

ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS – CONNECTION OFFER GUIDANCE

REF-NET-COM-021	Alternative Providers – Connection Offer Guidance		Applies to
			Distribution ✓
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1 Introduction

This Guidance Note provides supporting information on 'Alternative Providers' for the Distribution System Connection Offer provided to the Customer by the Company. This Guidance Note applies to large and major 'Demand' and/or 'Generation' Connection Offers.

Reference to this Guidance Note when reviewing and interpreting Connection Offers is essential to ensure consistent interpretation and approach.

2 References

The documents detailed in Table 2.1 – Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Documents should be used in conjunction with this document.

Table 2.1 – Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Documents

Reference	Title
REF-NET-COM-004	SSEN Standard Terms and Conditions for Large and Major Demand Connections
REF-NET-COM-019	SSEN Standard Terms and Conditions for Large and Major Generation Connections
REF-NET-COM-020	Connection Offer – Glossary of Defined Terms
REF-NET-COM-022	Reinforcement Works – Connection Offer Guidance *Under development 05/05/26
REF-NET-COM-023	Transmission Works – Connection Offer Guidance *Under development 05/05/26
REF-NET-COM-024	Site Requirements – Connection Offer Guidance *Under development 05/05/26
REF-NET-COM-025	Land Rights – Connection Offer Guidance *Under development 05/05/26
REF-NET-COM-026	Metering – Connection Offer Guidance *Under development 05/05/26
REF-NET-COM-027	Flexible & Curtailable Connections – Offer Guidance *Under development 05/05/26
REF-NET-COM-028	Change & Variations – Connection Offer Guidance *Under development 05/05/26
REF-NET-COM-029	Project Programming – Connection Offer Guidance *Under development 05/05/26

3 Competition in Connections

3.1 Background

The Company is a regulated Distribution Network Operator (DNO) owning and operating electricity Distribution Systems through its companies Southern Electric Power Distribution plc in central southern England and Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution plc in the north of Scotland.

- 3.1.1 Under the Electricity Act 1989 Customers may notify a request for connection to these Distribution Systems. The Company in response notifies a proposal to the Customer through a formal Connection Offer, which the Customer may accept. This Guidance Note clarifies and supports and should be referred to when considering the Connection Offer made by the Company to the Customer.
- 3.1.2 The Connection Offer sets out the Works that require to be carried out to enable the Connection. This Guidance Note looks at who may carry out those Works and the implications of this for the Connection.

3.2 Contestable Works and Non-Contestable Works

- 3.2.1 The electricity industry offers competition in connections (CiC) to ensure that connection works which do not have to be carried out by DNOs can be carried out on behalf of

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customers by competitive and suitably accredited and registered Alternative Providers. The aim is to provide customers with choice and competition in relation to the time and price of their connection works.

- 3.2.2 For detailed information on the Competition in Connections Code of Practice (CiCCoP), and to download the latest CiCCoP document, refer to: [Home | ENA CiC](#).
- 3.2.3 Further information can be found on the Company's Website at [Competition in connections code of practice - SSSEN](#).
- 3.2.4 Works which a DNO carries out on its own Distribution System to enable the Customer's Connection at a Connection Point, also known as a "**Point of Connection**" ("**POC**"), on the Distribution System are described as Non-Contestable Works – these Works must be carried out by the DNO.
- 3.2.5 Works which are carried out to connect up the Customer's new Premises or site to the DNO's Distribution System (a network extension) are described as Contestable Works – these Works can be carried out for the Customer by an Alternative Provider or by the relevant DNO.

3.3 Alternative Providers

- 3.3.1 Alternative Providers who may undertake the Contestable Works can be:
 - (a) Independent Connections Providers (ICPs) – suitably accredited and registered contractors who carry out the Contestable Works which are then adopted by the DNO once completed to form part of the Distribution System;
 - (b) Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs) – licenced network operators who build a localised network and then own and operate that network as the Customer of the DNO, connecting that separate IDNO network onto the DNO's Distribution System. The end customer becomes a customer of the IDNO, connecting onto the IDNO's network, (ICPs can work for IDNOs); and
 - (c) In some circumstances there may be others who can carry out Contestable Works (which will not be adopted and owned by the Company), for example: private network owners, Building Network Operators (BNOs), and Affiliate Independent Distribution Network Operators.
- 3.3.2 Suitably accredited and registered Alternative Providers are listed at www.lrga.com/en/utilities/national-electricity-registration-scheme-ners/ and may be able to provide the Customer with alternative offers for the Contestable Works.

