

Network Standard

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Title:

Approval of Materials and Equipment and Network Standard Variations

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Revision

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0	1/06/2015	BMS Conversion.	Duminda Thenuwara	Chief Engineer
1	12/07/2015	Changes to the definitions of Category A and Category B material definitions, inclusion of blended delivery projects, options for inspection and manufacturing facilities, options for reducing workload on Ausgrid staff from assessing and approving alternative materials.	Mark Thompson	David Wilkinson
2	13/09/2016	Minor change to Annexure C.	Mark Thompson	Wayne Hobden
3	5/02/2020	Clarifications were made to the following: materials and equipment acquired by Ausgrid for its own purposes; Category B assessments based on AER rates instead of commercial rates; exclusivity rights associated with material approvals; Suppliers responsible for managing their own stocks; alternative materials included in approved/certified project designs. Inclusion of Conditional Approval category.	Mark Thompson	Chris Hatch
4	13/02/2023	Electronic form for internal processing of Network Standard Variation requests and conversion to new NS template.	Bruce Webster	Dean Starkey

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Scope

This Network Standard specifies Ausgrid's requirements for:

- the inclusion of materials and equipment sourced through the Ausgrid's procurement processes for inclusion in Ausgrid's Approved Material List (AML);
- assessment and approval of alternative materials and equipment items for inclusion in Ausgrid's AML; and
- assessment and approval of Network Standards Variations.

This standard applies to Ausgrid non-contestable, contestable and outsourced, design and construction projects.

The provisions of this Standard regarding approved alternative materials and equipment do not apply to street lighting luminaires used on Ausgrid maintained lighting schemes. This equipment is determined by agreement between Ausgrid and the street lighting customers. Refer to NS119 for further information. Network Standards Variations relating to street lighting are covered by this Standard.

This Standard does not apply to tools and personal protective equipment (PPE) as these items do not form part of the electricity network and Ausgrid does not endorse or evaluate tools or PPE used by Accredited Service Providers. The only exception is specific tools which are designed, produced and utilised exclusively for Ausgrid and are not readily available from external suppliers e.g. special link extractor tools.

Ausgrid Documents

NS001 Glossary of Terms

NS119 Public Lighting Design and Construction

Acts and Regulations

Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2014 (NSW)

Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Regulation 2014

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW)

Clause Standard Requirements

1 Approved Materials List

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 Only approved materials and equipment shall be used in the construction of infrastructure that ultimately forms part of Ausgrid's electrical network.
- 1.1.2 Approved materials and equipment contained in Ausgrid's Network Standards and associated drawings are detailed in Ausgrid's Approved Materials List (AML), which is available on Ausgrid's website: www.ausgrid.com.au.
- 1.1.3 The use of alternative materials and equipment by Ausgrid is not permitted without prior approval by Ausgrid Engineering, irrespective of whether the alternative materials and equipment appears in the AML.
- 1.1.4 Where non-approved materials or equipment are identified as being or have been used, the party responsible will be directed to remove and replace these at their cost.
- 1.1.5 Materials and equipment acquired via Ausgrid's official procurement system (e.g. through Ausgrid Stores) for its own purposes are approved, but may not be shown in the AML.

1.2 Operation of the AML

- 1.2.1 Ausgrid's procurement process is the primary method used to include materials and equipment in the AML as follows:
- Items for which Ausgrid enters into a period contract or other procurement arrangement will be added to the AML. Subject to continued quality and supply, the items will remain in the AML for the term of the period contract or procurement arrangement and any agreed extensions to the contract or arrangement.
- 1.2.2 Ausgrid may approve several alternatives for the same material or equipment and include these in the AML.

