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Paper Reference:	**SECP_78_1303_07**
Action:	**For Decision**

OPSG - Superfluous Alerts Issue

1. Purpose

This paper asks the SEC Panel to note the expectations of SMDG that the OPSG (SEC Panel Operations Group) will be the main forum for overseeing the resolution of the Superfluous Alerts Issue.

The Panel is asked to note that this is consistent with the work currently being done by the OPSG on this matter, which includes the monitoring and review of status, and oversight of the development, deployment, and impact of remediations.

The Panel is asked to note that, if it were considered necessary to require that a remediation action be undertaken, this matter would be brought to the Panel for decision and action.

The SEC Panel is asked to endorse this role for OPSG, and to confirm that this activity is legitimately within the terms of reference of the OPSG.

2. Context

A variety of types of Superfluous Alerts are causing large traffic flows on the DCC infrastructure, to the extent that, in some cases, DCC Service Providers assert that their ability to support normal services is being impaired; further, the DCC has felt obliged to authorise investment in infrastructure capacity to ensure that the network can support the traffic being experienced.

Considerable efforts to remediate the problem are being made by all stakeholders, including SEC Parties and their service providers, DCC and its service providers, and device manufacturers. The DCC has been actively analysing the nature of the problem, reporting the current status, and defining, coordinating, and executing remediation actions. The DCC has reported status and progress each month to the OPSG.

The focus of the OPSG has been to:

(a) Define with the DCC the format of a comprehensive analysis of the nature and volumes of alerts, structured by type, region, and DMC, and to regularly review this report.

(b) Encourage DCC to continue to urgently investigate root causes, and to develop and execute remediation plans.

(c) Provide DCC with the views of Users.

(d) Encourage a cooperative approach to issue resolution and be available to support DCC in communication with SEC Parties and other parties. So far, this has not been necessary: DCC has generally reported good cooperation from all concerned.

3. SMDG Review

The SMDG has recently carried out a review of the Superfluous Alerts situation. It concluded that the OPSG was the most appropriate body to oversee and coordinate work on the issue.

4. Future Activities

It is expected that the OPSG will continue with its current review and monitoring work.

It is anticipated that the OPSG will increase its focus on root cause analysis, the planning and execution of remediations, and its observed impact on ameliorating the issue.

The OPSG will also consider operational risks, in particular in regard to service performance and capacity.

It may be the case that there will be instances where choices will have to be made between alternative remediation options, each with different implications for Users collectively and individually, and for service providers, and Device manufacturers. In such cases, the OPSG will seek to form a consensus on a preferred approach, and, failing that, will put the matter to the Panel.

An extreme example of this would be where it is considered necessary that a SEC Party undertakes a remediation action but is unwilling to do so: if requests from the OPSG do not resolve this matter, it would be referred to the Panel.

Another matter that has been raised by some stakeholders is the desire for more sharing of specific information, and, in particular, the identification to SEC Parties of DMCs possibly involved in Superfluous Alerts. This is the subject of a separate paper being put to the Panel (Ref SECP_78_1303_06).

Finally, it is noted that the OPSG will need to be aware of the work carried out in other forums, for example on the technical analysis of issues (TSIRS) and architectural matters (TABASC).

5. Reporting

The OPSG will continue to report to the Panel on its activities addressing Superfluous Alerts.

The OPSG will also brief SMDG each month on its activities and progress.

6. Resources

The work of the OPSG will focus on the regular monthly meeting. Preparations for this will be supported by the SECAS team, working with DCC and others as necessary. At present, it is not clear whether it will be necessary to request an increase in resources to carry out this activity: at present, no request is being made.

It should be recognised that there is a material call on DCC resources to carry out its activities in this area.

7. Terms of Reference (ToRs)

The ToRs of the OPSG are published on the SECCo website[1]. As might be expected, they do not include a specific reference to the Superfluous Alerts issue. However, the Purpose of the OPSG is defined in the ToRs as below:

> *"In accordance with SEC Section C2.4(d), the SEC Panel have established an Operations Group. The Group's purpose is to deal with operational matters relating to the operational services provided under the Smart Energy Code, including the DCC Services, and to enable close co-operation between the DCC and DCC Users.*
>
> *In this context, an 'Operational Matter' is anything which relates to a service delivered across the End-to-End Smart Metering System. It encompasses preparations and planning for such services as well as actual service execution. All DCC Services are included within scope. The Operations Group will focus on cross-industry matters, that are topics which affect, or have the potential to affect, multiple SEC Parties."*

The envisaged role for the OPSG on Superfluous Alerts appears consistent with this purpose, and the Panel are asked to agree that it is legitimate for the OPSG to undertake the role as described in this paper. The Panel could make an explicit amendment to the ToRs, if it was of the view that this was desirable.

8. Recommendations

The SEC Panel are asked to:

- **CONSIDER** the contents of this paper, including the view of SMDG that the OPSG should be the forum for overseeing work on Superfluous Alerts;
- **AGREE** that the OPSG should carry out the activities described above;
- **AGREE** that the activities described fall legitimately within the terms of reference of the OPSG; and
- **NOTE** that the OPSG may escalate certain matters to the Panel for decision and action, including in particular where a required remediation is not being carried out.

Dave Warner

Chair, SEC Operations Group

6 March 2020

[1] https://smartenergycodecompany.co.uk/operations-group/