3.4 Registration and Accreditation

- 3.4.1 As the connection works will always ultimately form part of an electricity distribution system, they need to be built to an acceptable standard. The Customer cannot use an unaccredited provider to carry out the Contestable Works, and it cannot just do the connection works itself, as this could place the electricity distribution system at risk.
- 3.4.2 ICPs will need to be registered and accredited to carry out those specific Contestable Works under the National Electricity Registration Scheme (NERS) before carrying out Contestable Works. Details of NERS accredited connection providers can be found at: www.lrga.com/en/utilities/national-electricity-registration-scheme-ners/search/.
- 3.4.3 IDNOs are regulated by Ofgem licencing. Details of licensed IDNOs can be found at: [List of all electricity licensees including suppliers | Ofgem](#).

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3.5 Customer Choice

- 3.5.1 When the Customer receives a Connection Offer from the Company it may choose to:
- (a) appoint the Company to undertake all of the Distribution Works (“All Works”); or
 - (b) appoint:
 - i. the Company to undertake only the Non-Contestable Works, and
 - ii. an Alternative Provider to undertake the Contestable Works.
- 3.5.2 The scope and price of the Contestable Works and Non-Contestable Works will be detailed in the Connection Offer from the Company.
- 3.5.3 Further details about the choice of and use of Alternative Providers for Contestable Works to be carried out by Alternative Providers can be found on the Company’s Website at: [Find an ICP/IDNO You have a choice - SSEN](#).
- 3.5.4 The Customer is expected to make its selection at the outset of the project. The earlier the choice, the better. If the Customer originally appoints the Company to do All Works but later wishes to move to a Non-Contestable Works Only position, it will first require to reimburse the Company for any wasted costs it has incurred and committed to in carrying out Contestable Works to that point. Plant and material which the Company has already procured will not usually be transferable to the Alternative Provider but will be used by the Company (where possible) elsewhere on its Distribution System. The Alternative Provider will require to carry out its own procurement. Where connection works are substantially advanced, it may no longer be realistic to change to an Alternative Provider without a substantial time and cost impact. Where a change to using an Alternative Provider results in a substantial change to the design of the Connection, that may require a new Connection Offer from the Company, potentially affecting the Customer’s queue position.

4 Contestable Works carried out by Alternative Providers

4.1 Contestable Design

- 4.1.1 Where the Customer chooses to have the Contestable Works carried out by an Alternative Provider, it must appoint an Alternative Provider. The Alternative Provider is responsible for the design of all Contestable Works. This shall include, but not be limited to, design for the Connection downstream from the Point of Connection (POC) for the Customer’s Facility to the existing electricity Distribution System assets.
- 4.1.2 The Alternative Provider’s design must be provided in accordance with the Company’s Milestone M5 deadline for the design. Delays to the Alternative Provider’s design will result in delays to the Estimated Connection Date – the Company’s design and Works cannot be completed until the Alternative Provider’s Contestable Works have progressed sufficiently.
- 4.1.3 The Alternative Provider’s design, including but not limited to any substation buildings and plinths, must meet the Company’s and industry standards and specification, including but not limited to those in the Company’s G81 Library. The Company will not accept the design for any Contestable Works where its current standards and specification are not met. Where the Company has to consider alternative standards and specifications this will delay the approval process and add to the cost to the Customer. The Company may not accept alternative design standards and submissions and/or design deviations.
- 4.1.4 The Company’s design standards and specification will be updated from time to time. Access to the Company’s standards and specifications, network information and GIS

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electricity network data is via a secure login applied for and accessed at: [Alternative Provider Network Information - SSEN](#).

- 4.1.5 Once advanced the Alternative Provider will require to submit the designs for the Contestable Works to the Company for review and/or approval, to nc.connections@sse.com. The Company expects to receive up to two sets of submissions in Company specified file formats. Where the Company has to review repeated design submissions this will delay the approval process and add to the cost to the Customer. Where the Alternative Provider's design submissions are delayed this will delay the connection. More details on what is required for design approval can be found on the Company's Website at: [Competition in connections - SSEN](#), and [G81 Library - SSEN](#).
- 4.1.6 Where the Company requires to review and approve the Alternative Provider's contestable design submission, there will be a design approval charge to be paid by the Customer or its Alternative Provider. Where the design approval charge was not included in the original Connection Offer, this charge will be required to be paid post Connection Offer acceptance. The Customer can find information on the Company's charges in the Company's Statement of Methodology and Charges for Connection on the Company's [Website](#).
- 4.1.7 Where the Company allows Alternative Providers to undertake the self-approval of their own designs, and where the Alternative Provider notifies the Company that they will undertake the design approval activity themselves, the Company will only review the Alternative Provider's design and provide any constructive feedback. In those instances, there will be no applicable design approval charge. The details on the circumstances where Alternative Providers can undertake self-design approval of their own designs are set out in the "**POC Self Identification and Self-Design Approval Guidance**" document published on the Company's [Website](#).
- 4.1.8 Once the designs are finalised and approved, the Alternative Provider and/or Customer will require to grant to the Company a non-exclusive, irrevocable, royalty free licence to copy and make use of these designs (including but not limited to any drawings, models, plans, reports/notes, calculations and materials) for the purposes of providing the Connection and allowing the Company to maintain and using the adopted Contestable Works as part of the Company's Distribution System.
- 4.1.9 Approval or acceptance by the Company of the designs carried out by the Alternative Provider does not transfer responsibility for those designs to the Company. The Alternative Provider remains liable for its design and the Customer is responsible for its Alternative Provider's design and Contestable Works. The Alternative Provider's contestable design and assets (plants and equipment) to be installed by them, must be approved/accepted prior to commencement of their site works.

