SEC Release Conclusions on the June 2023 Testing Approach Document

DCC Conclusions on the consultation issued on the draft Testing Approach Document for the June 2023 SEC Release

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Table of Contents

1.   Introduction and Context

1. The Data Communications Company (DCC) is Britain's digital energy spine, supporting the transformation of the energy system. DCC is licensed by the Government and regulated by the energy regulator Ofgem to connect smart meters in homes and small businesses across Great Britain to a single secure, digital network. DCC supports the roll-out of second-generation (SMETS2) smart meters, as well as the migration of existing first-generation (SMETS1) meters onto our network.

1.1.   Background

2. Under SEC Section D10.18, DCC has an obligation to produce a SEC Release Testing Approach Document which defines the approach to testing changes to DCC Systems arising from a SEC Release.

3. In November 2022 DCC issued a consultation[1] seeking comments on the draft June 2023 DCC Testing Approach Document which has been produced to satisfy the requirements set out in SEC Sections D10.18 – D10.20.

2.   Consultation Responses

2.1.   Responses

4. DCC received written responses from three parties, all of which are Energy Suppliers. In addition to the written responses, DCC received comments from stakeholders through engagement activities such as the SEC Testing Advisory Group (TAG).

3.   Analysis of Responses

5. DCC has analysed the feedback provided and views of stakeholders. Subject matter experts within DCC have reviewed every response. DCC has structured the analysis of responses by question. Thus, this section presents DCC's analysis by question in several separate subsections; with an overview of the responses on the topic and a DCC response.

3.1.   Question 1

6. DCC sought views on the overall testing approach asking: **"Do you support the overall approach and scope of the draft June 2023 DCC Testing Approach Document? Please provide rationale for your views."**.

Respondent Views

7. All three respondents supported the overall approach and scope outlined in the draft June 2023 TAD attached to the consultation. It was noted that the document followed the same approach and format as previous approved TADs and this looks to provide the necessary test coverage to satisfy any associated risk of promoting the June 2023 SEC Release to the production environment.

8. Two respondents noted that they had provided additional comments in response to question two in the consultation.

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[1] https://www.smartdcc.co.uk/consultations/june-2023-testing-approach-document/

DCC Response

9. DCC notes the support for the overall approach and have reviewed all the comments received, providing a response in the next section of this document.

3.2. Question 2

10. DCC sought any additional comments on the TAD asking: **"Do you have any other comments on the draft June 2023 DCC Testing Approach Document? Please provide details and rationales for your views."**.

Respondent Views

11. Respondents noted the following in relation to the testing scope:

    - a reference is made to Sheep-dip application with no explanation, and it would be good to see one included;

    - Pre-integration Testing (PIT) does not include Initial Operating Capability (IOC) SMETS1 Service Provider (S1SP) and therefore an explanation for this exclusion is needed; and

    - CR4805 states that the Enduring Change of Supplier (ECoS) Programme will use a development version of DCC User Interface Specification (DUIS) v5.2 to complete testing, prior to DUIS being fully developed for June 2023, clarification was therefore requested on whether ECoS will be tested against the June 2023 version of DUIS.

12. Respondents also requested the following information in relation to emulators:

    - clarification of test coverage impacts due to the emulators to be used will be assured to GBCS v4.1 but the June 2023 SEC Release includes Parse & Correlate (P&C) which is aligned to GBCS v4.2;

    - more detail on the testing and assurance to be applied to emulators, should new functionality be required; and

    - the process if a test fails due to an emulator but this cannot be run in any other way, leaving the test unable to be run.

13. One respondent also noted that it was their assumption that DCC regression testing will fully cover the parallel release of ECoS.

14. In relation to the Testing Issues Threshold, one respondent noted that if any defect has its Severity reduced from 1 or 2 to 3 or below by using a workaround which affects DCC User behaviour or processes, then this workaround must be agreed with TAG and possibly the SEC Operations Group (OPSG).

15. Finally, one respondent noted several typographical errors in the TAD. Particularly, Appendix B of the TAD does not reiterate that the device selection will be reviewed by TAG to ensure good and equitable coverage of device types.

DCC Response

16. Regarding the comments received relating to the testing scope, DCC has updated the TAD with the following:

    - a footnote has been included on Page 15 of the TAD to explain that the Sheep-dip application is a Data Service Provider (DSP) internal application which is not visible to DCC Users and manages the Recovery Application; and

- section 5.3 of the TAD advises that IOC will be the subject of focussed regression across the System Integration Testing (SIT) environment as IOC S1SP is excluded from PIT as there is no impact.

No changes have been made to the TAD regarding ECoS testing as DCC can confirm there is only one version of DUIS v5.2, the draft of which has been shared with SECAS. The same version of DUIS v5.2 is being used for both ECoS and June 2023 SIT before it is made available to DCC Users.

17. DCC considers there to be no impact to the testing scope or coverage as P&C v4.2 is backward compatible to emulators and/or Devices which are aligned to GBCS v4.1 or lower.

18. As there is no new device impacting functionality being delivered in the June 2023 SEC Release, DCC will utilise the emulators that have been tested and assured for the June 2022 and November 2022 SEC Releases and the GBCS v4.1 Programme. This means that the likelihood of any new emulator issue being encountered across the June 2023 Release is low. DCC has updated Section 7.1 and 9.1.2 of the TAD to outline these points. DCC also notes that it has separately identified Testing Issues that have been recorded against emulators during earlier testing and updates with be provided to the TAG. DCC can confirm that if/when a Testing Issue arises while using an emulator and the test cannot be run in any other way, the Testing Issue will be recorded as "OPEN" and will be subject to the rules around a Work Off Plan with the incumbent timelines for a fix.

19. To clarify the respondent's assumption on regression testing, DCC can confirm that the June 2023 SEC Release System Regression will be carried out against the SIT-B baseline code which will include ECoS changes. This is a standard practice followed when multiple programmes have to co-exist in the environment at the same time.

20. DCC notes that all Testing Issues will remain "OPEN" even if it has passed with a workaround and such Testing Issue will be discussed with TAG for agreement of the assigned severity and discussion of any workaround, if it impact any of the existing DCC User behaviour or processes. DCC notes that TAG still retain the right to require DCC to obtain the opinion of OPSG for confirmation of the assigned Severity of Testing Issues.

21. DCC has corrected the typographical errors highlighted in the consultation responses, however, we consider it is clear in the drafting, as outlined in Section 5.2, that the Device Selection Process will be reviewed by TAG to ensure good and equitable coverage of device types in test.

4. TAG Decision

22. On Wednesday 30 November 2022 and then subsequently 25 January 2023, DCC presented the consultation responses and the proposed amendments to the June 2023 SEC Release TAD.

23. Following amendments and clarifications, TAG approved the TAD in accordance with SEC Section D10.20.

5. Next Steps

24. Published alongside this consultation conclusion document is the approved version of the June 2023 SEC Release TAD (V3.0).

6. Attachments

Attachment 1: June 2023 SEC Release Testing Approach Document v3.0