ICP Design Fast-track & Approved Designer Scheme

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Signature	
Date	03 June 2025

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Signature	
Date	27 May 2025

This document forms part of the UK Power Networks Integrated Management System and compliance with its requirements is mandatory. Departure from these requirements may only be taken with the written approval of the above authoriser.

Revision Record

How have working practices changed? (Process, people, records. State if nothing has changed)	**What is the impact of the change?** (Training, briefing, change in policy, new tools, administration)
1. Ability for any ICP to acknowledge adherence to the scheme and start gaining the benefits straight away without the need to have an introductory workshop and an initial review period. Details that were discussed at the workshop now included into this document. 2. Ability for any ICP to instantly be rewarded a Fast-track level without an initial review period and be more easily rewarded positive changes to Fast-track levels. 3. Acceptance of standard over a smaller duration (6 over 6 months rather than 12 over 12 months) to help speed up advancement within the scheme. 4. Greater clarity on needing to gain Level 3 Fast-track ahead of being able to be rewarded Approved Designer status. 5. Expectation added for re-submissions being self-approved if the scheme was previously self-approved with Approved Designer status.	To make the scheme more encompassing to all, from appreciating the rising number of ICPs, and become easy for ICPs to gain the benefits. Having removed some of the labour-intensive aspects has allowed the scheme to become more self-sufficient to allow quicker progression.

Prepared by	Simon Barons				
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Revision Record					
How have working practices changed? Periodic review, with an update to references and standards, periodic review timescales, and utilisation requirement of Approved Designer status once granted.			**What is the impact of the change?** (Training, briefing, change in policy, new tools, administration) Appreciation of requirements for ICPs being introduced to the scheme and for ICPs at the next periodic review meeting.		
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Prepared by	Martyn Crocker				
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Prepared by	Martyn Crocker				
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CIRCULATION

☐ **All UK Power Networks Staff** No need to select other boxes if this is checked.

☒ Asset Management
☒ Capital Programme & Procurement
☒ Connections
☐ Contractors
☐ Customer Services
☐ Distribution System Operator
☐ Finance
☐ HR & Communications
☐ Information Systems
☐ Legal
☐ Safety, Health & Environment teams
Includes: In-Business Safety Teams, Safety Reps
☒ Strategy and Regulation
☐ Technical Training & Assurance
☐ UK Power Networks Services

☐ All Network Operations
No need to select boxes below if this is checked.

☒ EPN
☒ LPN
☒ SPN
☒ Connection Services
☐ Distribution Capital Delivery
☐ Highway Services
☐ Logistics
☒ Network Control
☐ Powercare
☐ Transport Services

External

☒ G81 external website
☒ ICPs Independent Connection Providers
☒ IDNOs Independent Distribution Network Operators
☐ Meter Operators

☐ **Others** (specify)

Contents

1.0 Introduction and Purpose 5
2.0 Scope 5
3.0 Objective 5
4.0 References 5
5.0 Definitions 6
6.0 Responsibilities 7
6.1 UK Power Networks 7
6.2 ICP 7
7.0 Records 8
7.1 UK Power Networks 8
7.2 ICP 8
8.0 Process Detail 8
8.1 Introduction to the Fast-track scheme 8
8.2 Determining a Fast-track Level 9
8.3 Determining an ICPs level of performance 10
8.4 Impact of poor performance 10
8.5 Additional Considerations 10
8.6 Referral Response Process (Fast-track levels only) 11
8.7 Common Causes for Rejections 11
8.8 Approved Designer status 12
8.9 Regulation 13
8.10 Other 13
8.11 Process Map 14
Appendix 1 - Summary of market segments where ICP can self-approve designs 15
Appendix 2 - ICP Acceptance Form 16

1.0 Introduction and Purpose

All DNOs are required to comply with a common Competition in Connections Code of Practice (CoP). One requirement of the CoP is for each DNO to enter into arrangements that will enable ICPs to reach a level by which they can self-approve a network extension design.