4.2 Land Rights and Consents

- 4.2.1 Where Contestable Works are being carried out by an ICP for adoption by the Company, the Customer (itself or through its Alternative Provider) shall obtain for the Company, free of charge (and shall provide evidence satisfactory to the Company that it has obtained) all necessary planning permissions, Land Rights and access rights and Consents in a form and along a route or at a location approved by the Company, necessary for the carrying out, installation and maintenance of any Contestable Works. Where Contestable Works are being carried out by an IDNO, that IDNO is responsible for obtaining the Land Rights and Consents it requires.
- 4.2.2 The Land Rights and Consents shall be maintained by the Customer (and/or its ICP) until adoption by the Company.
- 4.2.3 The Customer and the ICP must ensure the Land Rights and Consents comply with the detail set out at in the Standard Terms and Conditions, in the Connection Offer, in the Land Rights Guidance Note, and at: [Land rights - SSEN](#).

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- 4.2.4 The Company will incur costs checking the Land Rights and Consents being offered and working with the Customer, the ICP or others to ensure the proposed Land Rights and Consents are obtained and are satisfactory. The Company will invoice such costs to the Customer, and the Customer shall pay those costs in full.
- 4.2.5 The ICP will be responsible for all third-party negotiations for all Contestable Works, including for example but not limited to planning, environmental, ecology and archaeology checks.
- 4.2.6 In addition, the Customer and Alternative Provider must grant to the Company and its employees and agents all necessary rights of access to the Customer's Premises or site necessary to enable the Company to carry out its Works, exercise its rights and fulfil its obligations in relation to the Connection.

4.3 Build

- 4.3.1 Any Contestable Works undertaken by an Alternative Provider on behalf of the Customer must meet the Company's standards and specification, the requirements of all Land Rights and Consents, the terms of the Company's Offer for Connection including the Standard Terms and Conditions, any other relevant agreements and all necessary safety precautions in accordance with applicable law, including but not limited to the following Engineering Recommendations (where applicable) (as amended or replaced from time to time): G5, G81, G83 or G98, G59 or G99, G100, and P28.
- 4.3.2 The Contestable Works to be undertaken by the Alternative Provider include:
- Procurement and provision of the required equipment, materials, plant and apparatus;
 - All excavation, trenching and reinstatement (whether temporary or permanent) including excavations for the non-contestable final connection joint and civils required for the Contestable Works;
 - Installation of all mains and service ducting and all other plant, materials and apparatus required for the Contestable Works;
 - Recording of work – location of cable routes and equipment (including but not limited to as built parameters in the Company's specified format and plant data) and the provision of this information to the Company;
 - Making provision for the installation of metering equipment by an approved meter operator; and
 - Testing and commissioning of the Contestable Works.
- 4.3.3 The Company shall be entitled to inspect the Customer's Premises or site and the Customer's and/or Alternative Provider's Contestable Works and test them to its satisfaction. If the Contestable Works and any contestable assets installed are defective, fail any test (including any witness commissioning tests), and/or, where reasonably required by the Company, the Customer/Alternative Provider shall rectify the issue/defect at the Customer's cost, or the Company may complete the required rectification at the Customer's cost, or if energised the Company may de-energise the Connection. Such costs shall include the Company's reasonable costs of any repeat tests and abortive visits to the Customer's Premises or site.
- 4.3.4 The Alternative Provider is responsible for the adequacy and safety of the Contestable Works. The inspection, non-inspection or non-rejection of the Contestable Works by the Company shall not constitute any representation as to the adequacy, safety or other characteristics of the Alternative Provider's Contestable Works.
- 4.3.5 The Contestable Works, including jointing, civils and fitting, must be in accordance with the approved design and the Company's current Safety Management Procedures.

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- 4.3.6 The Alternative Provider shall obtain manufacturers' warranties and to pass these on to the Company for assets installed by the Alternative Provider which the Company will adopt.
- 4.3.7 The Alternative Provider's Contestable Works shall not cause any nuisance, inconvenience, or disturbance to adjoining premises.
- 4.3.8 Where the Alternative Provider's design, consents and/or construction works are delayed this will delay the Connection.

