ISPConfig

ISPConfig is not mentioned in the Exponential sources and is not placed in any tier. This page says so plainly, lists what an ISPConfig-managed server must provide for an Exponential site, maps each need to a generic…

Source file: `doc/eng-us/help/hosting/panels/ispconfig.md` Last changed 2026-11-04
https://doc.exponential.earth/learninminutes/exphelp/viewer/help/hosting/panels/ispconfig.md

This page is for hosting companies whose servers are managed with ISPConfig and who want to offer Exponential on them. It answers the first question honestly: **the Exponential sources do not mention ISPConfig at all.** It is not placed in a tier, and nothing here comes from a test. What the page can give you is the list of what an Exponential site needs, translated into the tasks any hosting panel performs, and a plan to test the combination yourself.

> **Warning**
>
> `.htaccess` **slows down every request.** When `.htaccess` files are enabled (`AllowOverride` anything but `None`), let alone used, Apache looks for them and reads and evaluates them on every request, in every directory of the path, and page loading times go up drastically (measured). The only real fix is to switch the feature off for the virtual host: `AllowOverride None` in the HTTPS virtual host, and the rules in the virtual host's own configuration as mod_rewrite rules. That is far faster in production speed tests and well worth the time it takes to optimize a production configuration. Switch over right away: copy the rules of the example HTTPS virtual host into your virtual host (with the static cache, also `staticcache_offload.conf`), set `AllowOverride None`, run `apachectl configtest`, reload Apache and test the site. The same rules for other servers: nginx, LiteSpeed, Caddy, IIS, Velocity (built in); where virtual host rules go in a control panel: Plesk, cPanel, DirectAdmin, ISPConfig. **On LiteSpeed or OpenLiteSpeed,** the server's own page cache can also answer anonymous visitors and crawlers without PHP: Page caching with LiteSpeed and OpenLiteSpeed.

> **Note**
>
> Nothing on this page describes ISPConfig's screens, options or files. For how ISPConfig performs each task below, check ISPConfig's documentation.

Contents

1. Status in the sources
2. Why it may still work
3. What the server must provide
4. Two things to check first
5. A test plan
6. Checklist

Status in the sources

Question	Answer
Is ISPConfig named in the documentation or code?	no
Which tier?	none: it is not placed
Has the project run Exponential on it?	not that the sources record

The tiers are defined in Operating system support. Panels that are placed: Plesk (tier 1 on the development server), cPanel and DirectAdmin (tier 3) (Control panels: overview).

Why it may still work

The reasoning that places cPanel and DirectAdmin in tier 3 is that Exponential needs nothing from a panel itself: "It is plain PHP files plus a database; it has no compiled code of its own" and "runs on almost any operating system that has PHP 8.0 or later (PHP 7.4 usable without support) and a web server" (Operating system support). Any server whose panel can provide the items below, on a supported operating system, meets the requirements. That is an inference, not a test result: treat ISPConfig as at most tier 3 until you have tested it.

What the server must provide

Need	Value	Panel task (generic)
Operating system	a tier 1 or 2 distribution, for example Debian 12 or 13, Ubuntu 22.04 or 24.04, AlmaLinux 9	the base install below the panel (Tier 2)
PHP	8.0 or later (Velocity included), with `dom`, `libxml`, `simplexml`, `xsl`, `mbstring`, `iconv`, `intl`, `pcre`, `json`, `session`, `zlib`, one database extension, `gd` or ImageMagick	PHP version and modules per site (2.3)
PHP for the command line	the same version and extensions as the site's	for Composer, the console and cron (Command line and web PHP)
`php.ini`	`memory_limit` 64M or more, `max_execution_time` 30 or more, `date.timezone`, `file_uploads` on, `allow_url_fopen` on	per-site PHP settings (2.5)
PHP user	PHP runs as the site's own user	per-site PHP-FPM pool (8.7.2)
Document root	the installation root (with `index.php`)	the site's document root
Rewrite rules	Apache: `.htaccess` from `.htaccess_root`; nginx: the derived server block	the site's web server directives (8.5, 8.6)
Database	in the official order: 1. SQLite 3 (no server) · 2. PostgreSQL · 3. MongoDB · 4. MariaDB · 5. Oracle · 6. MySQL; Microsoft SQL Server is known to be possible with additional work at this time	a database and user, UTF-8 (Databases and users)
Scheduled jobs	`runcronjobs.php` with the site's PHP	the site's cron jobs (Cron and shell access)
HTTPS	a certificate for every name of the site	the site's certificate settings (TLS certificates in panels)

