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MP231 'Firmware upgrade pathways'

March 2023 Working Group – meeting summary

Attendees

Attendee	Organisation
Ali Beard (AB)	SECAS
Kev Duddy (KD)	SECAS
Rachel Black (RB)	SECAS
Bradley Baker (BB)	SECAS
Will Marshall (WM)	SECAS
Adam Musgrave (AM)	SECAS
Ben Giblin (BG)	SECAS
Rainer Lischetzki (RL)	SECAS
Mohammedanwar Sumro (MS)	SECAS
David Walsh (DW)	DCC
Chris Thompson (CT)	DCC
Patricia Massey (PM)	BEAMA
Julie Brown (JB)	British Gas
Beth Davey (BD)	Calvin Capital
Mike Pyke (MP)	Chameleon
Amy Cox (AC)	EDF
Alex Hurcombe (AH)	EDF
Daniel Davies (DD)	ESG
Craig Biffen (CB)	EUA
Kelly Kinsman (KK)	National Grid Electricity Distribution
Stephanie Richards (SR)	Northern Powergrid Metering
Stuart Blair (SB)	Northern Powergrid Metering
Ralph Baxter (RBa)	Octopus Energy
Jamie Flaherty (JF)	Ofgem
Audrey Smith-Keary (ASK)	OVO Energy
Mafs Rahman (MR)	Scottish Power
Michael Snowden (MS)	Secure Meters
Jeff Studholme (JS)	Smart Meter Assets
Shuba Khatun (SK)	SSE Networks

Attendee	Organisation
Andy Knowles (AK)	Utilita
Kevin Clark (KC)	Utilita
Karen Jacks (KJ)	Vantage Meters
Luke Brady (LB)	Vantage Meters

Overview

The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) provided an overview of the issue identified as well as the Proposed Solution.

Issue

- Great Britain Companion Specification (GBCS) Section 11.1 contains information relating to firmware upgrades. It allows Device Manufacturers to specify any special requirements to be applied to a firmware upgrade on their Device, and what controls or dependencies are included.
- Certain Device models need to have a firmware upgrade applied in a specific order.
- Failure to follow the specific order can result in unintended consequences.
- No central location for information required to ensure each Device's firmware upgrade is applied correctly and no requirement for that information to be provided.

Proposed Solution

- Proposed new field on the Central Products List (CPL) New Entry form - 'Firmware Upgrade Path'.
- Contains the previous CPL Entry IDs which must be used as base firmware version when carrying out a firmware upgrade.
- This will be included in the Firmware Information Repository (FIR)
- New field for 'Firmware Upgrade Path' needs to be editable by SECAS to allow for retrospective changes

Working Group Discussion

SECAS (KD) provided an overview of the issue and Proposed Solution. They noted that previous feedback had indicated that Parties would prefer to use Firmware Version as a reference point, rather than CPL Entry ID. SECAS (KD) noted that the CPL Entry ID provides a one-to-one relationship which removes ambiguity for the User. They also noted that this is how the FIR is currently structured, which allows this solution to remain relatively simple.

A Working Group (MR) member queried whether there was any functional change from the solution, or whether it was just to provide information. SECAS (RL) confirmed it was just to have a central store for the information.

A Working Group member (BD) questioned whether the intention was to update the FIR for existing entries, or whether this solution is just for new CPL submissions. Another Working Group member (ASK) questioned how any retrospective update would work. SECAS (RL) noted that a new requirement would only be forward facing but would like to populate existing entries on a best endeavours basis by reaching out to Device Manufacturers on a voluntary basis. This would be via informal information exchange via email with all the necessary information to update the FIR from an authorised source.

Another Working Group member (SB) queried who would be responsible for any errors within the submission, or if a more optimal path becomes available later, would that be possible to update. SECAS (RL) confirmed that the data must be editable by SECAS for this reason and acknowledged that the manufacturer is best placed to provide the information but confirmed that the Supplier is currently responsible for the CPL submissions. Working Group member (JB) noted support for the change but was uncomfortable with Suppliers being responsible. They noted that [MP222 'CPL submission efficiency improvements'](#) would remove their responsibility if implemented, which SECAS (KD) confirmed was the case.

Working Group members (MS, KC & JB) all raised points that this solution is not resolving the root cause of the issue and that some manufacturers are exploring putting additional controls within their firmware that would prevent an incorrect version being applied. SECAS (RL) agreed but highlighted that any change would sit outside the SEC or be a change to the GBCS concepts and would be very lengthy, complex and expensive to deliver.

A Working Group member (MS) stated that they had never encountered this issue and treat their Release Notes as the source of truth. They were not happy with duplicating this information. SECAS (RL) confirmed there had been instances where pathways had not been followed that had impacted Devices. They also noted that not all manufacturers provide this information within Release Notes. A Working Group member (SR) agreed that some Manufacturers had complex upgrade paths and noted they received contact from their customers around these pathways, particularly when Devices had churned. Another Working Group member (JS) supported this. They also noted that Meter Asset Providers (MAPs) would happily help with data population where they could but didn't think this should be too onerous for manufacturers.

SECAS (AM) queried which Devices were in scope of the modification. SECAS (KD) initially thought Communications Hubs would be out of scope. However, previous feedback had flagged that as Suppliers are responsible for updating firmware on Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specification (SMETS)1 Communications Hubs they should be included. The DCC (DW) noted that this could cause impacts to the DCC and would have to investigate this. A Working Group member (JS) queried whether the impact would be additional queries, noting it appeared to be a small change.

SECAS (KD) also noted the scope of this modification does not include the interoperability of Devices. A Working Group member (DD) agreed with this stance, noting that is a far wider more complex issue.

Next Steps

The following actions were recorded from the meeting:

- SECAS to confirm any impacts on the DCC from including SMETS1 Communications Hubs in scope; and
- SECAS to issue the Refinement Consultation.