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Operations Group Meeting 112

26 February 2024, 12:20 – 16:30

Teleconference

OPSG_112_2602– Final Minutes

Attendees:

Category	Operations Group Members
Operations Group Chair	Dave Warner
Network Parties	Shuba Khatun
Large Suppliers	Kevin Donnelly
	Rochelle Harrison
	Sam Draper
	George Macgregor
	Ralph Baxter
	Emslie Law
Other SEC Parties	Martin Christie
	Michael Snowden
	Alex Ford

Representing	Other Participants
DCC	Danielle Jackson
	Val Cumberland
	Timothy Dunning
	Jane Wharam
	Gary Fairclough (<i>Agenda Item 7-8</i>)
	Andy Rowley (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)
	Richard Vernon (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)
	Bilal Ali
	Lynette Jones
	Martin Richards
	Mark Pitchford (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)

	Leigh Hill
	Ben Breen
	Gary Stuart
	Ian Drummond
	David Rollason
SECAS	Sarah Roebel (<i>Meeting Secretary</i>)
	Eugene Asante
	Conroy Saunders
	Cherrelle Mclean
DESNZ	Boz Laird-Clowes
	Rachel Allen
	Danny Holt
	Chloe Bailey

Apologies:

Representing	Name
Large Suppliers	Laurence Cross
Small Suppliers	Cassie Bowerman
Other SEC Parties	Geoff Huckerby

1. Previous Meeting Minutes

The Chair invited Operations Group (OPSG) members to comment on the Draft Minutes from OPSG 110. The OPSG **APPROVED** the minutes from OPSG 110 as final.

2. Actions Outstanding

SECAS presented the actions outstanding.

Action Ref.	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
OPSG 75/CONF 01	The DCC to provide further details on the removal of 'Roaming' from the CH&N Candidate List, including any implications.	12/07/2022	11/04/2023		DCC

The DCC provided a closing statement confirming that it will initiate engagement with TABASC during 2024 as a first step to deriving the cost benefits with a view of potentially including/removing (subject to SEC Forum endorsement) those features as part of a future deployment. The Candidate List is being managed separately to the work the DCC is undertaking as part of the wider network connectivity strategy

Action Ref.	Action	Date Raised	Last Target Date	Revised Target Date	Owner
development, primarily as the strategic review that underpins the List had already taken place as part of developing the 4G CH roadmap. This action is no longer required and can be closed. Status: Closed.					
OPSG 108/01	DCC to propose a way forward to address concerns managing the Incident process in relation to categorisation and incentives for DCC Users to implement the current process.	12/12/2022	11/04/2023		DCC
Status: Closed. See agenda item 08.					
OPSG 110/01	The DCC to come back to the OPSG 112 reporting meeting to provide an update and status of actions agreed at the incident workshop (25 January 2024).	29/01/2024	31/03/2024		DCC
Status: Closed. See agenda item 08.					
OPSG 110/02	The DCC to come back to the OPSG to provide more detail around the difference in behaviours between the two groups of Pre-Payment success scenarios (e.g., subsequent success vs. delayed success), relative to the time window to closure.	29/01/2024	30/06/2024		DCC
The OPSG requested a breakdown of current results split between Electricity Smart Meter (ESME) and Gas Smart Meter (GSME). The OPSG expressed concern over consumers being off supply during the delayed success scenario. See agenda item 05. Status: Open.					

The OPSG **NOTED** the update.

3. SEC Panel Reports – January 2024

Registration Data Provider (RDP) Incidents

SECAS presented the RDP Incidents report for January 2024. SECAS reported that there was one new Incident opened in January 2024. SECAS also noted that all incidents from previous months

have now been resolved following Registration Data corrections. SECAS confirmed that four severity 5 Incidents were reported as resolved within the month.

Quarterly Problem Report Summary

SECAS noted 50 Open Problems at the end of Q4 2023 with 23 new Problem Records created this quarter compared to 19 in the previous quarter (Q3). SECAS reported six Problem Records that have breached the Root Cause Analysis (RCA) target: the DCC had assigned one Problem to the High Impact Category and five to the Medium Impact Category.

