

Consultation

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Tests

Consultation opens: 24 July 2019
Consultation closes: 05 August 2019

Date: 24 July 2019

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1 Executive summary

Section H10.11 of the SEC places an obligation on DCC to periodically test its Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery (BCDR) arrangements and report the results to the SEC Panel and the Authority. In accordance with the obligations set out in Section H10.12A of the SEC, DCC is required to consult the Parties and the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) regarding the timing and approach of testing the DR infrastructure following the go-live of SMETS1 components into the live environment. This testing of the DR service is expected to result in a disruption to the Services

The scope of this consultation is limited to proving DCC's ability to continue providing the Services in the event that any aspect DCC Systems fails (Disaster Recovery). Testing of DCC's ability to provide DCC Services if its business operations are disrupted (Business Continuity) fall outside of the scope of this consultation and will be tested and consulted on separately.

The purpose of the proposed BCDR test is to validate that the secondary systems are capable of providing continuity of both SMETS2 and SMETS1 services. This includes testing all the SMETS1 infrastructure changes introduced into live since the last test that occurred in May 2019 prior to SMETS1 go-live. DCC considers that the optimum time to undertake this proving test is November 2019 before the anticipated ramp-up of live and active migration services for the following reasons:

- The increasing impact of new SMETS1 installations, plus existing SMETS1 meters that are gradually being incorporated into the DCC ecosystem; and
- November is expected to be outside the peak winter storm season, reducing the impact on Distribution Network Operators (DNOs).

DCC is inviting all Parties and the TABASC to provide their views on these proposals. DCC is particularly interested in understanding if there is anything more that can be done to ensure that this Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Test is undertaken in such a way as to minimise any disruption to the provision of the Services.

2 Disaster Recovery testing - proposed approach

2.1 Scope

The scope of this DR testing is to undertake activities to prove the following:

- That DSP is still capable of successfully failing-over from the primary to secondary systems within four hours, while proving that all SMETS1 components maintain continuity of service;
- That DSP is able to successfully operate from their secondary data centre site for at least one week, whilst also proving connectivity between all Service Providers and proving SMETS1 services continue uninterrupted; and
- That DSP is able to successfully failback from their secondary data centre to their primary data centre within four hours, with no impact to SMETS1 live services.

2.2 Proposed dates and times

The proposed dates and times for each proving test is set out below:

No	Date	DR Activity	Target – 4hrs	Contingency
1	03 November 2019	DSP failover	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
2	10 November 2019	DSP failback	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
3	17 November 2019	Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
4	24 November 2019	Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00

During each failover/failback test there will be a full outage to the Services¹. We are proposing to undertake DR testing in November 2019, prior to the commencement of live active SMETS1 migration services, in order to minimise the impact of this disruption to the Service.

We are anticipating a significant acceleration in the number of meters being installed and incorporated into the DCC ecosystem by November 2019. This is expected because of the changes to the current SMETS1 arrangements which sees SMETS1 infrastructure along with the migration of SMETS1 meters into the DCC ecosystem expected to increase from November 2019.

The anticipated introduction of SMETS1 into the DCC ecosystem combined with SMETS2 installations has led DCC to conclude that DR testing should be undertaken as early as possible following IOC go-live in order to minimise the impact on the overall Smart meter programme.

Section H10.12A and H10.12B of the SEC requires DCC to consult with Parties and TABASC prior to providing each Party with a Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Test Schedule at least 60 Working Days before the start of proving tests. DCC is consulting now in order to start proving tests on 3rd November 2019².

Q1

Do you agree with DCC's proposal to undertake DR testing in November 2019? If you disagree, please provide your reasons.

DCC is proposing to undertake the DR testing on Sundays between 09:00 and 13:00 as previously agreed before starting the March 2019 tests. This is primarily intended to minimise the impact of the proving tests on suppliers, including in relation to their Install and Commission activities.

Undertaking the DR testing during the daytime also ensures that resources are available from both DCC and DSP without incurring the additional cost associated with operating 'out-of-hours'. This is intended to support DCC meeting its regulatory obligations with

¹ Full details of the impact on the Services is provided in Annex 1.

