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Introduction HOME for housing providers and housing intermediaries

In this article all the elements of the HOME solution for housing providers and housing intermediaries are explained. Housing providers are the providers, owners, managers of student housing (eg. Camplus, IC Campus). Housing intermediaries are in general considered as online platforms compiling the offers of multiple housing providers (eg. HousingAnywhere, Uniplaces, Studapart, etc.). In the remainder of this article we will use the wording 'housing provider' for both.

For housing providers, the HOME solution can be considered as a channel to publish their inventory, specifically targeting the users of Erasmus+ App and therewith having a high-quality inflow of potential tenants that are being redirected to their own listing pages and booking flow.

The benefits of joining the HOME solution for housing providers:

International students are a fast-growing and relatively pandemic-resilient target group. The HOME solution will provide you with a direct inflow of



these high-quality potential tenants, re-directed directly to your own website/booking platform.

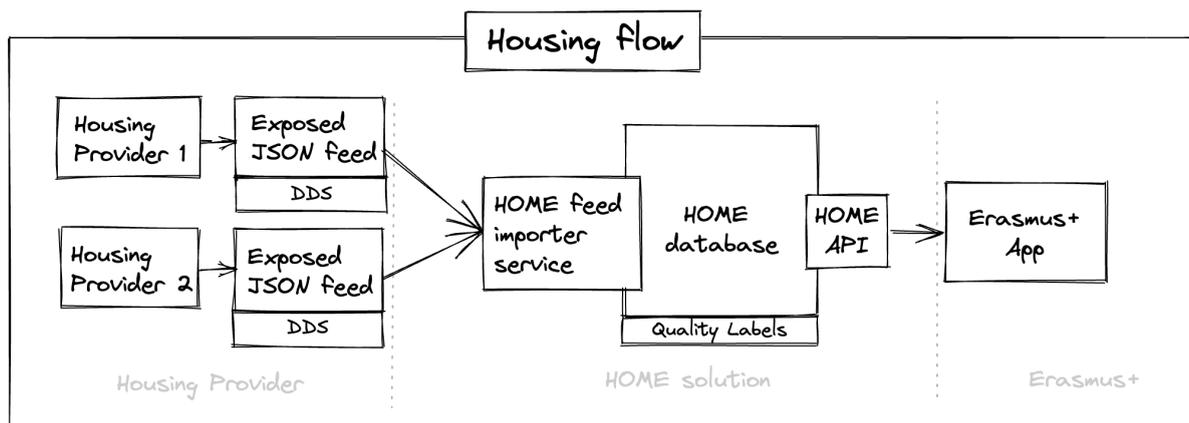
The Erasmus+ App, in which the housing providers offers are being shown, is becoming the “go-to” app for international students.

The HOME solution can be considered as a free affiliate marketing channel. Affiliate marketing is in general considered as a high-profitable acquisition channel in the online housing sector. The Return On Ad Spend (ROAS) for these channels are mostly higher than other online advertising channels.

By being part of the HOME solution, you will be part of an Erasmus+/EU initiative to improve international student housing in Europe. With the developed Quality Labels, that will be automatically attributed to your housing offers, and the Digital Data Standard for student housing the HOME solution aims to unify and clarify the student housing market.

Technical architecture

In this section the technical architecture of the HOME solution is explained, to create a better understanding for housing providers regarding the flow of housing information.



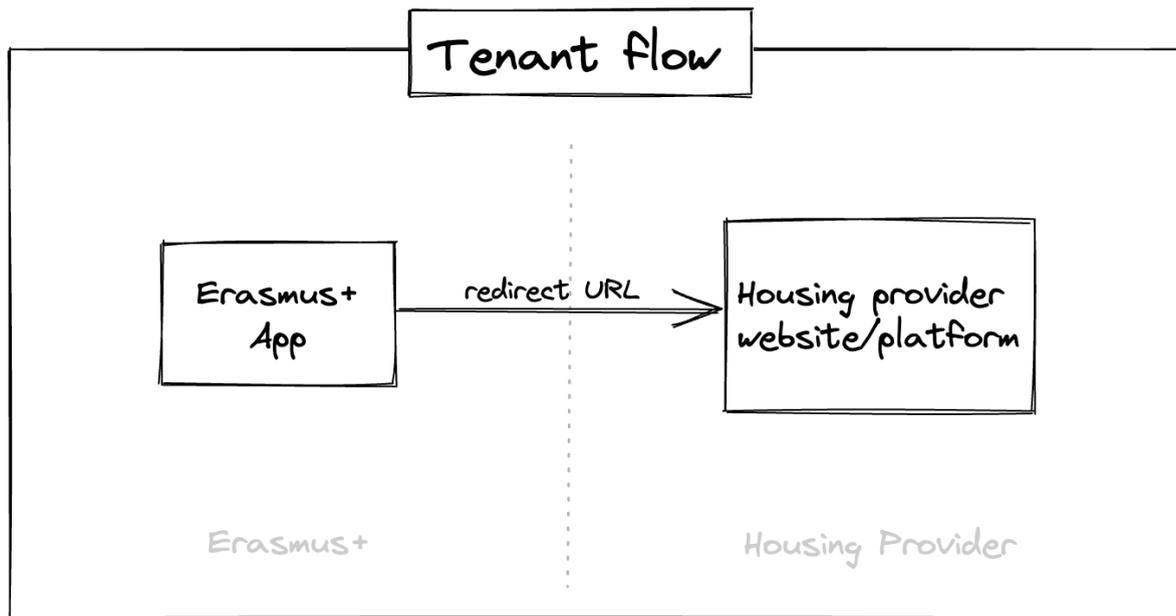
The following steps describe the housing flow, visually represented in the diagram above:

1. A student housing provider has several listings they want to publish on the Erasmus+ app.
2. They create a JSON feed according to the developed HOME Digital Data Standard (DDS) specified format with all the listings they want to publish on the Erasmus+ App. More on the Digital Data Standard (DDS) later in this article.
3. The URL of the created JSONfeed will be added to the HOME importer service. The importer service will add all the provided housing information to the HOME database.
4. Each feed will be read and updated once every day.
5. For each new unique listing added to the feed by the housing provider, a new listing will be added to the HOME database. If an existing listing is no longer found in the feed it will be removed from the HOME database.
6. If a known listing is found in the feed, the existing listing will be updated in the HOME database.
7. Based on the provided housing information, the developed HOME Quality Labels will be attributed to every housing offer. More on the HOME Quality Labels later in this article.
8. The Erasmus+ App will pull all the housing information from the HOME database via the HOME API and display all the housing offers in the housing section of the Erasmus+ App.

The displayed housing offer in the Erasmus+ App, can be viewed by all international students, and potential tenants, using the Erasmus+ App. If a student is interested in a specific housing offer and decides to move forward, the student will be redirected to the website, platform or booking flow from the housing provider that published the housing offer. The specific redirect URL for this offer is provided by the housing provider in the JSON feed. A visual representation of the tenant flow is in the diagram below.

All the technical elements within the HOME application are open-sourced, ensuring wide future dissemination within the Erasmus environment. In the scope of the project is the integration with the Erasmus+ App.





Digital Data Standard

To achieve a univocal way of gathering and structuring the accommodation data of all the different European-wide housing providers and intermediaries, a Digital Data Standard for student housing-related data has been developed. By making housing providers and intermediaries adhere to the created data standard, the HOME application can ensure the correct entitlement of Student Quality Labels to the accommodations and smooth integration to the HOME application.

With the student housing data being delivered in a univocal way according to the Digital Data Standard, the HOME solution is able to set up and maintain a structured database containing all the accommodation data from all the different housing providers that are connected.

The digital data standard has been created by mapping all the student housing data of sixteen large student housing providers or intermediaries across Europe. In this way, the most important and widespread data used within the student housing sector in Europe was identified. Together with the necessary data elements to identify and entitle the Quality



Labels this forms the HOME Digital Data Standard (DDS). The DDS and the technical elements are validated by both private and public housing providers as one critical factor of the project is to ensure that this technical solution caters to the needs of any type of housing provider in Europe, ensuring transparency and diversity.

The exposed JSON feed should be structured according to the Digital Data Standard. The latest version of the Digital Data Standard can be found here: [HOME-EuropeanDigitalDataStandard-Version1.0-Final.pdf](#)

The HOME consortium created a validation tool for developers to check the structure of their JSON Feed. It is built by exposing an endpoint to which you can send the JSON set-up of one single listing/advertisement. It will return any errors in the set-up or an “OK” if the set-up is correct. This is further described in the Digital Data Standard.

Quality Labels

The HOME solution introduces a set of Student Accommodation Quality Labels that aim to increase the quality and transparency of information about student accommodation.

At this moment students are overloaded with a lot of different and mostly incomplete information on student housing information on a plethora of housing platforms. The Quality Labels provide students with a selected, comprehensive, but not an excessively detailed list of important student accommodation aspects.

The Quality Labels have been set up after intensive research towards the national standards, practices and legal frameworks in different EU countries, combined with research on accommodation indicators, typology of student accommodations, living labels, and standard-related search terms and focus groups with students.