1.3 Suppliers in the AML

- 1.3.1 A supplier may be the manufacturer or may acquire materials and equipment from a manufacturer. The AML shall only list one supplier for any approved material or equipment from a manufacturer.
- 1.3.2 The supplier shown in the AML will be the one associated with the first application received by Ausgrid for approval of the item. For this reason, a supplier shown in the AML must not be considered as the only supplier of a particular approved item from a manufacturer and users of the AML may make their own enquiries regarding other potential suppliers of that item.
- 1.3.3 Suppliers and manufacturers may wish to enter into an exclusivity arrangement between themselves, no supplier will have exclusivity rights regarding any approval issued by Ausgrid in respect of any alternative material or equipment item, irrespective of whether the supplier paid for the assessment and subsequent approval of the item.

1.4 Alternative Material and Equipment in the AML

- 1.4.1 Approved alternative material and equipment which are directly equivalent to items procured by Ausgrid shall be listed in the AML adjacent to the respective Ausgrid item.
- 1.4.2 Alternative material and equipment which have no direct equivalent Ausgrid item shall be listed separately in the AML.

1.5 Approval Validity Period

1.5.1 The validity period for approved materials and equipment shall be limited to the life of the relevant period contract or other procurement arrangement.

1.5.2 Approval may be granted for alternative materials and equipment:

- On a project only basis; or
- For a set period of three years.

1.5.3 Ausgrid reserves the right to vary the validity period or to withdraw approval at any time subject to Ausgrid's changing requirements, specifications, changes in technology and industry standards (e.g. Australian Standards) and the continuing technical compliance of the material or equipment.

1.5.4 Prior to the end of the validity period for alternative materials and equipment, Ausgrid shall contact the applicant to determine if an extension to the validity period is required and confirm there has been no changes in manufacturing facility, manufacturing processes, materials, or design since the initial approval. Any changes shall require a reassessment at the cost of the applicant.

1.5.5 The applicant shall be responsible for managing their own stocks of alternative material or equipment items relative to the approval validity dates, such that they will not be left with stock holdings if continued inclusion in the AML at the end of the validity period is not granted by Ausgrid, or the applicant chooses not to continued inclusion in the AML.

1.6 Conditional Approval

1.6.1 Ausgrid may grant some material and equipment conditional approval. The conditions relating to the approval shall be noted in the respective comments field, relating to each relevant item, in the AML.

1.6.2 Conditionally approved items include, but are not limited to those for which the supplier/manufacture is approved but individual testing of each item supplied is required (e.g. transformers, wood poles, etc), or approval is limited to a specific production run (e.g. range of specific cable drums), etc.

1.7 Supply or Quality Issues

1.7.1 Ausgrid may at any time and without notice, withdraw approval and remove material or equipment from the AML due to supply or quality issues. This includes, but are not limited to, situations where materials or equipment are found to be:

- faulty or defective;
- lesser quality, as deemed by Ausgrid, than a sample product that was submitted at the time of original approval;
- different to what was approved;
- manufactured at a manufacturing facility different to what was approved;
- not compliant with Ausgrid's requirements (e.g. due to un-notified changes by the manufacturer/supplier); or
- the manufacturer/supplier fails to supply.

1.7.2 Where materials and equipment are included in an approved/certified project design, and Ausgrid withdraws approval for those items due to supply or quality issues, then the materials and equipment must be substituted with ones which are approved.

- 1.8 **Manufacturing Facilities**
- 1.8.1 **Change of Manufacturing Facilities**
- 1.8.1.1 Materials or equipment in the AML shall be approved for a particular manufacturing facility (i.e. factory) only.
- 1.8.1.2 Any change in manufacturing facility or manufacturing process shall require reassessment for continued inclusion of the materials or equipment in the AML. Such reassessment will be at the cost of the applicant/supplier/manufacturer.
- 1.8.1.3 Ausgrid must be provided with adequate notice to evaluate any proposed manufacturing change. If notice is inadequate, Ausgrid shall withdraw approval and remove the item from the AML.
- 1.8.2 **Inspection of Manufacturing Facilities**
- 1.8.2.1 For some critical material and equipment items (e.g. HV cable, power transformers, HV switchgear, etc.), Ausgrid may require the manufacturing facilities to be inspected as part of the approval process.
- 1.8.2.2 Inspections may be carried out by Ausgrid staff or a third-party representative.
- 1.8.2.3 For some material and equipment, it may be possible to perform the inspection remotely.
- 1.8.2.4 All costs¹ associated with these inspections shall be borne in accordance with Table 1.