SRV Forecast

SECAS noted the drop in the DCC's accuracy of forecasting Service Request Variant (SRV) volumes, with a Q4 2023 total of 89.03% accuracy compared to 93.26% in last quarter (Q3). The DCC reported that this was impacted by the volume of Scheduled Reads being significantly lower than forecasted. The OPSG requested that the DCC provide a view of what appears to be a decreasing trend in the performance.

CH Returns Report

SECAS presented the Quarterly Communications Hub (CH) Returns report and noted that 16,597 records were closed in Q4 of 2023 with 16,024 of those attributed to Service Users (No Fault Found) and 573 attributed to DCC (Fault Found). SECAS noted that Communication Service Provider (CSP) Central & South (C&S) contributed to 31% of returns and CSP North (CSPN) contributed to 69% of returns. SECAS noted that in both CSP C&S and CSPN, the majority of CH returns were recorded as 'Fault Return – SRV 8.14.3'. The OPSG queried whether some of the returns data could be being categorised incorrectly.

The OPSG also queried the CH fault rates for CSP C&S and CSP N respectively during each quarter of 2023. The data showed installed rate as a percentage of the installed volume rather than installed batch rate. It was noted that the YTD row appeared to show individual quarterly values rather than cumulative values.

More generally the OPSG noted the apparent lack of alignment between Users' views of faults and those of the CSPs.

The OPSG requested that DCC review the data underlying the CH fault report and its presentation and come back to the OPSG. DCC agreed to do this. When the data was clarified, it could then be decided whether the lack of alignment between USERS and CSPs should be investigated.

The OPSG:

- **NOTED** the presentation.
- **APPROVED** the SEC Panel Reports.

Action OPSG 112/01: The DCC to come back to the OPSG to provide a view of what appears to be a decreasing trend in performance of the DCC's SRV forecasting.

Action OPSG 112/02: The DCC to come back to the OPSG to provide clarity on the underlying accuracy and categorisation of data on which the Quarterly CH Returns report is built.

Action OPSG 112/03: The DCC to come back to the next OPSG Reporting meeting in March 2024 to provide a more detailed view of the CH Fault Rate for 2023.

4. Performance Measurement Report – December 2023

SECAS presented its review of the Performance Measurement Report (PMR) for December 2023 and noted the associated responses to queries provided by the DCC.

SECAS confirmed that three Category 2 Incidents were closed in December 2023 and no Key Incident was excluded from the December 2023 performance. The DCC reported that the Service improvement plan for DXC has been finalised and performance should now be at a steady state. The DCC state December's issues in SLA performance drops were due to two incidents with DXC on the 2 and the 8 of December 2023. The DCC stated that in the last two weeks of December 2023 and the whole on January 2024 all DXC performance measures have been green and no further incidents have occurred.

4.1 Code Performance Measures (CPM)

SECAS reported that the following Code Performance Measures (CPM) achieved Target Service Levels for December 2023: CPM1, CPM2, CPM3, CPM3A CSPN, CPM4, CPM5 (All Categories), CPM5A, CPM6 (All Interfaces), CPM7 and CPM8.

SECAS highlighted that DXC PM1.1 had slipped slightly but was still above Minimum Service Level.

SECAS queried why November's performance for DXC PM1.1 was record in the December PMR as 98.28% but the November PMR reported performance as 82%. The DCC confirmed that there was an error in the DXC reporting for November which the DCC had now corrected in the re-issued November PMR version 2 report.

SECAS noted that PM2.1 in CSP N continued to track between 97% and 98%. SECAS highlighted that PM2.1 for Central had a slight drop and queried why this drop was not also seen in the South. The DCC noted that this measure was missed due to failures for 200 devices and performance was so close to target that no service credits were applicable. The DCC confirmed that the WNC PDP Drop issue continues to impact performance, albeit at a reducing rate. The DCC state this issue will be resolved by April 2024, allowing performance to return to consistent levels.

SECAS highlighted that in December, one CPM did not meet target. CPM 3A in CSP C&S recorded performance of 91.38%, marking its ninth failure in a row to achieve Minimum Service Level. The DCC reiterated that the WNC CH PDP Drop Issue is a key driver for CSP C&S continuing below SLA performance in this area.

