RETAIL ENERGY CODE

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| | |
|---|---|
| 01 | Initial Assessment Report |
| 02 | Preliminary Change Report |
| 03 | Final Change Report |

# CHANGE REPORT

## R0098 – OPTIONAL FUZZY SEARCHING IN EES

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| CHANGE REPORT | PRELIMINARY |
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| | |
|---|---|
| DEADLINE FOR ALTERNATIVE CHANGE PROPOSALS | 16/02/2024 |


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### CHANGE OVERVIEW

This Change Proposal seeks to introduce configurable “fuzzy” matching into the Electricity Enquiry Service (EES) API for address requests.

| | |
|---|---|
| | High Impact:<br>N/A |
| | Medium Impact:<br>Consumers |
| | Low Impact:<br>N/A |


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### CODE MANAGER’S RECOMMENDATION

The Code Manager recommends Change Proposal R0098 is **APPROVED** for implementation on **28 June 2024**.

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RETAIL ENERGY CODE

# BACKGROUND

## 1 BACKGROUND

The Electricity Enquiry Service (EES) API undertakes "fuzzy" matching of address requests. For example, when searching for property 1 and postcode CH2 2AF, it will return matches for 15, 17, and 19. This change proposes that the EES functions in the same way as the Gas Enquiry Service (GES) so that a search of CH2 2AF, returns only the details for property number 1. However, there are certain cases where fuzzy matching is useful and therefore it is proposed for this functionality to be configurable.

This will improve the number of successful, automated Switching journeys for Consumers through Suppliers, Price Comparison Websites (PCWs) and Third-Party Intermediaries (TPIs). Where searches fail because of fuzzy matching functionality, these will need to be passed through an exception handling process which may require further contact with the Consumer, producing a loss of confidence in the Switching process and disincentivising Consumer engagement in future Switching.

## 2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Where a Consumer initiates a Switch through a Supplier, PCW or TPI that utilises the EES API address searches can fail as the API only undertakes "fuzzy" matching. Address Search errors will then need to go through an exception handling process creating an inefficiency and producing a loss of confidence in the Switching process.

## 3 USER STORIES

| REF. | USER STORIES |
|---|---|
| **CONSUMER USER STORIES** | |
| C1 | As a Consumer, I want to be able to switch my electricity easily and efficiently. |
| **MARKET PARTICIPANT USER STORIES** | |
| M1 | As an organisation providing switching services, I want Consumers to be able to search addresses efficiently. |

# PROPOSAL

## 4 SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS UNDERTAKEN

REC Technical Services explored the Proposer's request to align fuzzy matching functionality for address requests between the Electricity Enquiry Service (EES) and Gas Enquiry Service (GES) API. The requirements were then explored with the EES Provider to refine the solution to be taken forward.

## 5 PROPOSED SOLUTION

The solution will incorporate new functionality to specify new address search parameters for the API request. This will

- Specify whether an exact or non-exact match is required
- Specify response action where no match is found when using exact match mode. The failover operation should a match not be found when in Exact Match Mode will operate as follows:
    - ExactFailError=true: If no exact match when in Exact Match Mode, returning nothing (error - no match found)
    - ExactFailError = false: If no exact match when in Exact Match Mode, revert to fuzzy mode and return matching candidates.
    - In "Exact Match Mode", if a single match can be found, then this should be returned.

And affect the following search functions.

- Search Utility Address
- Search REL Address
- Search Address.

Participants will be able to opt out of using the fuzzy matching logic. A new optional Boolean parameter named ExactMatch will be created for each of the three search functions. The ExactMatch parameter will default to false, meaning that if the new ExactMatch parameter is not passed to the API, the functionality will not change. EES API Users not interested in the new functionality will see no change to current processing.

Further details on the technical change requirements can be found here.

This change will require updates to the EES API Technical Specification to reference the new parameters of exact/non-exact functionality and response rate where no match is found when using Exact Match Mode.

## 6 DRAFT LEGAL TEXT

The design of the solution has been included within the build and implementation costs from the Service Provider. This means that the updates to the EES API Technical Specification based on the design of the new functionality will not be available until the date of Release. This has been normal practice to date; however, the Code Manager is aware that this may be inconvenient for Parties and is looking to address this for future changes.

As this change incorporates optional functionality, the Code Manager has decided to progress with the technical elements of the change prior to the drafting being available. The detail in section 5 of this document should allow Parties to understand how the functionality can be used prior to the Release of the change if necessary.

# 7 SUMMARY OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

## 7.1 SERVICE PROVIDER IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The EES Provider completed a five working day initial assessment, a Preliminary Impact Assessment and a Detailed Impact Assessment on R0098. A summary of the Detailed Impact Assessment response has been provided below.

| | |
|---|---|
| **EES Provider** | • The solution is viable and implementable.<br>• Confirms that the functionality applies only to house number/name post code searches. This aligns the functionality in EES and GES.<br>• Approximately 4 weeks are required to design, build, test and implement this solution. Phases will be completed consecutively.<br>• The total cost for design, development and test is £19,486.<br>• There are no ongoing costs. |

## 7.2 REC PARTY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

A Party Impact Assessment was published on 12 January 2024 and closed 02 February 2024. Four responses were received by a Distribution Network Operator (DNO), Supplier, PCW – TPI and a Meter Asset Provider (MAP).

