

Public

Code Administrator Consultation

GC0175: Removing references to "Fax" or "Facsimile" within the Grid Code

Overview: This modification seeks to remove references to "fax" and "facsimile" from the Grid Code in order to reflect both current and future methods of communication between relevant Users and the National Energy System Operator (NESO) due to the national decommissioning of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

Modification process & timetable



Have 20 minutes? Read the full [Code Administrator Consultation](#)

Have 90 minutes? Read the full Code Administrator Consultation and Annexes.

Status summary: We are now consulting on this proposed change.

This modification is expected to have a: Medium impact on Generators, Demand Users, Interconnectors, Distribution Network Operators, NESO

Modification drivers: Efficiency, EU Compliance, GB Compliance, New Technologies, System Operability, System Security, Transparency

Governance Route Standard Governance modification to proceed to Code Administrator Consultation

Who can I talk to about the change?

Proposer:

David Halford
David.halford@nationalenergyiso.com
07812 774065

Code Administrator Contact:

Lizzie Timmins
Elizabeth.timmins@nationalenergyiso.com
07840708429

How do I respond?

Send your response proforma to grid.code@nationalenergyiso.com by **5pm on 29 November 2024**

Public

Contents

What is the issue?	3
What is the proposer’s solution	3
What is the impact of this change?	4
Proposer’s assessment against Grid Code Objectives.....	4
When will this change take place?	5
Implementation date.....	5
Date decision required by	5
Implementation approach.....	5
Interactions	5
How to respond	6
Code Administrator consultation questions	6
Acronyms, key terms and reference material	7
Annexes	7

Public

What is the issue?

NESO currently use fax machines within the Electricity National Control Centre to send and receive data from Primary and some Secondary Balancing Mechanism Units (BMUs). A number of these data submissions from BMUs support critical functions such as System Restoration, by transmitting data such as Unit Availability. Fax machines are ageing technology, with hardware support contracts ending (or have ended) and replacement parts difficult to source. The management of paper output is also time-consuming for reporting and audit purposes.

Why change?

The Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) that fax machines use, is due to be switched off by the start of 2027¹ which will result in all non-voice services that use this network ceasing. In readiness for the PSTN switch off, an alternative method of communication between relevant Users and NESO will need to be established to ensure current interactions can continue. It should also maintain the stability and audit trail that the current fax solution provides.

What is the proposer's solution

While there is an option to upgrade existing faxes to utilise digital line technology (via a digital adapter), this still does not address the current issues with the use of faxes in terms of hardware support and paper management. With this in mind, we believe a more future proof digital solution is required that provides the same functionality of the current fax solution but improves efficiencies and costs for Users.

The proposed solution, (to be defined under an “umbrella term” as the “Designated Information Exchange System”, will be an Azure based platform which will allow both Users and NESO to provide web form submissions and acknowledgements which are currently transmitted via fax through the use of paper forms.

The platform will be accessed through the Users Internet Service Provider (ISP) via a secure, encrypted login which will be maintained and administered by NESO.

¹ <https://business.bt.com/why-choose-bt/insights/digital-transformation/uk-pstn-switch-off/>

Public

The platform will require no software licence obligations from the User and will be designed to be extendable to ensure any future requirements can be incorporated, and scalable to accommodate both existing and future Users.

It is proposed that a phased approach will be introduced following the implementation of the proposal with Users being moved across to the new platform over a period of time that we will be agreed. The rationale for a phased approach is to ensure Users are fully comfortable with the use of the new platform prior to the phase out of fax machines.

The proposed new definition of the “Designated Information Exchange System”, will also include “facsimile” in order for the solution to accommodate the phased roll out of the platform from the implementation of the proposed changes where both the use of faxes and the platform will be in use.

This proposal will also take the opportunity to update references to fax or facsimile within the Grid Code that relate to “non-Control Room” activities. For example, Connections Compliance to reflect the current methods of communication that now takes place for these interactions, such as email.