Initiated by UK Power Networks as a Fast-track process for designs submissions in 2014 and has become the gateway to ICP Self Approved Designer status under the Code of Practice.

There are a lot of benefits of having design submissions Fast-tracked by UK Power Networks and self-approved by the ICP; rewarding good performing ICPs with faster design submission acceptances and the freedom to be less reliant on UK Power Networks. The scheme allows greater self-sufficiency - ICP gains confidence in ability to produce a UK Power Networks acceptable design, and for being self-approved, removes reliance on UK Power Networks to spend time reviewing submissions.

Promotes; better communication with ICP's to reduce design rejections, faster review of re-submissions, and early preliminary review to pick on changes necessary for acceptance. It rewards high 1st time acceptance rates; with an increasing no. of submissions 'fast-tracked', and in turn the ability for an ICP to self-approve their own designs.

This document is to set out arrangements that will allow an ICP to achieve the Approved Designer status as detailed in the Competition in Connection Code of Practice.

The purpose of this document is to codify the established and developing arrangements between DNOs and ICPs for facilitating the effective operation of competition in the market for the provision of Connections. In doing so it addresses the issues OFGEM has identified in its review of the Connections market, in relation to the DNO approval of a contestable network extension design completed by an ICP.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to LV & HV contestable network extension and network reinforcement designs.

The following parameters are excluded from this process:

- EHV network extension or reinforcement designs
- Distributed Generation, apart from any G98 compliant design

3.0 Objective

To document a process which both UK Power Networks staff and an ICP are required to follow in order to demonstrate competence in the ability to self-approve contestable network extension and/or contestable network reinforcement designs.

4.0 References

CON 08 109	Access to ICP NetMap Webview and Secondary Earthing Design Tool
DSR 01 007	Identification of HV Cables
DSR 01 018	Identification of LV Cables
EDS 06-0001	Earthing Standard

EDS 07-3102	Secondary Substation Civil Standards
EDS 08-1103	Multi-Occupied Building Supplies
EDS 08-0132	Planning Guidance for Disturbing Loads
EDS 08-1901	Guidance for the connection of customer's Disturbing loads
EDS 08-1101	Inset Networks
EDS 08-2000	LV Network Design
EDS 08-2100	LV Customer Supplies
EDS 08-2101	LV Customer Supplies up to 100A Single Phase
EDS 08-2102	LV Customer Unmetered Supplies
EDS 08-3000	HV Network Design
CON 08 006	Bi-Lateral Technical Statement Process
CON 08 123	Independent Connections Provider (ICP) Unmetered Connections (UMC) Jointing to Services (UJ2S) Procedure
CON 08 124	Independent Connections Provider (ICP) Unmetered Connections (UMC) Jointing to Mains (UJ2M) Procedure

5.0 Definitions

Business Days	All days of the week excluding Saturday and Sunday and any public holidays in England and Wales
BTS	Bi-Lateral Technical Statement
CiC	Competition in Connections
CoP	Code of Practice
Design Activity	Activity that requires access to UKPN records and design/planning procedures, to enable the development of a contestable network extension design
EHV	A voltage exceeding 22000 volts AC
EPN	Eastern Power Networks
Fast-track Design	An ICP design that has been accepted by UK Power Networks but without any inspection by its officers

G81 Appendix	The addendum appendix to the national suite of framework documents developed setting out common requirements for (i) design and planning (ii) material specifications (iii) installation and records
HV	A voltage exceeding 1000 volts AC but not exceeding 22000 volts
ICP	Independent Connections Provider
IDNO	Independent Distribution Network Operator
LPN	London Power Networks
LV	A voltage not exceeding 1000 volts AC
NERS	National Electricity Registration Scheme. The scheme for the assessment of service providers carrying out contestable work
OFGEM	The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
Site	Any specified part or section of the area at which the ICP is performing connections
Specification	The appendices (as published from time to time by UK Power Networks) to the Electricity Network Association's document G81 which set out the design standards, the material standards, the installation standards and any other standards applicable to the Works
SPN	South East Power Networks

6.0 Responsibilities

6.1 UK Power Networks

Any information that UK Power Networks is to provide under this procedure will be to a comparable level of accuracy as is provided to its own connections teams.

