MP231 'Firmware upgrade pathways'

June 2023 Working Group – meeting summary

Attendees

Attendee	Organisation
Rachel Black (RBl)	SECAS
Kev Duddy (KD)	SECAS
Bradley Baker (BB)	SECAS
Rainer Lischetzki (RL)	SECAS
Christopher Thomson (CT)	DCC
David Walsh (DW)	DCC
Julie Brown (JB)	British Gas
Beth Davey (BD)	Calvin Capital
Alex Hurcombe (AH)	EDF
Sharon Armitage (SA)	E.ON Energy
Daniel Davies (DD)	ESG Global
Martin Bell (MB)	EUA
Alastair Cobb (AC)	Landis + Gyr
Rachel Prosser (RP)	National Grid
Ralph Baxter (RB)	Octopus Energy
Joey Manners (JM)	Octopus Energy
Jamie Flaherty (JF)	OFGEM
Audrey Smith-Keary (ASK)	OVO
Mahfuzar Rahman (MRa)	Scottish Power
Gordon Hextall (GH)	Security Sub-Committee (SSC)
Shuba Khatun (SK)	SSEN
Nik Wills (NK)	Stark
Kevin Clark (KC)	Utilita

Overview

The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) provided an overview of the issue identified, the Proposed Solution, and the key discussion pints from the Refinement Consultation.

Issue

- 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

Refinement Consultation discussion points

- Should the additional data field for ZigBee banding be included?

- Should the CPL Entry ID be used as the identifier for base firmware versions?

- Should the data provision of ZigBee chipset vendor and ZigBee stack version be included on the FIR, or sent direct to the SSC?

Working Group Discussion

SECAS (KD) provided an overview of the issue and Proposed Solution, highlighting the changes in scope to the previous presentation at April Working Group, followed by the key discussion points from the Refinement Consultation.

SECAS (KD & RL) presented information on the firmware version information that is currently available on the Central Products List (CPL). They highlighted that duplication exists between Manufacturers currently, providing ambiguity.

A Working Group member (AC) noted that any solution needs to work for those who will use this database and that their viewpoint should be considered foremost.

Another Working Group member (DD) cited that the CPL Entry ID was very clear and that firmware version was ambiguous, although noting that cross referencing would be more tricky for Users. They commented that leaving ambiguity would not resolve the issue. They continued that there were two potential use cases for this issue. The first is to be able to identify the correct upgrade pathway, and the second is whether it can be used with system mapping to ensure that the correct upgrade pathway is being targeted.

A Working Group member (JM) stated that they didn't have a strong preference for either identifier, noting that their organisation would always check Release Notes prior to any deployment of upgrades. They agreed that the general principle of the solution to provide more information to Parties

was valuable, citing that it is an industry problem for churned Devices and therefore has a collective responsibility to manage. They also noted that this solution would not be essential for them, but a nice to have. This view was echoed by other Working Group members.

A Working Group member (AC) agreed that upgrade via the information contained in Release Notes was optimal and believed Manufacturers should share the relevant upgrade pathway from Release Notes. They raised a further issue that the information is subject to change and liability needs to be considered. The EUA representative (MB) confirmed this preference on behalf of their members.

The Proposer (GH) noted that not all Manufacturers are prepared to make those Release Notes available, in situations where contracts don't exist with those Suppliers. They noted that gaining Devices on churn, particularly for Small Suppliers, can often mean this issue arises.

A Working Group member (BD) agreed that this issue presents itself most prominently in churned Devices as the Meter Asset Provider (MAP) and Supplier don't necessarily have a commercial agreement.

SECAS (RL) noted that the solution is to place an additional safety net, rather than introduce complexity to the process, and noted that Release Notes should still be checked.

The Proposer (GH) queried whether the Release Notes could be linked as part of the FIR to resolve the issue. The EUA rep (MB) noted that historically Release Notes would not be able to be shared in this way but thought there was value through exploring this further if Users are interested. A Working Group member (AC) clarified that it would be the firmware upgrade pathway from within the Release Notes to be shared, as opposed to the Release Notes in their entirety.

The EUA representative (MB) highlighted that liability could be an issue if the information on the FIR becomes out of date and is not updated in a timely manner. Another Working Group member (AC) agreed and noted that any updates should have an SLA for SECAS to update the data. It should also be clearly identified that using the FIR information should not replace Release Notes. If Suppliers use that information that is out of date and an issue occurs.

A Working Group member (RB) highlighted problems of keeping multiple information sources up to date. They considered whether there was a better process for Parties to call out instances by exception where they could not obtain this data, rather than making all information available.

A Working Group member (DD) noted that they'd like to discuss the solution with Small Suppliers to work on the use cases and help shape the solution.

A Working Group member (AC) noted that the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub--Committee (TABASC) is planning to simplify the options for the ZigBee band information. The EUA representative (MB) noted that from a security perspective sharing ZigBee information direct with the SSC, as opposed to putting it on the FIR, would be preferable. A Working Group member (MR) noted this information would be obtained from Release Notes if required from their point of view anyway.

SECAS (KD) agreed to investigate these points further with the Proposer.

Next Steps

The following actions were recorded from the meeting:

- SECAS to liaise with Small Supplier representatives on the use cases; and

- SECAS to explore the solution further with regards Release Note availability.