4.2 Service Provider Performance

SECAS informed the OPSG that S1SP DXC fell short of the minimum requirement achieving 50% performance for Service Management measure 7- Planned Maintenance Events. The DCC reported that this was a result of a late submission of a Change Request. The DCC stated that proactive steps have been identified and implemented to minimise the risk of this occurring in the future.

4.3 Performance Indicators

The DCC reported that Performance Indicator 1 is below the Minimum Service Level in December for CSPN and CSP C&S at 88.23% and 81.78% respectively. The DCC stated that Power Restoration Alert (PRA) performance is not fully within the control of DCC. The DCC reported that the PRA (8F35/8F36) is generated by the Smart Meter and whilst the Devices for some Meter Manufacturers has consistently met the required Target Response Time others consistently fail. The DCC confirmed it has currently identified that there are four Meter Manufacturers consistently causing latency and are working to identify trends across Device Model, Active Firmware and CH combinations.

4.4. SMETS2 and SMETS1 Service Credits

SECAS noted that that Service Credits for SMETS2 equate to £21,556.47 and service credits for SMETS1 £39,599.38 for December.

The OPSG noted concern over CSPN performance and urged the DCC to consider this when contemplating future investment in this region. The DCC emphasised that it continues engagement with CSPN seeking to improved performance.

The OPSG:

- **NOTED** the presentation.
- **AGREED** with the summary.

5. Business Processes Indicator Reporting

The DCC presented Business Process Indicator success rate graphs, the OPSG Chair suggested minor format changes (e.g. scales) to which the DCC responded it would adjust the slides for the next OPSG Reporting meeting.

5.1 Business Process Indicators (BPI)

The DCC confirmed that firmware activation success for SMETS2 continues to remain stable with a slight increase in performance overall coming from a low point in October 2023 to a high in January 2024. The DCC noted that when device level success was checked, performance of SMETS2 was 97.5% and that CHs were the best performing device.

5.2 Pre-Payment Analysis

The DCC presented a Waterfall Chart showing factors impacting performance of Pre-Payment: this indicated a stable performance between December 2023 and January 2024, with a slight improved success rate.

The DCC noted they were continuing to monitor the size of the Incorrect Certificate bucket and noted a 23% decrease in volume of SRVs.

The DCC described the meaning of Delayed Success which was brought up in OPSG Action 110/02:

The DCC to come back to the OPSG to provide more detail around the difference in behaviours between the two groups of Pre-Payment success scenarios (e.g., subsequent success vs. delayed success), relative to the time window to closure.

The DCC noted that the time elapsed between the sending of an 'IO' (success) response code to a Pre-Payment SRV that had been received by the DSP following the 'E21' error response code. The DCC confirmed that the report showed data taken from the month of January 2024. The OPSG requested a view of the split between ESME and GSME with an amended slide to demonstrate the breakdown between these device types and the DCC agreed to investigate providing a side-by-side view. The OPSG noted the timing of the spike showing the point at which the 'IO' (success) response had been received occurs between 1 hour and 2 hours after the SRV is sent. The OPSG expressed concern over consumers being off supply during this delay period. The OPSG agreed to come back with the amended slide and keep OPSG 110/02 open.

The OPSG made no comments on Pre-Payment Glidepath.

5.3 Install and Commission

The DCC noted that the Install and Commission success rate was consistent across all regions. The DCC highlighted incorrect device status with three Users as the main driver of this bucket with 40% of

failures. The DCC noted the largest bucket was the time out error as two Users contributed the most with one User not doing any Install and Commission.

The OPSG:

- **AGREED** to keep action OPSG 110/02 open.
- **NOTED** the presentation.

6. DSP

The DCC presented an overview of the LC13B consultation conclusions, and the milestone plan presented to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

The DCC presented the consultation background which included its scope, covering DCC programs delivering DSP services and DSP SI. The DCC had received responses from five stakeholders: two large suppliers, a DNO, a Governance Body and Telecommunications Provider. The DCC set out its plan following closure of the consultation, which had been approved by the Secretary of State.