The ICP shall access the UK Power Networks cable records via the e-Maps portal or alternatively upon written request to the Plan Provision department of UK Power Networks, who will supply the ICP with drawings showing the location of the Electric Lines comprising the Distribution System in the vicinity of the proposed Works.

UK Power Networks reserves the right to withdraw use of this procedure from any ICP that does not comply with its terms.

6.2 ICP

The ICP accepts that this procedure may only be used for so long as it:

- Has appropriate full NERS accreditation for the design tasks to be undertaken.
- Uses suitably qualified and experienced staff to build and assess the design.

- Accepts liability for the costs of any remedial works that become necessary as a result of failing to operate the procedure as documented.
- Accepts that UK Power Networks will provide information to a comparable level of accuracy as is provided to its own connections teams.
- Has entered into the Competition in Connections Code of Practice Framework Agreement.

The ICP must be certified under the LRQA NERS scheme as accredited to carry out the specified work on UK Power Networks distribution system. This must include, for 'design activity', the Electrical Design of Distribution Networks scope, inclusive of cable networks to industrial/commercial properties and cable networks to domestic properties, or as modified by LRQA NERS.

To advise on resubmissions what has changed.

If holding an Approved Designer status, to provide confirmation that a design has been self-approved.

7.0 Records

7.1 UK Power Networks

To monitor performance of ICP design submissions, data will be captured and held by the Competition in Connections Commercial Analyst team. This data will be used to determine the fast-track level an ICP is awarded, and similarly determine an ICP's competence to achieve Approved Designer Status. An example of the data captured, would be instances when UK Power Networks has provided assistance to the ICP to help achieve a first-time design acceptance.

The Competition in Connections Commercial Analyst team will be responsible for the control of a list detailing the performance of each ICP. This list will be regarded as 'confidential information' but may be disclosed to LRQA NERS upon request.

For customer applications a project file will be created within UK Power Networks systems, all records created during the life of the project will be kept in this common file.

7.2 ICP

The ICP shall maintain a full and comprehensive record of information and drawings supplied to UK Power Networks, and these shall be made available at the earliest opportunity if they are required for inspection by UK Power Networks.

8.0 Process Detail

8.1 Introduction to the Fast-track scheme

UK Power Networks captures the performance of all ICPs and is consistent in its approach to reviewing design submissions conducive to this process so that this scheme is automatically encompassing to all. To capitalise on its performance and to unlock the full potential and benefits of this process, an ICP only needs to acknowledge acceptance of the details and responsibilities as identified in this document - while providing a couple of escalation contact details – by completing and returning the form attached (see Appendix 2).

In turn, design submissions might automatically become selected to be fast-tracked, so as not to need to wait for UK Power Networks to formally review to reach acceptance and be deemed instead as self-accepted by the ICP, and where ICP's could gain the ability to self-approve designs by being rewarded Approved Designer status.

The ICPs acknowledgement to the scheme needs to be from a suitable management representation from the ICP to a Design Manager within the UK Power Networks Competition in Connections department.

An ICP is of course welcome to discuss the details as documented here with a UK Power Networks Design Manager at any time.

When actively participating in the scheme, details of escalation contacts within the ICP business is needed to help ensure that we can discuss design submissions as necessary in a way to seek acceptance, rather than conditional acceptance or rejection within strict timescales. Normally only used if UK Power Networks is struggling to get in contact with the ICP designer or their alternative out of office contact if absent.

UK Power Networks will seek to grant where possible a Fast-track level as soon as an ICP accepts the details of this scheme, which will be based on the ICP's level of performance with design submissions made to date.

The higher the Fast-track level awarded when first participating in the scheme or following a periodic review, the greater the number of designs that are fast-tracked:

Level	Submissions fast-tracked
1	30%
2	70%
3	100%

ICPs cannot ask that a specific design submission is not to be Fast-tracked. The ones that are Fast-tracked are determined at random by UK Power Networks.

