

FAQs - new service charge model (01 July 2022)

Service Charge model description and costs calculation

Q: What if I receive more than the GB than allowed in my Volume Band?

ECMWF will implement technical limits and warnings in the various systems. At the point where you are close to using up your data allowance, we will be in touch to discuss the options.

Q: Where can I find information about the Volume Band Charge and the description of the Service Packages?

You can find information on this [page](#).

Q: What if I do not use all the GB allowed by the Volume Band in one year?

The GB you do not use will be lost. It is not possible to bring the GB you did not use in one year in another licence.

Q: What does it change with respect to the old pricing method?

Before, fees were calculated as the sum of:

- Information Cost (the actual cost for data, based on EPU's - [ECOMET Product Unit](#))
- Handling charge (cost of labour and computer/network resources), with Handling Charges being 20% of the Information Cost.

The new Service Charge model drops the Handling Charge and introduces two new components, based on the amount of data and services that can be coupled to data access: Volume Band Charge and Service Package. The total fee is calculated as the sum of:

- Information Cost (based on EPU)
- Volume Charge (based on the amount of data requested)
- Service Package (based on the services available to access the requested data).

Q: What does it mean EPU?

The tariff for ECMWF Real Time Products is evaluated on the basis of an 'information unit' introduced by ECOMET, the EPU (ECOMET Product Unit).

More detailed information can be found at this [page](#).

Q: How do I know in which Volume Band my request will be?

When creating a quote on the [Product Requirements Catalogue](#) (PRC), after all the products and parameters have been added, it is possible to see different information before submitting the quote, and one of this information is the "Total yearly volume". This is the value that is used to calculate the fee, based on where this value falls in the different Volume Bands available (see [table](#)).

Note that even in the case data compression has been requested, the value to calculate the fee is based on the uncompressed amount of data.

Q: Can I swap or change items included in a Service Package?

No, items in a single Service Packages are fixed and cannot be changed, and the price for every Service Package is also fixed.

If you want to get more services, you will have to upgrade your Service Package.

Q: How do I calculate the fee I will pay?

The total fee to be paid for the quote will consist in the sum of three different components:

- Annual Information cost (based on EPU's - [ECOMET Product Unit](#))
- Volume Band Charge (based on the amount of data requested, calculated over an entire year)
- Service Package (based on the type of services requested to disseminate the data)

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Q: Are all combinations Volume Bands / Service Package allowed?

No, not all the combinations. For Basic and Bronze Packages all combinations with Volume Bands are allowed, for Silver and Gold Packages, it is not possible to purchase them if the Volume Band is below 10-50 GB and 50-100 GB respectively.

Q: Can I get archive data with my Real-time licence?

An organisation can have up to three archive licences, every licence linked to a single account.

For Basic, Bronze and Silver service packages, the user can purchase archive licence(s) separately from the Real-time licence.

Gold users will get an archive account with their service package, and can purchase 2 more archive licences if needed.

Q: What if I only want access an Archive data or to ecCharts?

If you buy the Gold Package you will have access to archive data and ecCharts (up to 100GB) by default, but you can purchase an archive licence or for ecCharts also if you do not want to buy a licence for Real Time data. Prices for archive and ecCharts access can be found at this [page](#).

Q: What does it means "Maximum Charge users" and how does it work the new Service Charge model if I am a Max Charge user?

A user with a Maximum Charge licence pays fixed Information Cost (which is based on EPU calculation), which, starting from July 2022 will be 100,000 EUR per year (if High Frequency products have been requested, cost will be 108,000 EUR). The existing benefits of a Maximum Charge licence will no longer apply to new or renewing contracts.

When the new Service Charge model will be in place, Maximum Charge licensees will have to check in which Volume Band they fall according to the amount of data requested, then they will be able to pick up a Service Package. Services available for every Service Package and to Maximum Charge users are illustrated at the [Service Packages overview](#).

Note that if Maximum Charge user wants to request an additional amount of data, if the new amount of data (old data + new data) makes the total volume to fall in another Volume Band, an amendment will be necessary.

Q: What if I choose another licensor/deliverer than ECMWF?

At the moment of placing your order, it is possible to choose a [Member or Co-operating State National Meteorological Service](#), instead of ECMWF. Your order for real-time data will be sent to the relevant Catalogue Contact Point(s) or ECMWF who will act as your licensor. After this you will need to specify if you want the Real-time data to be delivered directly by ECMWF or via the [Member or Co-operating State National Meteorological Service](#).