Table 1: Responsibility for Cost of Manufacturing Facility Inspections

Material / Equipment	Responsible for Costs of Factory Inspection
Materials and equipment submitted in response to Ausgrid procurement process, which Ausgrid determines are technically compliant and enters into a period contract or other procurement arrangement	Ausgrid
Materials and equipment submitted in response to Ausgrid procurement process, that are assessed by Ausgrid as technically compliant, but Ausgrid does not enter into a period contract, or other procurement arrangement	Supplier/Manufacturer
Alternative materials and equipment associated with outsourced projects	In accordance with the commercial agreement for the project
Alternative materials and equipment (refer to Clause 2)	The applicant

¹ Costs include but are not limited to wages, fares, accommodation, living away from home expenses.

2 Approval of Alternative Materials and Equipment

- 2.1 Accredited Service Providers (ASPs), manufacturers and suppliers may request Ausgrid to consider approval of alternative materials and equipment.
- 2.2 Ausgrid charges a fee for the assessment of alternative materials and equipment requests for the inclusion in the AML. This shall include the costs associated with the inspection of manufacturing facilities if applicable as detailed in Clause 1.8.
- 2.3 Ausgrid reserves the right to reject applications that involve issues including, but not limited to, the following:
- Work Health and Safety (WHS) implications;
 - environmental implications;
 - trialling, testing, or development;
 - training of Ausgrid employees, contractors, or ASPs;
 - changes to work practices for Ausgrid employees, contractors, or ASPs;
 - any change in risk to public, Ausgrid employees, contractors, ASPs, or the network; or
 - increases in ongoing operating costs including maintenance.
- 2.4 Ausgrid reserves the right to limit the number of approved alternatives for any material or equipment.
- 2.5 The applicant must acknowledge and agree that Ausgrid's alternative materials or equipment assessment and approval is a desktop audit only and is not a representation or warranty that the material or equipment complies in all respects with Ausgrid's requirements or all applicable standards or is fit for purpose and free of design or manufacturing defects.
- 2.6 The applicant must ensure that Ausgrid is provided with all necessary and relevant information relating to the compliance or non-compliance of the material or equipment with Ausgrid's requirements.
- 2.7 The applicant must ensure that any material or equipment that is subsequently approved and supplied to Accredited Service Providers, continues to comply with Ausgrid's requirements in all respects and any deficiency or associated problem is immediately brought to the attention of Ausgrid.
- 2.8 The original applicant for approval of any alternative material or equipment may request Ausgrid to remove that item from the AML at any time subject to considerations regarding timing, consumption of stock and risk to Ausgrid's network.
- 2.9 **Third Party Assessor**
- 2.9.1 Ausgrid may require the services of a suitable third-party assessor. Ausgrid will provide advice at the time of application regarding whether the services of such a third-party assessor shall be required.
- 2.9.2 The cost of the assessor's services shall be borne by the applicant either as a direct payment to the third party or included in Ausgrid's fees.
- 2.10 **Category A**
- 2.10.1 Category A refers to alternative materials and equipment that are required for use on a specific contestable construction project. Applicants are typically Accredited Service Providers complying with appropriate Connection/Relocation Policies and following the contestable process.
- 2.10.2 The single point of contact for Category A approval requests is the Ausgrid representative responsible for facilitating the contestable works.
- 2.10.3 Category A approval requests shall be submitted prior to, or at the Design Information stage of the project.
- 2.10.4 Ausgrid shall accept no responsibility for delays or consequential losses caused by the approval process.