For levels 1 and 2, the selection of a design to be Fast-tracked is wholly random and is controlled by the CiC Business Support Team. Each ICP and their level achieved is recorded on a 'Fast-track Determination' tool and shall be regarded as 'confidential information'. Design entries are grouped in blocks and dependant on the level achieved, an appropriate allotted number of designs are randomly selected to be Fast-tracked. Once a design has been selected as a Fast-tracked design, the ICP shall be informed by email within 48hours of the job being received.

8.2 Determining a Fast-track Level

An ICP's design acceptance performance is periodically reviewed (typically at 3-month intervals) and a level is awarded/refreshed based on the below parameters:

Level	
1	• Over a 6 month rolling period, achieve a **70%** first-time acceptance rate, maintaining approximately 6 projects • Achieve required standard of performance with minimal assistance
2	• Over a 6 month rolling period, achieve a **90%** first-time acceptance rate, maintaining approximately 6 projects • Achieve required standard of performance with minimal assistance

3	• Over a 6 month rolling period, achieve a **100%** first-time acceptance rate, maintaining approximately 6 projects • Achieve required standard of performance with minimal assistance
Approved Designer	• Previously held level 3 To retain this status: • >50% self-approved designer utilisation (over a 6 month rolling period) • No design deficiencies highlighted during review period

A fast-track level is awarded independently for LV and HV designs; as it is recognised that there is a varying complexity in design needs between the two voltage bands.

8.3 Determining an ICPs level of performance

A key enabler to achieving a higher level is the amount of assistance provided to the ICP by the UK Power Networks designer. Minimal assistance, such as a telephone conversation or email exchange to resolve a small design issue or query on occasional projects, would not be detrimental to an ICP's performance; however multiple exchanges over a single project and/or the need for a more formal meeting or discussion on fundamental concerns will impact performance. This will be something taken into account, along with any incidence of needing to escalate the matter (see the Referral Response Process), at the next review meeting and may impact an ICP's Fast-track level or retention of an Approved Designer status.

UK Power Networks review of performance also includes the level of assistance needed for acceptances, rejections, withdrawals, resubmissions, additional info, and any information gathered post submission acceptance.

For resubmissions it is appreciated that designs may need to change to cater for unforeseen circumstances found during the build, or to meet a client's subsequent change in requirements, rather than for correcting matters.

It is recognised that in some cases there does need to be collaborative working between UK Power Networks and the ICP, and as such these instances would be discounted.

8.4 Impact of poor performance

If following a review period, an ICP's performance has deemed to have dropped below the minimum requirements for the level they have been previously awarded, an improvement plan shall be agreed and implemented between UK Power Networks and the ICP. A further review period shall be completed, and if the ICP's current Fast-track level criteria has still not been achieved, then the ICP shall move down to the appropriate fast-track level.

8.5 Additional Considerations

7.5.1 Re-submissions - ICPs are to make it clear what has been changed to save on unnecessary time from otherwise having to review the entire scheme. Any details not highlighted as changed will not be taken as accepted.

7.5.2 Conditional Acceptances - UK Powers Networks intent is to seek designs that warrant Full Acceptance. Conditional acceptances tend to be from a lack of information provided and could impact an ICPs performance under the scheme.

7.5.3 Design Standard - It is the ICPs responsibility to meet UK Power Networks standards as detailed on the G81 regardless of design submission review.

7.5.4 Informal review of complex matters – It is appreciated that a particular aspect of a design for some projects could be subjective/complex. Within reason, UK Power Networks will thereby entertain an informal review in turn to provide confidence that the inherent design submission should be acceptable.

8.6 Referral Response Process (Fast-track levels only)

For the initiative to be most effective, good communication between the UK Power Networks and ICP Designer is essential; to verify anything to seek acceptance as opposed to rejections.

UK Power Networks will be looking for minimal assistance, yet should changes be needed to reach acceptance, prompt responses will be required from the ICP.

