma Johnson	British Gas
Lynne Hargrave	Calvin Capital
Alex Hurcombe	EDF Energy
Julie Geary	E.ON
Daniel Davies	ESG Global
Terry Jefferson	EUA
Peter Hoare	Kaifa Metering
Alastair Cobb	Landis & Gyr
Ralph Baxter	Octopus Energy
Mafs Rahman	Scottish Power
Andy Beggs (ABg)	Shell
Audrey Smith-Keary	SSE - OVO
Emslie Law	SSE - OVO
Matthew Alexander	SSEN
Gemma Slaney	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 draft legal text and a summary of the Refinement Consultation responses.

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

Working Group Discussion

SECAS (KD) presented the draft legal text noting the addition of a table in the DCC User Interface Specification (DUIS) that is then referenced under the Service Request Variants 8.2, 8.4 and 12.2. Additional text is also required under 'Join Service' requests 8.7.1 and 8.7.2 to provide an error code to show the Alt HAN Device cannot be joined in this way. Working Group members did not have issues with the legal text, but the DCC noted that the Data Services Provider (DSP) will provide any DUIS changes as part of the Impact Assessment.

SECAS noted that one response to the Refinement Consultation commented that additional legal text may be needed to oblige Suppliers to carry out firmware updates. However, SECAS confirmed that the onus is currently on Suppliers to rollout firmware to support their consumers and additional legal text would not be required.

One Working Group member (ABg) also queried whether AlthANCo should be able to rollout the firmware upgrades itself or whether changes in the SEC could be required for this to happen. They continued that AlthANCo may wish to provide more support for its services that could benefit industry. The Proposer stated that AlthANCo is not a DCC User. Its interactions with DCC are set out currently in Section Z and the onus is on Suppliers to rollout firmware. Any changes to the Alt HAN arrangements would be a broader discussion than just this modification and could be picked up directly with Parties outside of this Working Group.

SECAS provided an overview of the Refinement Consultation responses to the solution, noting that Parties were broadly supportive of the solution but there were some clarifications needed. SECAS stated that Respondent questions surrounding costs and the specific data items within the reporting requirements would be resolved through the Impact Assessment.

One Working Group member (AC) questioned whether there would be a priority ordering of firmware upgrades if multiple Devices were due to be upgraded. SECAS confirmed the order of priority and delivery of upgrades mirrors that introduced as part of SECMP0007 for Prepayment Meter Interface Devices (PPMIDs).

One respondent had noted that a possible constraint previously stated, namely that when a Trust Centre Swap Out (TCSO) occurs the Alt HAN Device would not be able to rejoin the HAN as a PPMID, had not been addressed in the Preliminary Assessment. The DCC confirmed that no solution had been identified and if this happened, the Alt HAN Device would not be able to receive OTA firmware updates. SECAS will identify a suitable location for guidance for these firmware upgrades and recommend this is included.

A Working Group member (EL) questioned whether the Alt HAN Device would need to go through Commercial Product Assurance (CPA) certification as part of joining the Central Products List. It was confirmed that PPMIDs do not require CPA certification and therefore the Alt HAN Device should also not need this. SECAS advised this would be clarified with the Security Sub-Committee (SSC).

One Respondent had noted that the Alt HAN Device (Bridge 1) is currently being redesigned to allow installation directly to the Electricity Distribution Network and questioned how this impacts the modification. The Proposer stated that mass rollout of Devices had been delayed for 12 months and therefore changes implemented for this modification would be more likely to have been delivered before the mass rollout of Devices. Any Device installed prior to the DCC changes for OTA firmware upgrades would not be capable of receiving these upgrades OTA. The Proposer continued that this is a known risk and is being managed by the Alt HAN programme. This could also be included within suitable guidance documentation for firmware upgrades.

SECAS noted responses had identified some Supplier Parties could incur costs up to £100k, mainly to implement new triage and internal processes. Respondents believed changes could be implemented within six to nine months which would fit in with the implementation approach and rollout.

One Working Group member questioned how many Devices are expected to be installed, noting that the number of sites that had been indicated originally was greater than the newest estimates and whether this modification was still needed. They noted OTA updates had previously been discounted for In Home Displays (IHDs). The Proposer noted that the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) are currently working on these estimates but expectation remains that the market size will be in the region of hundreds of thousands of Devices.

Another Working Group member (RB) supported the view that this modification was necessary, highlighting that the Alt HAN Devices are integral to the Smart Meter Implementation Programme and are not peripheral in the way that IHDs are.

Finally, SECAS presented an overview of responses on the case for change. It was noted that Respondents agreed that the modification better facilitated SEC Objective (a), provided consumer benefits with protection from post install defects and a reduction of site visits. This would reduce consumer inconvenience and costs that could be passed on.

SECAS also noted that all respondents were supportive of the modification and its principles. Two respondents however, asked for further clarity on costs and requirements. SECAS confirmed that costs would be picked up under the Impact Assessment and AltHANCo will work with SEC Parties directly to provide any clarification. This was noted by the Working Group.

Next Steps

The following actions were recorded from the meeting:

- SECAS to seek clarification around CPA requirements for the AltHAN Devices from SSC
- SECAS to identify suitable location for guidance information; and
- SECAS to request Impact Assessment