



**Consultation on DCC Business Continuity
and Disaster Recovery 2021 Testing Plan**

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1. Executive Summary

Section H10.11 of the SEC places an obligation on DCC to periodically test the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery (BCDR) arrangements in order to assess whether the BCDR procedures remain suitable for achieving the objectives described in Section H10.9 and report the results to the SEC Panel.

This consultation seeks the views of SEC Parties and the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) on the 2021 BCDR plan, which is expected to result in disruption to DCC Services. This consultation is being undertaken in accordance with H10.12A.

The scope of this consultation is limited to proving DCC's ability to maintain continuity of services through 2021 calendar year, if during the year, there is an unplanned disruption to any aspect of DCC Technology Systems (Disaster Recovery). Testing of DCC's ability to provide DCC Services if any aspect of DCC business operations is disrupted (Business Continuity) is outside the scope of this consultation and will be tested separately.

The purpose of BCDR testing is to verify that the secondary systems can provide continuity of DCC services to Customers and Service Users. To enable DCC carry out annual BCDR plans, this consultation covers the whole of 2021 calendar of BCDR schedules of testing. Readers should refer to Annex 1 for information on the impact to services during BCDR and to Annex 2 for the proposed testing schedules in 2021. In addition, DCC will communicate testing dates to industry appropriately and regularly to ensure BCDR awareness is maintained.

Disaster Recovery testing as a result of Middle Operating Capacity (MOC) and Final Operating Capacity (FOC) programmes are excluded from this Consultation, as dates and times were agreed as part of the programme deliverables.

In view of the above, DCC is inviting all Parties and the TABASC to provide their views on these proposals.

1.1. Scope

The scope of 2021 BCDR testing is to prove the following:

- That each Service Provider can achieve failover or failback between their datacentres within the contracted 4-hour Recovery Time Objective (RTO).
- That each DCC Service Provider can successfully continue to operate from their secondary datacentres for at least 1 week, while also proving continuity of all services in respect of SMETS2 and SMETS1 services.

- That all DCC Service Providers and DCC Service Users can continue to operate and communicate successfully for at least 1 week in conjunction with other Service Providers primary or secondary datacentre, whichever configuration is in place for service availability.
- In respect of SMETS1, that DCC MCC migration team can continue to operate and carry out migrations when SMETS1 Service Providers are operating from the secondary site.
- That DCC Core Services are restored at levels that meet stakeholder, customer, and regulatory obligations.
- That the BCDR plan is tested to maintain an effective continuity capability that is aligned to SEC Regulations.
- That Service Providers can demonstrate their BCDR capability by testing their recovery processes, enabling DCC to demonstrate successful and resilient secondary site operations across the ecosystem.

Separate timings will be agreed with each Service Provider, and each proposed proving schedule will check the capability of the Service Provider to meet DCC's BCDR objectives.

2. Proposed Dates and Times

DCC BCDR failover/failback activities will be performed on Sundays between 09:00 - 17:00 in order to minimise the impact of this disruption to normal services. This is based on 4 hours RTO and 4 hours contingency.

Some failover/failback activities are planned to use the planned maintenance windows such as TSP usually undertaken on Thursday after 20:00 hours and Secure Meters on Saturday after 20:00 hours, as these do not have adverse impact on services.

Following careful consideration of the factors outlined above, DCC's view is that Business as Usual (BAU) BCDR testing should not take place any earlier than the 18th March 2021. Each BCDR activity will be communicated to industry as reminders in advance to ensure proposed dates and times for each proving exercise are known and shared with Service Users.

Section H10.12A and H10.12B of the SEC requires DCC to consult with Parties and TABASC prior to providing each Party with a BCDR Test Schedule at least 60 Working Days before the start of proving tests. DCC is consulting now in order to start proving tests on or after 18th March 2021 and seek industry views on the 2021 test schedule.

**BCDR
Q1**

Do you agree with DCC's proposal to undertake BCDR proving on or after 18th March 2021 and that updates to these dates should be shared with Service Users well in advance of the test dates? If you disagree, please provide your reasons.

DCC is proposing to undertake the BCDR testing on Sundays between 09:00 and 13:00 as previously agreed with contingency from 13:00 to 17:00. This is primarily intended to minimise the impact of the testing and subsequent disruption on suppliers, including their Install and Commission activities.

Undertaking the BCDR testing during the daytime also ensures that resources are available from all participating Service Providers without incurring additional costs operating 'out-of-hours' and allows DCC to meet obligations while keeping BCDR costs as low as possible on behalf of SEC Parties.

**BCDR
Q2**

Do you agree with DCC's proposal to undertake BCDR testing during Sundays 09:00 – 13:00, with additional contingency between 13:00 – 17:00? And the proposal to undertake some BCDR testing during planned maintenance windows? If you disagree, please provide your reasons.

