

# Consultation on the Release Management Policy

**Date:** 8 October 2019

**Classification:** DCC Public



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## 1. Introduction and Context

Section H8.9 of the Smart Energy Code (SEC) requires DCC to produce a Release Management Policy (RMP) that plans, schedules and controls has in place for the building, testing and deployment of releases of IT updates, procedures and processes in respect of the DCC Internal Systems and/or the Parse and Correlate Software.

There have been two previous versions of this Policy. DCC continually strives to improve its service offerings and have produced this, third, version of the Policy in order to:

- Better align the Policy to the obligations placed on it by SEC;
- Provide SEC Parties with increased visibility of DCC's release management processes; and
- Enhance the ability of DCC to deliver defect fixes and Service Improvements to Service Users quickly and cost effectively.

DCC is obliged to consult with Parties, Registration Data Providers (RDP) and the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) before making any changes to the DCC Release Management Policy, which is the subject of this consultation.

## 2. DCC Release Management Policy

The purpose of the document is to describe the processes and governance that DCC applies to releases of DCC Internal Systems and the Parse and Correlate Software under the Planned Maintenance obligations in the SEC. It also provides details of the processes and governance steps applied when SEC Releases and other major programs are brought up from their development environments onto the Production environment.

**RMP  
Q1**

*Do you agree that the revised Release Management Policy aligns with the regulatory requirements of the SEC? Please provide a rationale for your views.*

The document is broken down into a number of sections covering different aspects of DCC's Release Management Policy, which are summarised below.

### **Environmental context:**

This section provides an overview of the available environments and streams are used by DCC. The environments consist of pre-integration testing (PIT), systems integration testing (SIT), User Integration Testing (UIT) and Production. These are arranged as two streams: the A-stream which consists of PIT-A, SIT-A, UIT-A and Production, and a B-stream consists of the PIT-B, SIT-B and UIT-B.

**RMP  
Q2**

*Is this context useful and do you have any comments on the Environments that are available to DCC? Please provide a rationale for your views.*

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## Release Management approach

Release maintenance is spread throughout the calendar as evenly as possible, and scheduled maintenance releases are deployed in most months. The SEC Release Management Policy provides for up to two scheduled SEC System Releases per year at the times that are specified in Section 3 of the SEC RMP.

The standard release promotion path on the A-stream integrated environments is as follows:

PIT-A -> SIT-A -> UIT-A -> Production

In order to enter an environment, certain criteria must be met, details of which are set out in the DCC RMP.

In exceptional circumstances (for example, to resolve a Severity 1 Production Incident) it may be necessary to deploy releases in extremely short timescales and it is possible to move directly from PIT-A to Production. In this event, the SIT-A and UIT-A environments would be brought into alignment retrospectively as soon as possible after the Production deployment.

Immediately prior to the deployment of a release into Production, several checkpoint meetings are held in order to verify network and service stability, resource and communications readiness. Throughout the deployment further checkpoint meetings are held in order to ensure that the plan is on track and the deployment is proceeding successfully. Communications to DCC's customers and are issued to signal the start of the deployment, commencement of testing and conclusion of the deployment.

The release of a new version of the Parse & Correlate software follows a similar process, but there are some difference around how new versions are deployed into Production, which are described in the RMP.

**RMP  
Q3**

*Do you agree that the Policy provides sufficient information with respect to the planning and implementation of Releases by DCC? Please provide a rationale for your views.*

SEC and other major programme releases are developed and tested on the B-stream environments and follow different testing and governance regimes to those applied to production maintenance releases.

There are interactions with, and dependencies on, the A-stream production maintenance releases which are set out in the RMP. For example, the schedule to uplift to SIT-A provides enough time for the release to be regression tested on both SIT-A and UIT-A before deployment to Production, with the uplift of B-stream releases directly onto Production being prohibited as this would result in SIT-A and UIT-A going out of alignment with the Production system.

**RMP  
Q4**

*Do you agree that the Policy provide sufficient information with respect to the uplift of SEC releases and other major programs by DCC? Please provide a rationale for your views.*

## Communication with stakeholders

Information with respect to production maintenance releases is shared with Service Users and other SEC Parties which are described in the RMP.

**RMP  
Q5**

*Do you agree that the Policy provide sufficient information with respect to the release communications provided by DCC? Please provide a rationale for your views.*

**RMP  
Q6**

*Do you have any general comments on the Release Management Policy? Please provide a rationale for your views.*

## 3. Elective Communications Service Framework

Once the final version of the RMP has been published, DCC intends to develop an Elective Communications Service Release Management Process as part of a wider Elective Communications Service Framework. This process will be at a level that is immediately below the RMP and DCC believes that it will be helpful to all parties to have sight of this specific process. DCC would accordingly like to have the input of parties as to whether they agree that it would be useful to have a view of the process.

**RMP  
Q7**

Do you agree that it would be beneficial to have sight of the Elective Communications Services Release Process?

## 4. Next Steps

Following this consultation, DCC will take into account respondents' views, and publish an updated version of the Release Management Policy.

## 5. How to respond

Please provide responses in the attached template by 17:00 on 19 November 2019 to DCC at [consultations@smartdcc.co.uk](mailto:consultations@smartdcc.co.uk). A response template has been provided which you are invited to use.

Consultation responses may be published on our website [www.smartdcc.co.uk](http://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

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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.

If you have any questions about the consultation documents, please contact DCC via [consultations@smartdcc.co.uk](mailto:consultations@smartdcc.co.uk).

## **6. Attachments**

- Attachment 1 – Release Management Policy