| | |
|---|---|
| **ENERGY SUPPLIERS** | • The Supplier noted that this new functionality would likely be useful and as it is optional, would have no implementation lead time requirements.<br>• A small amount of development work would be required by internal staff to implement the new functionality.<br>• Benefits were anticipated in having less exceptions and a reduction in incorrect Switches.<br>• No issues or risks were identified in introducing this new functionality. |
| **DISTRIBUTION NETWORK OPERATORS** | • The DNO was supportive of the new functionality although saw no benefits to its own internal processes.<br>• No implementation lead time or costs to implement were required.<br>• No issues were identified in using the new functionality. |
| **THIRD PARTY INTERMEDIARIES** | • The TPI noted that the targeting of addresses was a point of friction in the Switching process and that this change would make this easier for the end users of its service.<br>• It noted no costs for implementation or lead times required.<br>• It highlighted that the solution would improve the customer user experience when Switching, making the process faster and more accurate. |

| | |
|---|---|
| METER ASSET PROVIDER | • The MAP raised queries about the API being backwards compatible.<br>• Noted that no internal changes or costs were required for implementation.<br>• No benefits to its organisation but also no issues highlighted with the new functionality. |

## 8 DELIVERY AGAINST CHANGE PROPOSAL PLAN

To date, all activities have been completed within the required timescales. The Change Proposal Plan can be found here.

## 9 KEY RISKS, ASSUMPTIONS, ISSUES AND DEPENDENCIES

### 9.1 RISKS AND ISSUES

| No. | ISSUE | NOTES | HOW TO PROGRESS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **I01** | The legal text changes to the EES API Technical Specification will not be finalised until Release. | As this is optional functionality, the Code Manager has decided to progress this change so that benefits can be realised by Parties as soon as possible. | Closed. |

## 10 PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE AND APPROACH

| | |
|---|---|
| PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE | 28/06/2024 |

| | |
|---|---|
| PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH | BIG BANG – Guidance updates will be approved through a separate Change Proposal. |

As R0098 includes optional functionality, no Party Impact Assessment responses noted that an implementation lead time was required and therefore a June 2024 release date is proposed.

## 11 BUSINESS CASE ASSESSMENT

### 11.1 COSTS

| | DESIGN/ DEVELOPMENT COSTS | IMPLEMENTATION/TEST COSTS | ONGOING OPERATIONAL COSTS |
|---|---|---|---|
| EES PROVIDER | £13,703 | £5,783 | £0 |

| INTANGIBLE BENEFITS | BENEFITS DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| CONSUMER SWITCHING EXPERIENCE | Improved user experience for Consumers utilising TPIs resulting in less exceptions. |
| REDUCTION IN INCORRECT SWITCHES | This change will make the Switching process through TPIs and PCWs more accurate through a reduction in incorrect Switches. |

### 11.2 COST BENEFIT ANALYIS SUMMARY

Whilst there is a one-off cost for the development of the new functionality, there was no implementation costs noted by any Party through the Impact Assessment responses. The Code Manager believes that the efficiencies gained through its use, particularly by TPIs, would make the Consumer experience of Switching better and the process faster and more accurate through less exceptions and a reduction in incorrect Switches.

## 12 CASE FOR CHANGE

### 12.1 SELF GOVERNANCE

The Code Manager considers there is a positive case for change for implementing this Change Proposal on the basis that the proposed solution:

- Is both viable and implementable and effectively resolves the problem statement;
- The cost and effort of implementing and operating the proposed solution is proportionate and cost-effective;
- The proposed solution delivers positive outcomes for consumers using PCWs; and
- The proposed solution provides useful functionality available for all EES API users and no Market Participant detriment has been identified.

## 13 CODE MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Based on sections 11 and 12 of this report, the Code Manager considers that a positive case for change can be made for implementing this solution and recommends that the Technical Expert Panel:

- **APPROVE** the proposed change solution;
- **APPROVE** the proposed implementation approach; and
- **APPROVE** the proposed implementation date of 28 June 2024.

## 14 CONSULTATION PLAN AND NEXT STEPS

The consultation on this Preliminary Change Report for R0098 will be published on the REC Portal on **16 February 2024** and close on **08 March 2024.**

Following consultation, the Code Manager will produce an updated version of this Preliminary Change Report (referred to as the Final Change Report). This will include the outcome of the consultation, setting out a summary of the consultation submissions and the Code Manager's response.

The Final Change Report will be issued to the Technical Expert Panel on **27 March 2024** to make its determination.

## 15 APPENDIX

| | |
|---|---|
| **CHANGE PROPOSAL** | Link |
| **CONSOLIDATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT RESPONSES** | Link |

## 16 GLOSSARY

| TERM | DEFINITION |
|---|---|
| Consumer | means any person supplied (or seeking a supply) of Energy at an RMP (whether or not that person also exports or is seeking to export electricity at an RMP). |
| Electricity Enquiry Service (EES) Provider | means the provider of the Electricity Enquiry Service. |
| Electricity Enquiry Service (EES) | means the service described as such in the EES Service Definition. |
| Electricity Supplier | means a person holding an Electricity Supply Licence. |
| Fuzzy Matching | a technique used to identify similar elements in a dataset. |
| Gas Enquiry Service (GES) | means: (a) until CSS Go-Live Date, the enquiry service provided pursuant to the UNC which allows authorised users to access Gas Retail Data; and (b) from CSS Go-Live Date, the service of that name procured by RECCo pursuant to the Data Access Schedule. |
| Price Comparison Websites (PCW) | means operators of price comparison websites. |
| Switch | means a change to the Registered Supplier for an RMP. |
| Third Party Intermediary (TPI) | means a broker or introducer acting between Consumers and Energy Suppliers, including Price Comparison Websites. |