The Quality Labels certify some of the most relevant quality aspects of the student accommodation: 1) international friendliness, 2) wheelchair-accessible, 3) room quality, 4) super-secure, 5) well-equipped, and 6) premium accommodation, (Fig.3).

The Quality Labels will be attributed to each of the accommodations automatically based on the data provided (according to the Digital Data



Standard) by the Housing Provider. So, every Quality Label has a certain logic based on a set of data values behind it. The specific logic and data values per Quality Label are listed in the Digital Data Standard.

 [HOME-EuropeanDigitalDataStandard-Version1.0-Final.pdf](#)

In the figure below is the example of the Quality Label: **Well-equipped kitchen**. Every Quality Label has an icon, criteria and a set of indicators. Every indicator has a corresponding data value that is present in the Digital Data Standard.

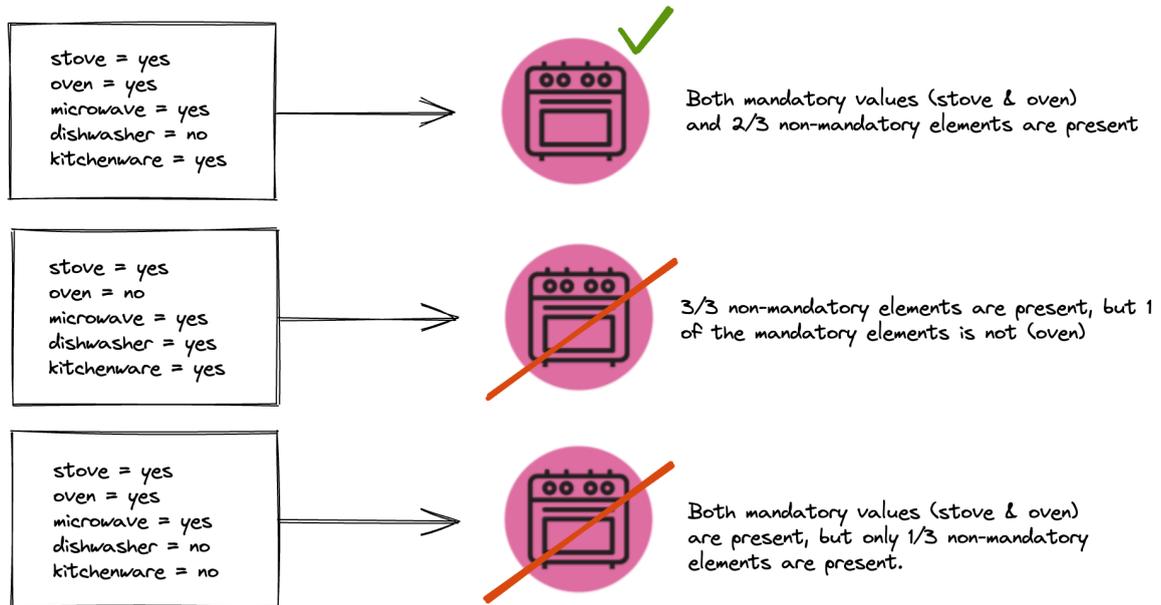
The logic for this label is that the accommodation should provide all the mandatory indicators and at least 2 out of 3 non-mandatory indicators.

Icon	Label	Criteria	Indicator	Rules
	Well-equipped kitchen	Well-equipped accommodation, displaying above average kitchen appliances. <i>A listing should qualify for all the mandatory fields, and at least 2 out of 3 non-mandatory fields.</i>	• Stove (mandatory)	stove = yes
			• Oven (mandatory)	oven = yes
			• Microwave	microwave = yes
			• Dishwasher	dishwasher = yes
			• Kitchenware	kitchenware = yes



A couple of example scenarios for the Well-equipped kitchen Quality Label:

Data provided by the Housing Provider
via JSON feed according to the
Digital Data Standard



Onboarding process

At this moment we are launching the HOME solution with an initial group of pilot housing providers and intermediaries. These housing providers are actively supported by the technical teams of HousingAnywhere and the European University Foundation to establish the JSON feed according to the Digital Data Standard.

In case you are interested in joining HOME, please follow the application process on <https://www.thehomeproject.eu/onboarding/>.

The HOME consortium will then contact you during the next onboarding cycle to take the next step and make sure your housing offers are published on the Erasmus+ App. New housing providers are being reviewed and onboarded once every 6-9 months. With the next cycle starting around September/October 2023.



Housing providers that do not have the technical resources to connect to the HOME solution directly can get in contact with one of the housing intermediaries connected to HOME and list their property on the intermediary platform. Afterwards, it will automatically be visible in the HOME solution. A list of housing intermediary partners connected to HOME will be published at a later stage.