2.10.5 Australian Energy Regulator (AER) rates apply for the assessment in accordance with Ausgrid's "Alternative control services fee schedule", available on Ausgrid's website.

2.11 **Category B**

2.11.1 Category B refers to alternative materials and equipment that are not required for use on specific contestable construction projects. Applicants are typically manufacturers or suppliers seeking to have their materials and equipment approved as alternatives for unspecified ASPs to utilise.

2.11.2 The assessment and approval of such material and equipment is outside the Connection/Relocation Policies and Contestable process.

2.11.3 The single point of contact for Category B approval requests shall be via email (approvals@ausgrid.com.au).

2.11.4 Ausgrid shall arrange for the quotation to be issued within 10 business days.

2.11.5 Category B requests are assessed under Ausgrid's short form contracts which expire after 12 months. If the applicant has not provided the necessary information within this time, it will be necessary for the applicant to pay Ausgrid for any work already undertaken and, if it is desired to continue with the assessment, enter into a new contract.

2.11.6 The fee associated with this work are based on AER rates in accordance with Ausgrid's "Alternative control services fee schedule" available on Ausgrid's website.

2.12 **Form of Approval**

2.12.1 Approval of alternative materials and equipment, including extensions to approval periods shall be represented by written approval from Ausgrid and by inclusion of the material or equipment in the AML.

2.12.2 Any additional controls required for alternative materials or equipment shall be included in the approval and AML.

2.13 **Approval Process – Alternative Materials and Equipment**

2.13.1 The approval process for the inclusion of Category A and Category B alternative materials and equipment in the AML shall be in accordance with Annexure A.

3 Approval of Network Standard Variations

3.1 Network Standards Variations are one-off dispensations to use alternative standards, procedures and methods in the design, construction and maintenance of Ausgrid's network.

3.2 All projects (non-contestable, contestable and outsourced) must comply with the relevant Ausgrid Network Standards.

3.3 Where the requirements of Ausgrid's Network Standards cannot be practically complied with, the issues shall be highlighted immediately, and approval sought through a Network Standard Variation.

3.4 Network Standard Variations associated with Ausgrid outsourced projects must be assessed and approved under the commercial agreement of the specific project at the time of initial contract negotiations. If the need for a Network Standard Variation becomes apparent only after the initial contract has been executed or the project has commenced, contract variation/penalty payments may be applicable.

3.5 **Point of Contact**

3.5.1 For contestable work, the single point of contact for the approval of Network Standard Variations shall be the relevant Ausgrid representative responsible for facilitating the contestable works.

3.5.2 For outsourced projects, the point of contact for the approval of Network Standard Variations shall be the Ausgrid representative responsible for the project.

3.5.3 For non-contestable work which do not have an Ausgrid representative, requests for approval of Network Standard Variations shall be via email (assetstandards@ausgrid.com.au).

3.6 [Assessment of Variations](#)

3.6.1 Network Standard Variations shall be assessed on the basis that the Network Standard Variation must result in an equal or lower level of risk compared to the level of risk that would have been achieved by complying with the relevant Network Standard/s.

3.7 [Form of Approval](#)

3.7.1 Approval of Network Standard Variations is represented by written approval from Ausgrid.

3.7.2 For contestable projects, it is the responsibility of the Accredited Service Provider (ASP) to retain a copy of this letter on site and present it to Ausgrid at the time of inspection, otherwise defect notices will be issued.

3.7.3 For outsourced projects, any approval of Network Standard Variations shall be incorporated in the specific project documentation and provided to Ausgrid.

3.8 [Amendment to Network Standards](#)

3.8.1 For Network Standard Variations that are approved, Ausgrid is not obliged to change the relevant Network Standard, nor to consider any Network Standard Variation for any future projects on a precedent basis.

3.8.2 Ausgrid may choose to amend a Network Standard based on applications for Network Standard Variations received. In such circumstances the applicant/s will have no claim on Ausgrid for use of intellectual property or copyright, etc.