Two things to check first

1. Which web server serves the site, and how its rules are set. Under Apache the shipped `.htaccess` works when `.htaccess` files are read (`AllowOverride`) and `mod_rewrite` is on. Under nginx there is no `.htaccess`; the Exponential rules must go into the server's configuration. The project ships no nginx file: chapter 8 gives a server block that is "derived, not shipped" and asks you to "test it on your site before you rely on it" (8.6). Under Apache, `php bin/php/console exp:setup:htaccess --apply`, run as the site's shell user, copies `.htaccess_root` into place; under nginx that copy protects nothing (Setting up .htaccess and config.php from the console).

> **Warning**
>
> "Never serve the installation with a generic configuration such as nginx's 'serve the file if it exists, else `index.php`'": "those hand out every file that exists, including `settings/*.ini` and the SQLite database" (13.2). A panel's default PHP site template is exactly such a configuration unless you add the Exponential rules.

2. `open_basedir` and `disable_functions`. Panels often restrict both per site. The setup wizard only warns about `open_basedir`; the cronjob page needs `proc_open`, `exec` and `posix_kill` for its run, crontab and stop features (Cronjobs, Before you start); ezupdate looks for Composer below the installation root first because `open_basedir` can hide system folders (ezupdate).

A test plan

Step	Pass when
Install on a fresh site (setup wizard, or `exp:install` with a shell)	every critical test passes; site and `/admin` answer
Request `/settings/site.ini`, `/.env`, `/composer.json`, `/kernel/classes/ezini.php`	404 or an Exponential page, never the file (13.2)
Upload an image, view it	image and variations served
Cron line	the run appears on **Setup > Cronjobs**
Change PHP version in the panel	the site still answers; both web and command line PHP changed
Backup and restore to a second site	the restored site works
Two sites on the server	neither site's PHP can read the other's `settings/override`

If everything passes, tell the project, so ISPConfig can be placed in a tier (The four tiers).

Checklist

- ☐ Operating system of tier 1 or 2 below the panel.
- ☐ PHP 8.x with every required extension, web and command line alike, one user per site.
- ☐ Exponential rewrite rules in place (`.htaccess` or the derived nginx block); file-exposure test passed.

☐ `open_basedir` and `disable_functions` decisions documented.

☐ Database, cron and certificate set up.

☐ The test plan passed; offer documented as not covered by the project's own tests.

Related pages

- Control panels: overview, Webmin
- nginx with PHP-FPM, Apache with PHP-FPM
- Requirements at a glance
- Setting up .htaccess and config.php from the console
- Free documentation: this page is free to copy, translate and improve under the GNU FDL 1.3.

Become an Exponential Partner

Partners share their information, provide funding, contribute back and develop the products with us, and that is how Exponential grows. A partner website and dashboard are planned for mid-2027: please become a partner today to speed up our growth rate and land new features faster.

Partners: start here | How to apply

Exponential Copyright © 1998-2026 Exponential Foundation and 7x
Permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify this document under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.3 or any later version published by the Free Software Foundation; with no Invariant Sections, no Front-Cover Texts, and no Back-Cover Texts. A copy of the license is included in the section entitled "GNU Free Documentation License".
This documentation is free documentation, licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License 1.3 or later:
https://www.gnu.org/licenses/fdl-1.3.html.