If you select ECMWF, you will get to review the Volume Band Charge and then choose a Service Package. If you prefer to have your data delivered by a Member State, you will submit your order to them, the licence standard agreement will be prepared by the selected deliverer, and ECMWF will not be involved in this process.

Q: Can I still apply for the micro business discount?

The small business discount consists of a 50% discount applicable to the Information Charge on real-time data, for companies with less than 10 staff headcount, and an annual turnover or balance sheet of no more than 2 million euros (more information at this [page](#)). The discount does not apply to the Maximum Charge Information Cost.

This discount will still be available with the deployment of the new Service Charge model. Licensees will get 50% discount on Information Cost, and then will pay for the Volume Band Charge and the selected Service Package.

Q: What if I want to amend my licence before its expiration to get the new Service Charge?

You will need to terminate your existing licence with your Licensor. Pro rata adjustments to existing contracts will not be made.

Q: What if I want to purchase the European cut-out?

The [European cut-out package](#) is a pre-defined package of real-time products. The package includes up to 15 parameters from the real-time catalogue for the area 25°N-84°N, 74°W-45°E. For the European Cut-out package 28,000 EUR annual information cost is applied. If High-Frequency Products are included, the Information Cost will be 29,600 EUR.

It is still possible to purchase the European cut-out package. Information costs will remain unchanged, and licensees will pay for the Volume Band Charge and the selected Service Package.

Changes in Data Requirements or on Configuration, licence amendments

Q: what does it mean "Data Requirement changes" and how do I count them?

Data requirement changes are all those changes in the data request with respect to the quote sent via the [Product Requirements Catalogue](#) on which the licence is based. A change in Data Requirements usually implies an amendment in the current licence.

A single Data Requirement change is when a user sends a single request which includes changes in one or more of the following parameters:

- adding or removing a Set of products
- adding or removing Forecast runs
- adding or removing Forecast time steps
- adding a new area, removing an existing area, change coordinates of an existing area
- changing the resolution
- adding or removing parameters.

Please note: in case changes are requested that do not change the price of the initial quote, an amendment to the licence is not necessary. However, it counts as a Data Requirement change (ECMWF may decide to waive the change from the count).

Data Requirements changes count does not apply to Maximum Charge users, unless the new quote falls in a different Volume Charge band (in this case, an amendment is required, and the change is counted).

Q: what does it mean "Configuration changes" and how do I count them?

Configuration changes are all those changes requested/implemented by the licensee which do not impact on Data Requirements (based on the initial quote sent via the [Product Requirements Catalogue](#)). There are two different types of Configuration changes which can be requested by licensees:

- Configuration changes on PREd:
 - Creation of a new destination or stream
 - Deletion of an existing destination or stream
 - Switch of a stream from Delay to Operational stream and vice-versa
- Configuration changes on ECPDS:
 - Set-up of a new host
 - Directory targeting
 - Set-up of an alias
 - Set-up of (a) parallel connection(s)
 - File renaming (TBD)

The maximum number of Configuration changes allowed includes both changes in PREd and in ECPDS, and the licensee can decide how to split the number of changes between PREd and ECPDS. Every request for a change in the two lists above count as a single change.

Q: I need to increase the amount of received data or I would like to get more services. How can I upgrade my licence?

Yes, you can upgrade the Volume Band charge (if you want to add data to your dissemination and the amount of new data makes the total volume to fall in another Volume Band) and/or the Service Package (if you want more services coupled to the data dissemination). The upgrade of a licence requires an amendment in the licence.

Q: I purchased a Bronze/Silver/Gold licence, but I would like to downgrade it to the Basic licence. Is that possible?

No, it is not possible. Once you have a licence with a Bronze, Silver or Gold package, it is not possible to downgrade to the Basic package.

Q: How long does it take to implement the changes requested in an amendment?

Please note that it can take some time before you receive the additional/new data operationally. If you know you want to add data, please [let us know](#) at least 2 weeks before you wish to receive the data operationally, such that we have the time to do this properly.

Q: Can I test the data before amending my licence?

Yes, we can send you data for you to test before amending the licence, for a maximum of 10 working days.

Services available on PRed/ECPDS/PRC

Q: What are destinations and hosts on ECPDS?

A user connecting to the ECPDS web interface will come across these entities, which are two of the basic concepts the ECPDS is based.