Legal text

See Annex 2 which details the proposed changes across the Grid Code.

What is the impact of this change?

Proposer’s assessment against Grid Code Objectives	
Relevant Objective	Identified impact
(a) To permit the development, maintenance and operation of an efficient, coordinated and economical system for the transmission of electricity	Positive The proposal should create efficiencies in relation to communication between Users and NESO and replace outdated technologies.
(b) Facilitating effective competition in the generation and supply of electricity (and without limiting the foregoing, to facilitate the national electricity transmission system being made available to persons authorised to supply or generate electricity on terms	Neutral

Public

which neither prevent nor restrict competition in the supply or generation of electricity);	
(c) Subject to sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii), to promote the security and efficiency of the electricity generation, transmission and distribution systems in the national electricity transmission system operator area taken as a whole;	Positive The proposal should create efficiencies in relation to communication between Users and NESO and replace outdated technologies. This in turn should have a positive impact from a system security point of view as increased response times should be realised.
(d) To efficiently discharge the obligations imposed upon the licensee by this license and to comply with the Electricity Regulation and any relevant legally binding decisions of the European Commission and/or the Agency; and	Neutral
(e) To promote efficiency in the implementation and administration of the Grid Code arrangements	Neutral

When will this change take place?

Implementation date

10 working days after authority decision date.

Date decision required by

As soon as possible

Implementation approach

It is proposed that a phased approach will be introduced following the implementation of the proposal with Users being moved across to the new platform over a period of time that we will be agreed. The rationale for a phased approach is to ensure Users are fully comfortable with the use of the new platform prior to the phase out of fax machines.

Interactions

CUSC

BSC

STC

SQSS

Public

European Network Codes
 EBR Article 18 T&Cs2
 Other modifications
 Other

Whilst EBR interactions do exist, these have been identified as minimal interactions.

Changes will also be required to the CUSC and STC Procedures to reflect the changes that are being proposed to the Grid Code in respect of the removal of references to Fax and Facsimile.

How to respond

Code Administrator consultation questions

1. Please provide your assessment for the proposed solution against the Applicable Objectives?
2. Do you support the proposed implementation approach?
3. Do you have any other comments?
4. Do you agree with the Proposer's assessment that GC0175 does impact the Electricity Balancing Regulation (EBR) Article 18 terms and conditions held within the Grid Code?
5. Do you have any comments on the impact of GC0175 on the EBR Objectives?

Views are invited on the proposals outlined in this consultation, which should be received by **5pm** on **29 November 2024**. Please send your response to grid.code@nationalenergyso.com using the response pro-forma which can be found on the [GC0175 modification page](#).

If you wish to submit a confidential response, mark the relevant box on your consultation proforma. Confidential responses will be disclosed to the Authority in full but, unless agreed otherwise, will not be shared with the Panel or the industry and may therefore not influence the debate to the same extent as a non-confidential response.

² If your modification amends any of the clauses mapped out in Annex GR.B of the Governance Rules section of the Grid Code, it will change the Terms & Conditions relating to Balancing Service Providers. The modification will need to follow the process set out in Article 18 of the Electricity Balancing Regulation (EBR – EU Regulation 2017/2195). All Grid Code modifications must be consulted on for 1 month in the Code Administrator Consultation phase, unless they are Urgent modifications which have no impact on EBR Article 18 T&Cs. N.B. This will also satisfy the requirements of the NCER process.

Public

Acronyms, key terms and reference material

Acronym / key term	Meaning
BMU	Balancing Mechanism Unit
BSC	Balancing and Settlement Code
CUSC	Connection and Use of System Code
EBR	Electricity Balancing Regulation
GC	Grid Code
GCDF	Grid Code Development Forum
ISP	Internet Service Provider
PSTN	Public Switched Telephone Network
STC	System Operator Transmission Owner Code
SQSS	Security and Quality of Supply Standards
T&Cs	Terms and Conditions

Annexes

Annex	Information
Annex 1	Proposal form
Annex 2	Legal Text