The UK Power Networks designer is empowered to contact the ICP designer to discuss any errors or queries in relation to a submitted design. This may involve an email communication, an on-line collaborative meeting, telephone discussion or even a face-to-face meeting. The intention is to negate the need to reject a design submission; an internal goal is to work with the ICP to achieve first-time acceptance.

If a submitted design requires amendment to reach acceptance, a prompt response from the ICP is required; as such the following process shall be adopted if necessary:

1. The ICP Designer shall be contacted in the first instance to discuss the remedial action and agree a solution.
2. If no response is received after 48 hours, refer to ICP Design Manager.
3. Following a further 48 hours, refer to ICP Director.
4. Should a delay in being able to gain a response jeopardise UK Power Networks' ability to react within the applicable SLC15 standard time frame, a design rejection will be communicated.

8.7 Common Causes for Rejections

- Cross Sections – Not clear if footpath or carriageway, missing/incorrect details, duct formations, DNO/IDNO marker tape not stated, actual depth not stated (not to state as per NJUG), cables shown in roads without justification.
- For LV IDNO branch joint connections - detail of IDNO cable being connected, route of IDNO cable from the joint, confirmation of IDNO marker tape being used.
- Substation access/egress including dual locking where applicable.
- Lack of detail on area surrounding substation (e.g. type of standing, spacing to fences/foliage etc., step changes, proximity to any metal fixtures).
- Earthing report (format keeps changing and values are input wrong). Design stating step/touch 'beyond' limits set for certain surface type.
- Earthing statement on drawing stating 1ohm (no longer valid and should match the report). When a site is deemed hot, the additional requirements are missing (e.g. removing the link/separation etc.).
- Enclosure type vs earthing design used. Standard designs used for non-standard substations.

- IDNO and DNO substations in same room.

8.8 Approved Designer status

When an ICP has successfully operated at level 3 of the Fast-track process and subsequently meet the performance standards to be granted Approved Designer status at either LV or HV, the Head of Competition in Connections (or his nominated deputy) shall notify the ICP, in writing, that their organisation has met the criteria set out in the CiC Code of Practice in respect to Approved Designer, and as such UK Power Networks recognises them as an Approved Designer.

The Approved Designer status is awarded independently for LV and HV designs; as it is recognised that there is a varying complexity in design needs between the two voltage bands.

The ICP needs to confirm with all design submissions if they have 'self-approved' the design under their Approved Designer status, or, if UK Power Networks are to review and confirm acceptance of it against the SLC15 time-frame – however, not using the Approved Designer status allows UK Power Networks the ability to withdraw an Approved Designer status.

ICPs should still continue to submit 'all' LV & HV designs to UK Power Networks in a timely fashion for their records, in advance of carrying out any works and allowing UK Power Networks to duly coordinate the project with its delivery team. It is recommended to also send in the BTS at this time (as detailed CON 08 006 – Bi-Lateral Technical Statement Process) to save on touch points.

UK Power Networks will continue to undertake random surveillance audits of the ICP designs.

Having been awarded an Approved Designer status, when submitting a design it is important to advise if this is a revision to a previously accepted design and what the extent of the change is. Any resubmissions to previously self-approved designs will similarly be self-approved by the ICP with Design Approval status.

If an issue or query is highlighted with an ICP design that requires attention, the UK Power Networks designer shall follow the same referral response process as adopted under the Fast-track scheme, with the view it will be resolved at designer level. These queries or errors will be recorded on UK Power Networks systems and discussed at the next periodic design review meeting, commencing from the date the Approved Designer status is granted.

If following a review period, an ICP's performance has dropped below the minimum requirements for Approved Designer; an improvement plan shall be agreed and implemented between UK Power Networks and the ICP. A further review period shall be completed, and if the Approved Designer criteria has still not been achieved, then the ICP will lose their Approved Designer status and shall move down to an appropriate Fast-track level (including Level 3).