The DCC presented the key points highlighted by stakeholders which included:

Agreement that Contract Award is a key milestone, and that the DCC can plan with increased certainty from this point

The DCC presented their intention to share a detailed plan with SEC governance bodies and other stakeholders when appropriate. The DCC noted that the DSP program had shared a 6-month engagement plan and the DCC will be looking to publish a formal engagement plan on their website during Q1 2024 which will incorporate this and the outcomes of the consultation.

Incumbent Service Provision

The DCC confirmed negotiations with the incumbent DSP were continuing and would allow sufficient time for procurement and options to extend services further in the event of a delay to the programme.

Request for increased amount of planned engagement in relation to transition and migration

The DCC presented that a new transitional engagement milestone in the programme plan would allow for additional engagement and complement any updates that DESNZ direct to the Transition and Migration Approach Document.

Request that there is increased visibility of DCC meetings in relation to SEC Security Assurance requirements

The DCC noted this activity was already underway and the plan now included a new Security Assessment Milestone to increase visibility. The DCC noted that procurement of the Competent Independent Organisation (CIO) will start imminently with a view to CIO contract award; the plan included the following three new milestones: MS16, MS35, and MS41. The OPSG had no comments regarding this.

The DCC presented other changes including DSP System Integration and the new timeframe is two years of Design, Build and Test followed by eight years of run with break points throughout.

The DCC updated the OPSG with all upcoming milestones for 2024 that incorporate governance and key plan milestones. The OPSG had no comments.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

7. Chatty Devices

The DCC presented evidence that excessive alerts in CSPN were impacting Business Process Indicator success rates. The DCC noted that the rule of thumb for “excessive” was at least 1,000 alerts per day from an individual device.

The DCC noted that 14.5k devices met the guideline, although CSPN have given a sample size of 15.5k devices. The OPSG noted November 2023 as a peak month for excessive alerts due to a Service User undertaking a system upgrade and DCC highlighted a downward trend going into December as a result of firmware upgrades which has contributed to the reduction. DCC advised that more than 50% of alerts were produced by a very small number (2.4k) of devices. In relation to the graph highlighting the Alert volumes, SECAS requested that the DCC correct the slide to include 8F3E Alert within the key, as the DCC noted that this Alert had the highest volume.

From the data, the DCC has identified the ten towers with the highest Alerts. The DCC queried whether OPSG members would like to target the towers and the OPSG confirmed that continued monitoring of the towers and enhanced reporting to show the geographical view and proportion of ‘chatty devices’ to each tower, would support the aim of reducing Alerts. The DCC agreed to provide a geographical view of the top ten affected towers and the devices producing Alerts associated with each one, and to provide these to Users.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

Action OPSG 112/04: The DCC to develop a geographical view of the top 10 impacted towers in CSP North and the 'chatty' devices connected to each. DCC to review whether excessive alerts have increased over Q2 2024. The analysis to include the proportion of 'chatty devices' connected to each of the 10 towers.

8. Incident Management Update Workshop Overview

The DCC presented an Incident Management improvement plan, building on the discussions at the workshop held on 25 January 2024. The DCC noted there had been fifteen attendees (excluding DCC) from all SEC party categories. The DCC noted that all attendees were open in sharing with the DCC, and the differing methods used within their business to categorise Incidents. The DCC highlighted that it would reword the summary regarding the phrase “no consideration for end consumers” to better reflect the DCC message, noting that service to end consumers is of prime importance to all SEC Parties, including DCC.

The DCC highlighted that the main areas of improvement which were discussed included: boundaries between Category 2 and Category 3, concerns with impacts on Pre-Payment SRVs, and concerns regarding consistency of the communication coming from the DCC. The OPSG Chair noted that the SEC definition of an Incident included threat, not just observed symptoms.

The DCC presented OPSG Actions 108/01 and 110/01 and invited OPSG to agree to close. The DCC noted the improvement plan taken away from this workshop included focus on high impact windows.

The DCC reported in the year to December 2023 there was an 8% decrease in Major Incidents compared with 2022. The OPSG noted that however, the number of Category 1&2 Incidents remained in the range 2-3 per month.

The OPSG agreed to close the above actions with no comments.