3.9 [Records – Network Standard Variations](#)

3.9.1 Ausgrid shall maintain a register of applications for Network Standard Variations.

3.10 [Process – Network Standard Variations](#)

3.10.1 The approval process for Network Standard Variations shall be in accordance with Annexure B.

Annexure A: Approval Process for Alternative Materials and Equipment

The approval process for the inclusion of Category A and Category B alternative material and equipment in the AML is as follows:

- 1) An approval request is submitted by the applicant to Ausgrid using the Request for Approval of Alternative Materials and Equipment form, refer to Annexure C.
- 2) Ausgrid gives a quotation for the approval assessment and a summary of the main assessment criteria applicable to the application.

Ausgrid will quote the estimated time for processing the approval request which will be dependent the applicant supplying all of the required information to enable the assessment to be carried out. Timeframes for carrying out assessments are subject to variance due to potential delays in the applicant providing evidence of compliance.

Ausgrid will assess alternative materials and equipment only if all necessary evidence of compliance and supporting material is provided by the applicant in the required format. Experience has shown that test certificates in particular can take a long time to obtain. Ausgrid will advise what information is required to assess an item but will not pursue the applicant (or any third party e.g. manufacturer) to provide the necessary information.

- 3) The applicant agrees² to proceed with the approval request.
- 4) Ausgrid provides comprehensive details of required compliance criteria and the format in which it is to be presented to Ausgrid for assessment.
- 5) The applicant gathers the required information to demonstrate compliance and assembles it into the required format for submission to Ausgrid for assessment. The required information may include but is not limited to test reports, accreditation certificates, manuals, installation instructions, drawings and samples.
- 6) The applicant submits (on the one occasion) all the required documentation to Ausgrid. If the information submitted to Ausgrid for approval is found to be not in the required format or incomplete e.g. supporting material is found to be missing, the application will be rejected by Ausgrid. Once rejected, a new application will need to be made, including payment of all associated fees, before Ausgrid will reconsider the material or equipment for approval.
- 7) Ausgrid assesses the material or equipment for compliance.
- 8) Ausgrid notifies the outcome of assessment via a letter (if the application is rejected, the reason for rejection is given to the applicant).

² For Category B approvals the applicant signs and returns a copy of the short form contract.

Annexure B: Approval Process for Network Standard Variations

The approval process for Network Standard Variations is as follows:

- 1) An approval request is submitted by the applicant to Ausgrid using the Request for Approval of Network Standard Variation form, refer to Annexure D.

The Ausgrid representative shall complete the electronic Network Standard Variation form accessible through Ausgrid's Technical Documents repository.

- 2) Ausgrid assesses the proposed Network Standard Variation.
- 3) Ausgrid notifies the applicant of the outcome via a letter (if the application is rejected, the reason for rejection is given to the applicant).

Annexure C: Request for Approval of Alternative Materials and Equipment Form

The annexure is stored externally to this document.

Annexure D: Request for Approval of Network Standard Variation Form

The annexure is stored externally to this document.

Annexure E: Assessment Criteria for Category B Requests

The criteria used by Ausgrid to assess alternative materials and equipment for inclusion in the AML may include, but are not limited to:

- compliance with Ausgrid Network Standards and Ausgrid specifications which include applicable Australian and International Standards,
- compliance with any other Ausgrid technical requirements,
- type testing in accordance with the specification and proof of compliance,
- current NATA or equivalent accreditation of the testing facilities,
- current ISO quality accreditation of the design and manufacturing facilities,
- manufacturing process controls,
- the environmental and work health and safety (WHS) impacts of the material or equipment (including compliance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW) and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW) regarding Safety in Design),
- warranty and guarantee,
- organisational structure and financial capabilities of the applicant,
- life cycle costs associated with the material or equipment when used on Ausgrid's network,
- implications regarding Ausgrid maintenance and operations processes,
- training requirements.