If an ICP has achieved Approved Designer status in another DNOs area but has not achieved such status with UK Power Networks as result of low project volumes, consideration will be made to advance an ICP directly to level 3 of the Fast-track scheme and then subsequently awarding the ICP with the Approved Designer status after an initial review period. Each application of this manor will be reviewed on its merits, as although it is recognised that the ICP will have demonstrated competence in another DNO area, there needs to be a familiarisation period in which both UK Power Networks and the ICP can work together to communicate the application of UK Power Networks design standards and policies. Supporting evidence from NERS and other DNO's may be drawn upon by UK Power Networks when assessing an ICP's request for Approved Designer status.

If an ICP maintains a satisfactory performance for a continuous period following achieving Approved Designer status, the review period may be extended. If an ICP's performance is found to have dropped during an extended review period, an earlier design review meeting can be instigated, and where more frequent review periods could reconvene.

8.9 Regulation

Where UK Power Networks is requested to provide design acceptance then SLC15 service standards will apply.

Design acceptance charges will be in accordance with published rates, and will include charges for any resubmissions or variations to designs that have been submitted through the design fast-track process.

Where cases of difficulty are encountered the details will in the first instance be referred to the Head of Competition in Connections and the Connections Regulation Manager, for decision.

8.10 Other

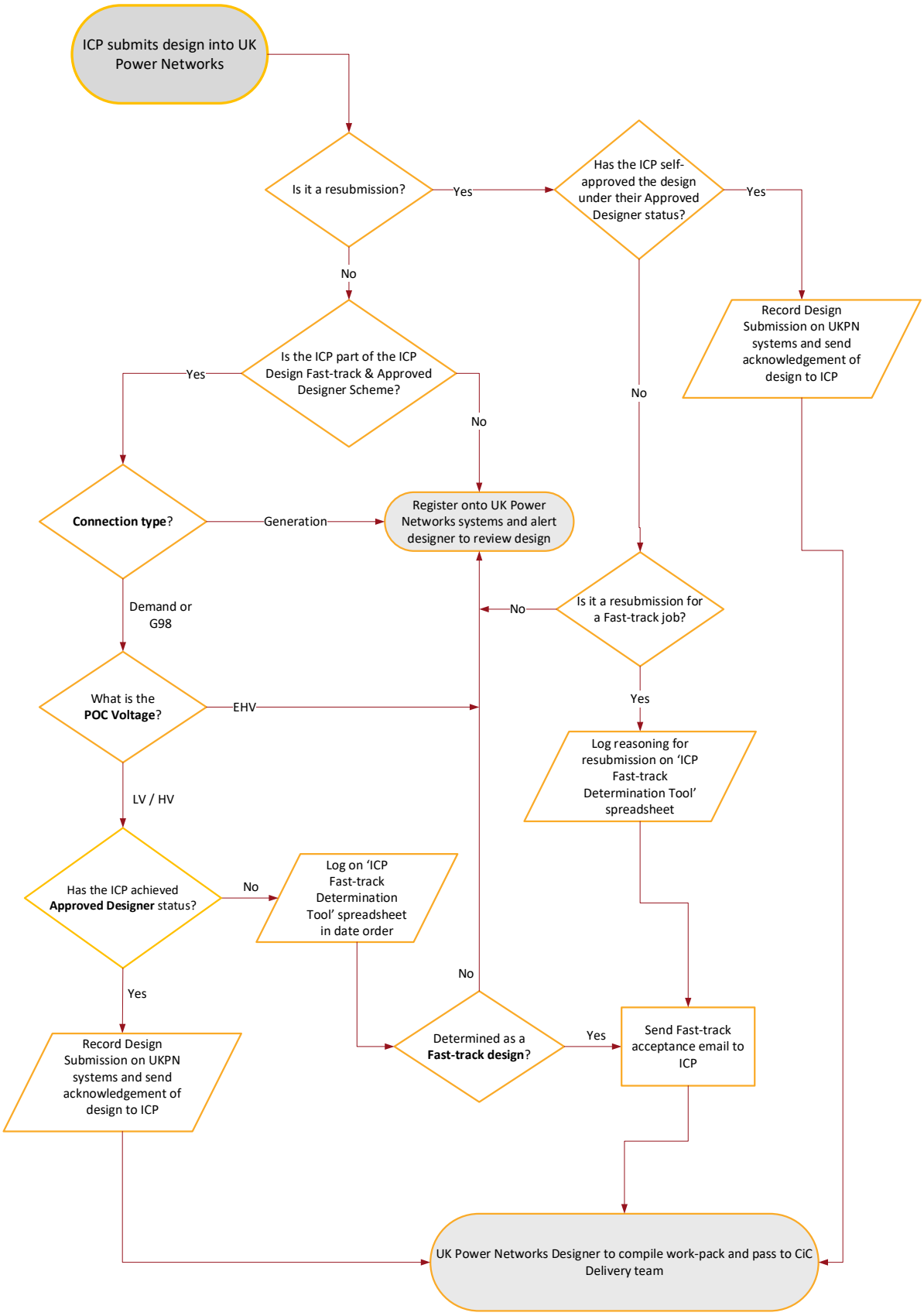
8.10.1 The ICP is not permitted to use ducts indicated as 'spare' on UK Power Networks drawings without the specific agreement of UK Power Networks.