4.4 General Standards

- 4.4.1 The Alternative Provider shall carry out the Contestable Works with reasonable skill and care and in accordance with applicable law. The Alternative Provider's Contestable Works must be free of defects, in accordance with the design, materials and quality specified by the Company (for example in the G81 library) and in accordance with all applicable Land Rights and Consents and carried out to allow the Company's Works on the Connection to be carried out in a continuous, efficient and logical progression.
- 4.4.2 The Alternative Provider shall design and carry out the Contestable Works safely and in compliance with:
- (a) the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002;
 - (b) the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 ("CDM"), as amended or restated from time to time. Where the Customer has appointed an Alternative Provider to carry out the Contestable Works, the Company will not hold any role under CDM for those Contestable Works. The Customer will be "Client" under CDM, and its Alternative Provider shall appoint the other roles under CDM and ensure compliance with CDM;
 - (c) relevant Health and Safety Executive documents, including but not limited to HSG47 "Avoiding Danger from Underground Services" and GS6 "Avoidance of Danger from Overhead Electric Power Lines" as such publications may be amended or restated from time to time. These documents are available from the HSE Books website at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books;
 - (d) Engineering Recommendation G5 ("Planning Levels for Harmonic Voltage Distortion and the Connection Harmonic Sources and/or Resonant Plant to Transmission Systems and Distribution Networks in the United Kingdom");
 - (e) Engineering Recommendation P28 ("Planning Limits for Voltage Fluctuations and the Connection of Disturbing Equipment to Transmission Systems and Distribution Networks in the United Kingdom");
 - (f) the technical engineering requirements of the Distribution Code; and
 - (g) the terms and requirements of the Company's Connection Offer including the Standard Terms and Conditions as applicable to the Contestable Works, as if it were the Customer.
- 4.4.3 The Company shall be under no obligation to permit the Customer's connection directly or indirectly to the Company's electricity Distribution System unless it is satisfied that the Customer and its Alternative Provider have complied with the requirements set out in this document and the Connection Offer issued by the Company to the Customer.

4.5 Active Network Management (ANM)

- 4.5.1 Where a Connection Offer is for a constrained area and subject to Active Network Management, including but not limited to Technical Limits, this will have additional implications where the Customer chooses to connect to the Company's electricity

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Distribution System(s) through an IDNO. Both the IDNO and the Customer will require to agree to the Active Network Management/information sharing terms set out in the Bilateral Connection Agreement (BCA).

4.6 Crossing Liability

- 4.6.1 Where the Contestable Works cross or work around assets of third parties, the Alternative Provider may be required to enter into crossing or proximity agreements, undertakings or consent letters with those third parties and to obtain additional insurance to progress the works. Where such agreements, undertakings or consents are required, the Alternative Provider shall enter into, obtain insurance for and comply with those agreements, undertakings or consents.

5 Adoption

5.1 Adoption Process

- 5.1.1 Prior to the ICP starting the Contestable Works and before design approval and any works commencing on site, the ICP will require to enter into an Adoption Agreement with the Company. The process for adoption by the Company of assets built by the ICP is laid out in documents accessed through the Company's Website. The current Company's Adoption Agreement template can be viewed on its Website at: [Competition in connections useful documents - SSEN](#).
- 5.1.2 Any Contestable Works undertaken by an ICP on behalf of the Customer must meet the Company's adoption requirements where those Contestable Works are adopted by the Company. Any Contestable Works on site that commence ahead of design approval and completion of the Adoption Agreement will be entirely at the Customer's risk. The Company will not be obliged to adopt any Contestable Works where the Company's standards and specification and adoption requirements are not met.
- 5.1.3 The Company will levy additional charges on the Customer to cover costs in respect of the Company's adoption of the appointed ICP's Contestable Works (where applicable).

6 Further Information

6.1 Information

6.1.1 Self-connecting new electricity networks onto the Company's Distribution System

In line with the CiCCoP, Alternative Providers can either:

- request that the Company undertakes the final works and associated phased energisation of the POC, for connecting the Customer's Premises or site onto the Company's Distribution System, or
- undertake the final works and associated phased energisation of the POC themselves under the self-connect process, for connecting the Customer's Premises or site onto the Company's Distribution System.

Note: Alternative Providers can self-connect onto the Company's Distribution System either an extended networks to be adopted by the Company, or an embedded network to be adopted by an IDNO, where the Company allows this. Suitable NERS accreditations must be held by Alternative Providers for the self-connect activity.

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- 6.1.2 Further information about Competition in Connections can be found on the Company's Website at: [Competition in connections - SSEN](#). The process for adoption of assets is published on our [Website](#). Our G81 Library, network information, and Geographical Information System (GIS) can be found [here](#) and should be accessed via a secure login applied for at: [Register new account](#).

7 Revision History

No	Overview of Amendments	Previous Document	Revision	Authorisation
01	New Guidance Document	Not Applicable	1.00	Rob Gladstone
02				