The OPSG:

- **AGREED** to close OPSG actions 108/01 and 110/01.
- **NOTED** the presentation.

9. Major Incidents in FOC – Review of Causes

The DCC noted overall there were 33 Major Incidents (Category 1&2) in 2023, twelve of which were related to FOC. The DCC had considered eleven out of twelve Major Incidents as one Incident had been downgraded to a Category 3. The DCC presented that of these eleven, two were Category 1 and nine were Category 2 Major Incidents. The DCC confirmed that the Major Incidents originating in FOC could be categorised as relating directly to infrastructure, configuration, capacity, and software. In discussion, the DCC noted that “configuration” was intended to cover all aspects of “operational error”: the OPSG noted that more might fall into the operational error category than DCC had indicated.

The DCC presented the high severity FOC Incidents which included an Incident summary and root cause summary:

The DCC noted that in April 2023, issues occurred due to the Price Change event. The DCC noted that S1SP had a large number of Alerts taking up too many IP addresses which had a knock-on effect and that SRVs therefore failed. The DCC noted November 2023 saw a hardware failure of a switch in S1SP and December saw increased SR failures in SMETS1 IOC and FOC. SECAS highlighted that two Major Incidents occurred in March very close together and also with the same Root Cause.

The DCC summarised the Problem themes for FOC Major Incidents as: one Major Incident related to BCDR, one related to a maintenance release, four related to third-party change/global outage outside of DCC control, two were technology related, and three environment management related.

The OPSG queried how this information aids future learning. The DCC responded stating that it was working closely with the FOC Service Provider and committed to providing an update on the outcome of recent engagements during March 2024 to the OPSG.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

10. Major Incident Review

Formal Report for Major Incident INC000001130925

SECAS presented a review of INC000001130925 noting that the DCC had reported that this Category 1 Major Incident occurred on 11 January 2024. SECAS reported the impact of this Major Incident was on SMETS1 SRVs in MOC and affected Pre-Payment. SECAS noted that the MOC Service Provider had not proactively notified the DCC of this issue, despite being aware of it and asked the DCC whether it is doing anything to improve proactive communication from Service Providers. The DCC highlighted that the DSP did firmly remind of their obligations and that there was an action to improve the responsiveness of the Service Provider.

Formal Report for Major Incident INC000001134531

SECAS provided a review of INC000001134531 and reported that this Category 1 Major Incident occurred on 17 January 2024. SECAS summarised this DSP Major Incident as impacting all SRVs in SMETS1 and SMETS2 and lasting 35 minutes. The DCC noted that this was due to regular patching work that had previously not had issues. The DCC highlighted that it has now been restored and the root cause is still under investigation, though could possibly be due to hardware clusters. SECAS

enquired about whether the recommended solution of re-introducing nodes into a cluster been implemented or when it will be expected. The DCC noted that this solution has been implemented, however, a further enduring solution may be required, and it is continuing to work through that with the DSP.

The OPSG Chair noted that the resolution times for the two Category 1 Major Incidents discussed had been fast.

The OPSG:

- **NOTED** the presentation.
- **AGREED** the two major incident reports could be published by the DCC.

11. OPSG Q3 Lookback Report

SECAS presented the OPSG Q3 lookback report (October 2023 until December 2023). SECAS noted that the expenditure reported was slightly under budget due to unexpected annual leave. SECAS highlighted that the Look Forward was not presented prior to this period as the process was changed by SEC Panel but was then reverted back.

The OPSG **NOTED** the presentation.

12. Customer Perspective

None were proposed.

13. Any Other Business

User Forum

SECAS noted that the OPSG User Forum trial of the Social Squared plug-in for Microsoft Teams is open until Thursday 29 February 2024 and a possible extension into March is being considered. The OPSG asked that SECAS considers other simpler options such as WhatsApp or Signal.

Next Main Meeting

SECAS highlighted that the next OPSG meeting will be in person and will be taking place at 8 Fenchurch Place.

Review of BCDR Testing Approach

SECAS will share ex-committee a proposed plan for reviewing the BCDR Testing approach: OPSG Members were asked to provide comments.

Next Main Meeting: 12 March 2024 (in person); Next Reporting Meeting: 25 March 2024.