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MP243 'CHTS v1.1 and GBCS v2.1 Installation End Date and Maintenance End Date'

July 2023 Working Group – meeting summary

Attendees

Attendee	Organisation
Rachel Black (RBI)	SECAS
Kev Duddy (KD)	SECAS
Ben Giblin (BG)	SECAS
Alison Beard (AB)	SECAS
Elizabeth Woods (EW)	SECAS
Mohammedanwar Sumro (MS)	SECAS
Simon Grimwood (SG)	SECAS
Abhijit Pal (AP)	DCC
Waseem Fazal (WF)	DCC
Leigh Hill (LH)	DCC
David Walsh (DW)	DCC
Gary Williams (GW)	DCC
Chris Thompson (CT)	DCC
Jayne Thorpe (JT)	DCC
Amy Cox (AC)	EDF
Alex Hurcombe (AH)	EDF
Sharon Armitage (SA)	EON
Martin Bell (MB)	EUA
Ralph Baxter (RB)	Octopus Energy
Joey Manners (JM)	Octopus Energy
Audrey Smith-Keary (ASK)	OVO
Emslie Law (EL)	OVO
Mahfuzar Rahman (MR)	Scottish Power
Jeff Studholme (JS)	Smart Meter Assets
Shuba Khatun (SK)	SSEN
Kevin Clark (KC)	Utilita

Overview

The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) provided an overview of the issue, impact and the proposed solution.

Issue

An issue in Great Britain Companion Specification (GBCS) v3.2 specification has led to Communications Hubs continuing to be manufactured to be compliant with GBCS v2.1 for an additional two years than anticipated. The volume of Communications Hub stock has grown to an extent that stock volumes will not be used before the end of the existing Technical Specification Applicability Tables (TSAT) dates.

Impact

Once the Installation and Maintenance End Dates pass, any remaining uninstalled stock will be non-compliant with the Smart Energy Code (SEC) and should be scrapped or returned. The Data Communications Company (DCC) notes that the existing returns process will not be able to support the volume of Communications Hubs which are compliant with these specifications.

If Parties continue to install these Communications Hubs following the end of the Installation Validity Period (IVP), the installation would be non-SEC compliant. The DCC would not be under an obligation to support the maintenance and upgrade of the firmware on the Device.

Proposed Solution

The Proposer has made several estimations about the number of Communications Hubs that are uninstalled which will expire at the end of the existing Communications Hub Technical Specifications (CHTS) v1.1 and GBCS v2.1 end dates, versus the number of Communications Hubs which are being installed each month. They believe that a 24-month extension to the existing End Dates would be appropriate to clear the backlog of existing Communications Hubs.

This would change the Installation End Date from 30 April 2024 to 30 April 2026 and the Maintenance End Date from 31 May 2024 to 31 May 2026.

Working Group Discussion

SECAS (BG) provided an overview of the modification, noting the issue and the Proposed Solution.

A Working Group member (MR) noted the introduction of 4G Communications Hubs over the coming years and asked whether work was being carried out to control future stock volumes. (GW), acting as Proposer for this meeting, noted this point and confirmed that DCC is carrying out work to manage future Communication Hub volumes. They added that the focus of discussion should be on the fact that DCC has manufactured Communications Hubs to GBCS v2.1 and the need to extend the existing Installation and Maintenance End Dates. They noted that they believe that a 24-month extension is suitable to allow the Communications Hubs aligned to these specifications to be installed, with no further End Date extensions. (MR) noted this, adding that SEC Parties will be installing Communications Hubs with the knowledge that they will have to be exchanged for 4G

Communications Hubs in the coming years. (GW) noted this but added that the existing backlog of Communications Hubs still needs to be cleared before discussions about installation of 4G Communications Hubs should take place.

Another Working Group member (SA) queried the figure provided by the Proposer that around 2.2 million Communications Hubs associated to CHTS v1.1 and GBCS v2.1 will expire at the end of the existing End Dates. They questioned how many Communications Hubs had not been installed as Parties were unable to identify who owned the Device. They noted they were experiencing an issue whereby they cannot identify Device owners, leading to that Communications Hub being classed as a 'stranded asset'. (GW) responded saying that if Communications Hubs are asset items in a pending state in SEC Parties stock inventories, then 'stranded assets' would be included in their figures. (JT) added that SEC Parties are responsible for stock reconciliation, noting that if a Device is pending then the DCC is aware it has been delivered to a warehouse but is uninstalled.

(RB) noted concern about the costs associated with large volumes of Communications Hubs expiring and questioned whether this issue had been discussed at all relevant forums. They added that the Communications Hub Transition Group (CTG) had not discussed the issue identified in this modification. They added that there is an ongoing legal conversation taking place regarding the liability for uninstalled Communications Hubs. As such, wider discussions may need to be included in this modification. (GW) noted that DCC Logistics are having discussions individually with SEC Parties, have presented these figures to the Operations Group (OPSG) and believed this issue has been presented to the correct forums. (JT) added that DCC have been discussing reverse logistics and volume levels at the Supply Chain Working Group to make SEC Parties aware of the current arrangements.

(JS) expressed concern about the number of Communications Hubs which could expire and noted their belief that inventory management was poor. They also noted that they believed there is a lack of reporting from the CTG due to the classified nature of documentation. They added that if access was easier to CTG documentation then this may allow Parties to make more informed stock management decisions. (EL) noted these comments, but added that the issue identified in this modification and stock management was not an issue that CTG discusses. They added the focus of the CTG is to examine the transition to 4G Communications Hubs, with the remit not extending to the discussions of this modification.

(ASK) referred to [MP221 'CHTS v1.0 and GBCS v1.1 Installation End Date and Maintenance End Date'](#). They noted there was discussion during that modification about how future decisions about End Dates were made and questioned whether this was being considered as part of MP243. SECAS (AB) noted that discussions will be taking place with the Technical and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) about managing the TSAT within the SEC, with a potential project to examine this further. They added that the project may look at the implications of extending the TSAT End Dates as there are other consequences on other technical specifications with increased costs of testing.

SECAS (BG) asked Working Group members their opinions on if only the Installation End Date should be extended, with no change to the existing Maintenance End Date. (GW) noted that the Maintenance End Date is one month following the Installation End Date to allow the Communications Service Providers (CSP) sufficient time to recognise that the Device has completed post-commissioning obligations and entered the firmware upgrade path. (JM) added that Devices should not be installed after the IVP and highlighted that the Maintenance End Date is set to show the availability of firmware

for Devices being installed. (MB) questioned whether a period of four weeks between the Installation End Date and Maintenance End Date would be suitable to install such a large amount of Devices. (GW) noted that by the four-week period between the IVP and MVP ending (currently between 30 April 2024 and 31 May 2024) would see very small numbers of Communications Hubs installed. SECAS (KD) explained that discussions had taken place which suggested only extending the Installation End Date as this would force the DCC to upgrade the Device to a newer version of firmware, rather than to GBCS v2.1.

Next Steps

The following actions were recorded from the meeting:

- SECAS to present the modification to the OPSG and Security Sub-Committee (SSC).
- SECAS to issue the Refinement Consultation.
- SECAS to return to the Working Group to discuss the Refinement Consultation responses.