8.10.2 An ICP shall notify UK Power Networks and seek acceptance for instances where standard depth cannot be achieved on UK Power Network cables, either for new cable installations or to existing cables that are affected as a result of the ICP's works. Before options such as the installation of steel plates or steel pipes are considered, the ICP must provide evidence that no other alternative route is viable. It should be noted that the installation of mitigation strategies for shallow cables/assets is considered to be "special engineering difficulties". As such, standard solutions are not detailed on the company G81 specifications. Referral to UK Power Networks is required in every case.

8.10.3 For LV IDNO design submissions, the Point of Isolation shall have been achieved in accordance with Engineering Standard EDS 08-1101 IDNO Networks. For instances where a direct feed from an LV Distribution cabinet/pillar/board is preferred by the ICP/IDNO, agreement must be sought by UK Power Networks before constructing a design in this manner.

8.10.4 by the ICP/IDNO, agreement must be sought by UK Power Networks before constructing a design in this manner.

8.11 Process Map



Appendix 1 - Summary of market segments where ICP can self-approve designs

Relevant Market Segment	Self-approval of designs available (Yes/No)	Comment
LV demand	Yes	Subject to provisions of UKPN document CON 08 114
HV demand	Yes	Subject to provisions of UKPN document CON 08 114
HV/EHV demand	No	
EHV/132kV demand	No	
DG LV	Yes	Subject to provisions of UKPN document CON 08 114
DG HV/EHV	No	
UMS LA	Yes	No Design Approval required. Subject to provisions of UKPN documents CON 08-123, CON 08-124, EDS 08-2102
UMS Other	Yes	No Design Approval required. Subject to provisions of UKPN documents CON 08-123, CON 08-124, EDS 08-2102
UMS PFI	Yes	No Design Approval required. Subject to provisions of UKPN documents CON 08-123, CON 08-124, EDS 08-2102

Appendix 2 - ICP Acceptance Form

ICP Design Fast-Track & Approved Designer Scheme

For the attention of all UK Power Networks CiC Design Managers

I confirm that my organisation *[insert ICP Name]* _____ wishes to actively take part in the UK Power Networks' ICP Design Fast-Track & Approved Designer Scheme. As such I confirm that we have read and understood the details of how the scheme works and the various responsibilities of both us and UK Power Networks in conducting ourselves as detailed in document CON 08-114 ICP Design Fast-Track & Approved Designer Scheme. Please note our escalation contacts as being the following:

Escalation Contacts:

Role	Full Name and Job Title	e-mail Address	Phone
ICP Director			
ICP Manager			

Signed _____

Print Name _____

Position _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Company _____

Please email the completed form to cicpostquote@ukpowernetworks.co.uk