² The earliest DCC can consult on our proposals is 23 July due to the need to ensure completion of key SMETS1 IOC go-live activities.

respect to BCDR testing in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, and to keep end costs as low as possible on behalf of SEC Parties.

Q2

Do you agree with DCC's proposal to undertake DR testing during Sundays 09:00 – 13:00, with additional contingency between 13:00 – 17:00? If you disagree, please provide your reasons.

It is unavoidable that the Services will be disrupted during each failover and failback test. Although this disruption does not meet the definition of Planned Maintenance, DCC proposes to include it in the monthly schedule provided to Parties in accordance with Section H8.4. We also propose to include it in the Forward Schedule of Change in the Self-Service Interface in order to support Users when they are planning their business activities.

Q3

Please provide any suggestions which you consider may help to minimise disruption to the provision of the Services during the proving test.

2.3 Key steps

Sunday 3 November: The Data Service Provider (DSP) will failover from the primary systems to the secondary systems.

Sunday 3 November - Saturday 9 November: Services will be provided using the secondary DSP systems for 1 week, with the two Communication Service Providers (CSPs) and the Trusted Service Provider (TSP) continuing to run on their primary systems. This is intended to allow Users to assess and measure the performance of the secondary DSP system, and notify DCC of any issues they might encounter.

Sunday 10 November: The DSP will failback from its secondary systems to its primary systems.

Sunday 17 & 24 November: This contingency window will only be used if there is a problem with any of the failover/failback tests that results in an activity being cancelled or postponed. If no problems are experienced during the failover/failback tests, the contingency will be cancelled, and the Services will be made available on this date. We anticipate notifying Parties if this contingency is to be used or not by 10 November (following the 10 November failback).

2.4 Post-test reporting and actions

On completion of the proving test, DSP will be responsible for conducting their own post-test reviews and will be required to submit reports to DCC. DCC will carry out assurance checks to verify DSP's performance and identify any further areas for improvement. Once this assurance review is complete DCC will prepare its report for provision to the SEC Panel in accordance with Section H10.11(b).

Any residual post-test actions identified during the proving test, or following DCC's assurance work will be documented and tracked to completion.

3 Consultation questions

1. *Do you agree with DCC's proposal to undertake DR testing between 3 November and 10 November 2019? If you disagree, please provide your reasons.*
2. *Do you agree with DCC's proposal to undertake DR testing during Sundays between 09:00 – 13:00, with additional contingency between 13:00 – 17:00? If you disagree, please provide your reasons.*
3. *Please provide any suggestions which you consider may help to minimise disruption to the provision of the Services during the proving test.*

3.1 How to respond

Please provide responses by **05 August 2019** to DCC at consultations@smartdcc.co.uk. If you have any questions about the consultation documents, please contact consultations@smartdcc.co.uk.

Consultation responses may be published on our website www.smartdcc.co.uk. Please state clearly in writing whether you want all or any part, of your consultation to be treated as confidential. It would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. Please note that responses in their entirety (including any text marked confidential) may be made available to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority (the Authority). Information provided to BEIS or the Authority, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information legislation (primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). If BEIS or the Authority receive a request for disclosure of the information we/they will take full account of your explanation (to the extent provided to them), but we/they cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded by us as a confidentiality request.

4 Annex 1 - Impact on the Services

The impact on Users during each proving test window will be as follows:

- The DUIS will be closed and no new Service Requests will be accepted. No Alerts or responses will be delivered;
- All DSP Future Dated and Scheduled events that are due to be executed during each Maintenance window will be suspended and restarted after the window ends;
- Future Dated, Scheduled and other events originating from the HAN during the outage period will not be delivered;
- The SSI will be unavailable;
- The Service Desk will remain open and contactable via email and telephone during all outages;
- The SMKI Services will be unavailable;
- The daily file transfers of Registration updates from the DSP will be disabled, although inbound Registration files will still be received from the RDPs and the data applied at the end of each proving test window; and
- The Order Management System (OMS) will be unavailable to Users.