During each failover and failback activity, it is expected production services will not be available for the duration of the times stated. Although disruptions caused by BCDR testing does not meet the definition of Planned Maintenance, DCC will communicate with SEC Parties as follows:

- DCC BCDR Team will communicate with SEC Parties bimonthly by email to provide updates on BCDR activities aligned to the Forward Schedule of Change so that conflicts with internal planned changes can be avoided where possible.
- DCC BCDR Team will provide regular quarterly updates and presentation at SECOPS Group to share BCDR updates and plans including next quarter planned activities that impact service.
- BCDR plan dates are entered and maintained on the DCC Forward Schedule of Change (FSC) in the Self-Service Interface for reference, and they provide a guidance to BCDR activities that have service disruption as part of the runtime.

All planned outages are aligned with the failover/failback change window timelines agreed.

**BCDR
Q3**

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

2.1. Key steps

Sunday 18th March 2021: The first failover exercise will commence after this date. Scheduled and changes to test dates will be shared in advance with SEC Parties and will be updated in the Forward Schedule of Change.

Failover: Each DCC Service Provider will failover from their primary systems to their secondary systems in 4 hours RTO.

Business as Usual (BAU): DCC services will be delivered using the secondary systems for a minimum of one week's duration, depending on the prevailing circumstances at the time and agreed with SEC Parties. This is intended to allow Service Users the opportunity to assess the performance of the secondary systems, and to notify DCC of any issues they might encounter during this time.

Failback: Each DCC Service Provider will failback from their secondary systems to their primary systems in 4 hours RTO.

Contingency: Each Service Provider will be allotted a contingency window which will only be used if there are problems with any of the failover/failback exercises that results in an activity being cancelled, reversed or rollback. If no problems are experienced during the BCDR exercises, the contingency window will be cancelled, and services will be made available to service users to plan their activities.

DCC anticipate notifying Parties if this contingency is to be used or not on the day of the last planned activity taking place.

2.2. Post-Exercise Reporting and Actions

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

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

3. Consultation Questions

Summary of the consultation questions are set out below:

BCDR Q1	Do you agree with DCC's proposal to undertake BCDR proving on or after 18 th March 2021 and that updates to these dates should be shared with Service Users well in advance of the test dates? If you disagree, please provide your reasons.
BCDR Q2	Do you agree with DCC's proposal to undertake BCDR testing during Sundays 09:00 – 13:00, with additional contingency between 13:00 – 17:00? And the proposal to undertake some BCDR testing during planned maintenance windows? If you disagree, please provide your reasons.
BCDR Q3	Please provide any suggestions which you consider may help to minimise disruption to the provision of the Services during the proving exercise periods.

3.1. How to respond

Please provide responses by 16:00 on 7th December 2020 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 DCC website www.smartdcc.co.uk. Further, DCC may refer to responses in the consultation conclusions, which will appear on DCC's website. Please note that responses may be made available to the SEC Panel.

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 Service Users during each proving exercise 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 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 exercise window; and
- Active meter Firmware downloads will be interrupted and therefore terminated due to shutdown of the motorway. Disrupted Firmware downloads will need to be re-initiated post BCDR test.

The Change window is effective between the hours stated during which production services will not be available.

Key Services for SMETS1 and SMETS2 will not be available during the BCDR exercise window.

5. Annex 2 - Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Test Schedule

The below BCDR test schedule shows all planned outages to services during 2021.

All BCDR test dates, along with the outages associated with the proving exercise will be communicated bimonthly providing updates where applicable including confirming tests dates that are due within the 2 months period.

Date	SMETS2 BCDR Proving Activity	Recovery Time Objective 4 hours	Contingency
18 March 2021	TSP (BT) – DR Failover	20:00 – 00:00	00:00 – 04:00
25 March 2021	TSP (BT) – DR Failback	20:00 – 00:00	00:00 – 04:00
08 April 2021	TSP (BT) – DR Contingency	20:00 – 00:00	00:00 – 04:00
25 April 2021	DSP – DR Failover	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
09 May 2021	DSP – DR Failback	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
23 May 2021	DSP – DR Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
06 June 2021	DSP – DR Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
06 June 2021	CSP N – DR Failover	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
13 June 2021	CSP N – DR Failback	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
13 June 2021	CSP N – DR Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
20 June 2021	CSP N – DR Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
10 Oct 2021	CSP SC - DR Failover	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
17 Oct 2021	CSP SC – DR Failover	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
24 Oct 2021	CSP SC – DR Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00

Table 1: SMETS2 BCDR Testing Plan

Date	SMETS1 Resilience and BCDR Proving Activity	Recovery Time Objective 4 hours	Contingency
11 April 2021	SIE SFTP – DR Failover/Failback	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
18 April 2021	SIE SFTP – DR Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
11 July 2021	SIE – Resilience Testing	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
18 July 2021	SIE – Resilience Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
25 July 2021	DCO – Resilience Testing	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
01 Aug 2021	DCO – Resilience Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
05 Sept 2021	CP – DR Failover	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
12 Sept 2021	CP – DR Failback	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
19 Sept 2021	CP – DR Contingency	09:00 – 13:00	13:00 – 17:00
25 Sept 2021	Secure Meters – DR Failover	20:00 – 00:00	00:00 – 04:00
13 Nov 2021	Secure Meters – DR Failback	20:00 – 00:00	00:00 – 04:00
20 Nov 2021	Secure Meters – DR Contingency	20:00 – 00:00	00:00 – 04:00

Table 2: SMETS1 Programme Post Go-live Resilience and BCDR testing Plan