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MP182 ‘Improving transparency of elections’

February 2022 Working Group – meeting summary

Attendees

Attendee	Organisation
Ali Beard	SECAS
Kev Duddy	SECAS
Louise Evans	SECAS
Joey Manners	SECAS
Elizabeth Woods	SECAS
David Walsh	DCC
Easton Brown	DCC
Emma Johnson	British Gas
Lynne Hargrave	Calvin Capital
Alex Hurcombe	EDF Energy
Daniel Davies	ESG Global
Carrie Coles	Good Energy
Peter Hoare	Kaifa Metering
Ralph Baxter	Octopus Energy
Grace Royall	Ofgem
Audrey Smith-Keary	OVO Energy
Emslie Law	OVO Energy
Mafs Rahman	Scottish Power
Elias Hanna	Smart ADSL
Eric Taylor	SMETS Design Ltd
Christie Thomson	SSE
Robert Johnstone	Utilita
Kelly Kinsman	WPD

Overview

The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) provided an overview of the modification, reviewed the issue and possible solutions and proposed next steps.

Issue

SECAS provided an overview of the modification.

- In SEC Panel or Sub-Committee elections the outcome of votes is published, but not the breakdown of votes
- It is argued that not publishing results in full is at odds with conventional free and fair elections
- Could create a negative impression to SEC Parties who could be dissuaded from engagement and participation
- Transparency within Governance should be improved wherever possible

Working Group Discussion

Issue

SECAS presented an overview of the election process to the SEC Panel or Sub-Committees. Where more nominees are received than seats available then an election is held, where all members of a Party category are able to vote for their preferred nominee(s). Although this is the same process for all Party categories, in practice this tends to only occur for Other SEC Parties.

The names of the successful nominees in these elections are published, but there is no breakdown of votes accompanying this. This detail can be passed to the SEC Panel for scrutiny on request but is not made public.

SECAS noted it is argued that this lack of transparency could prevent some SEC Parties from engaging and participating. SECAS also noted the counter view that it could be reputationally impacting to state where nominees have received a low number of votes and discourage future nominations.

One Working Group member (AH) noted that this is not an issue for Large Suppliers who each receive a seat, although commented that the current process does provide anonymity.

Possible Solutions

SECAS noted that the SEC, and the majority of codes act in the same way, whereby full results are not published. However, it was also stated that there is precedent for a full publication with the Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) and Connection and Use of System Code (CUSC) following this process. SECAS also highlighted that the Retail Energy Code (REC), the newest Code, also did not publish a full breakdown. The Distribution Connection and Use of System Agreement (DCUSA) undertake a partial publication whereby nominees are stated in the order they finished in the election, but the specific votes are not disclosed.

Another Working Group member (EJ) also noted this was not an issue for them, but suggested if it was an issue for others then giving a voting breakdown would not impact them. They continued that mirroring the DCUSA process could combat the perceived issue of keeping anonymity.

The Proposer countered saying it was not relevant how other Codes functioned, and that SEC Parties should develop a process that meets the criteria of a transparent election, and the needs of the SEC Parties. He continued to note that publication of results is a standard process in many democratic elections through many different types of groups and forums.

SECAS summarised that the Working Group had noted possible issues of anonymity and discouragement in participation as consequences of a full publication, and that there was no preference on the possible solutions. The Working Group had no further comments.

Next Steps

The following actions were recorded from the meeting:

- SECAS will develop the draft legal text to deliver a Proposed Solution; and
- SECAS will distribute the Refinement Consultation for the modification once the legal text has been drafted.