- A **destination** should be understood as a place where data transfers are queued and processed in order to deliver data to a unique remote place, hence the name 'destination'. It specifies the information the Data Dissemination service needs to disseminate the content of a data file to a particular remote site. Each destination implements a transfer scheduler with its own configuration parameters, which can be fine-tuned to meet the remote site's needs.
- A **dissemination host** is used to connect and transmit the content of a data file to a target system. It enables users to configure various aspects of the data transmission.

Q: What is pre-schedule delivery?

ECMWF delivers files according to the dissemination schedule, but the majority of files arrive into the system up to 45 minutes before this and are queued until the schedule.

With the pre-schedule option, the files will be sent as soon as the files are created and deposited into the ECPDS interface. This means files may arrive between 10-40 minutes before the schedule.

Pre-schedule delivery is available to Member States, Co-operating States and Gold Service Pack licence holders.

For more information, see the [Pre-Schedule Delivery](#) web page.

Q: Can I have a trial period?

It is not possible to have a trial period.

Q: What is the advantage of having a back-up host on ECPDS?

A destination can be associated with a list of dissemination hosts, with a primary host indicating the main target system where to deliver the data, and a list of fall-back hosts to switch to if for some reason the primary host is unavailable.

Q: What is directory targeting on ECPDS?

Like any object storage system, the one used in ECPDS is hierarchy-free and has no nested tree structure to store its data. However, ECPDS is able to emulate a directory structure when required. Then, when the data is requested, ECPDS will be able to build a virtual file system with directory trees. In this way, licensees will have the pushed files in the structure they prefer.

The possibility of directory targeting depends on the selected Service Package.

Q: What is an alias destination on ECPDS?

Destination aliases make it possible to link two or more destinations together, so that whatever data transfer is queued to one destination is also queued to the others. This mechanism enables processing the same set of data transfers to different sites with different schedules and/or transfer mechanisms defined on a destination basis.

The possibility for the set-up of an alias destination is related to the type of selected Service Package.

Q: What is Dissemination Request Button in PRC?

A dissemination request is the request for the dissemination of ECMWF products. The dissemination request is generated by the user when submitting a quote using the [Product Requirements Catalogue](#) (PRC). Clicking on the Dissemination Request Button, it will be possible to display the request for all the products and the parameters in the quote, in the form of a [MARS-like](#) language (pseudo-meteorological vocabulary). This syntax is the same that is used on the [Product Requirements](#) tool (PRed) when setting up a stream to request specific products and parameters.

Q: What does it mean FTP Pull/Push on ECPDS?

- FTP Push: if the distributor (ECMWF) automatically sends all the generated files to licensee's machine, as soon as the files are generated, without any action required from the licensee.
- FTP Pull: if the licensee can actively access the distributor's (ECMWF) machine to download only the files needed. Without an action from the licensee, the files are not sent by default as for FTP Push.

Q: What does it mean that I can have data compression on ECPDS?

Data compression is the process to encode data in order to get a file with a smaller size than the original one. Compression is important because it reduces dissemination time and therefore enables faster access to forecast products.

ECMWF offers lzzip2 compression of disseminated data, which is a lossless file compression technique. More information at this [page](#).

Q: What does it mean parallel connections on ECPDS?

Sometimes, when a licensee has a request that implies a big amount of data to be sent (>10GB per day), or has issues with bandwidth, configuring a set parallel streams (connections) when pushing data to ECPDS can help to improve the data transfer.

ECMWF offers a maximum number of 10 parallel connections, according to the selected Service Package.

Q: What is the difference between support during office hours and Operational support?

ECMWF Data Support team work between 08 GMT - 17 GMT Monday - Friday, except for Public Holidays. During this time, the team are available to help with questions regarding data, installation, new requests/quotes, licences.

Outside of these hours, our Operators are available to help you with urgent requests relating to the operational transfer of data and potential failures. They are unable to install new data or amend licences.

Q: What does it means being able to access PREd/ECPDS?

The Product Requirements Editor ([PREd](#)) is a web application used for the management of real-time data requirements.

The ECMWF Production Data Store ([ECPDS](#)) is the ECMWF Production Data Store, which is a system for transmitting real-time data.

Being able to access PREd and ECPDS means an increased level of self-serve and more flexibility for licensees to manage their data requirements.

Q: How can I see how many changes I still have for the licence year, or how many GB are still available?

Later in the year, ECMWF will provide access to a user profile which will provide more information. Until then, you can contact your Licensor or ECMWF Data Support via the Support Portal.

Q: As a Basic or Bronze package, can I get test data for cycle upgrades?

For basic and bronze service packs, we will provide a test cycle of the open data for purposes of comparison, but we won't provide bespoke test data.