

Conclusion on the BCDR Testing Plan 2021

Consultation on DCC Business
Continuity and Disaster Recovery
2021 Testing Plan

Version: 1.0

Date: 16.12.2020

Author: consultations@smartdcc.co.uk

Classification: DCC Public

Table of Contents

1. Background	3
2. DCC Responses to Comments Received	4
3. Next Steps	5
4. Annex 1 - Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Test Schedule	6

1. Background

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.

A consultation was issued to seek 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 was issued in accordance with Section H10.12A of the SEC. The scope of the consultation was limited to proving DCC's ability to maintain continuity of services through 2021 calendar year. The purpose of BCDR testing is to verify that the secondary systems can provide continuity of DCC services to Customers and Service Users.

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

- That each DCC 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 the DCC Migration Control Centre 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 DCC 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.

2. DCC Responses to Comments Received

DCC Received five responses to the consultation which all provided similar feedback. Three responses were from Large Supplier Parties and two responses were from Network Parties. DCC invited views from TABASC at the 3 December meeting where it was confirmed no formal comments or response would be provided. DCC posed three questions in the consultation which are set out below, along with comments received and DCC's response to those comments.

Question 1

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.

The question related to the beginning of the test schedule and the planned continued communication throughout the 2021 calendar year to confirm testing dates. It should be noted that the original consultation noted the first testing date as scheduled for *Sunday 18th March*, however this should have read as *Thursday 18th March*.

Comment: All respondents agreed with the proposed testing schedule. Respondents also noted the need to engage with users before any changes were agreed and the requirement for early communication to any changes.

Response: DCC welcomes the agreement of testing dates and will continue to work with industry to communicate and confirm testing dates through 2021.

Question 2

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.

This question related to the timing of BCDR testing on Sundays, which allows the RTO to be met while also providing contingency and Thursday BCDR testing during planned maintenance windows, which looks to limit the impact of testing.

Comment: Four respondents provide clear agreement to these timings, while noting other impacts.

Response: DCC welcomes these agreements to timings.

Comment: Respondents noted impacts of BCDR testing including on the delivery of Service Requests, Enrolment and Adoption of SEMST1 meters, and Prepayment related Service Requests.

Response: DCC will continue to consider impact of the required BCDR testing on other areas of service and how these may be reduced, while continuing to consider the importance of completing BCDR testing to ensure secondary systems can be available when required to protect the service. DCC BCDR testing dates are planned in consideration of other areas of the service and major release dates to ensure these areas of service are not impacted.

Question 3

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

This question invited any additional comments.

Comment: Some respondents noted the large number of testing dates and raised the possibility of combining BCDR testing to cover multiple Service Providers at the same time.

Response: DCC notes the concerns raised and the complexity and planning required by individual Service Providers. While the BCDR schedule is considering compliant against the regulatory requirements DCC will investigate this proposal and the possibility of combining Service Provider testing. DCC will consider where it may be possible to run testing during planned maintenance windows in midweek. Any changes to the testing schedule will be discussed with Users.

In addition, BCDR activities will be included in any decisions considering adverse weather conditions.

Comment: Once responded asked whether alerts generated during the testing should be queued and despatched to the Service User once testing is complete.

Response: DCC can confirm that BCDR testing is a managed and controlled process, that ensures alerts are queued up when failover/failback begins and then released once connectivity has resumed. No messages are deleted or discarded during failover/failback activities.

3. Next Steps

DCC will continue to engage with industry and confirm testing dates as the schedule is progressed through 2021. DCC will investigate the combining of BCDR Testing to reduce any impact to users or running tests during planned maintenance periods, any changes will be discussed with Users prior to changes being confirmed.

Annex 1 sets out the current BCDR Testing and should be taken as formal notification of the 2021 schedule.

4. Annex 1 - 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