

# SONI Forward Work Plan

2024-25

Published September 2024



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# Foreword

SONI has prepared this Forward Work Plan in line with the Utility Regulator's (UR's) Guidance on the Evaluative Performance Framework that came into effect in January 2022.

It has become part of our annual business planning process, and this edition covers the period from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

The Forward Work Plan provides an overview of the initiatives that SONI plans to deliver across a set of four TSO roles: System Operations; Independent Expert; System Planning; and Commercial Interface.

We appreciate the value that stakeholder input provides. As a result of the feedback received through previous years, we recognise that we need to continue to build on our stakeholder engagement exercises.

In this plan we set out the engagement activities currently planned for each role over the 2024-25 period. Our focus in this paper is on the key initiatives we are planning to progress. These are in addition to the many 'business as usual' activities we undertake as part of our licence and other obligations.

Also, in parallel with this plan, we continue to engage closely with the UR and EirGrid on the implementation on the SONI Governance arrangements.

In line with the UR's Guidance on the Evaluative Performance Framework, the UR welcomes submissions from stakeholders to provide feedback on SONI's Forward Work Plan.

The UR will also host a stakeholder event on November 13th 2024, which will provide an opportunity for further feedback and allow questions on our plan. SONI would also welcome any feedback to this publication<sup>1</sup>.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank stakeholders for their feedback ahead of this process, as this will help to inform our implementation of this plan and the content of future plans.



**Alan Campbell**  
Chief Executive Officer, SONI

<sup>1</sup> Stakeholders can provide comments using the email address: [info@soni.ltd.uk](mailto:info@soni.ltd.uk) quoting "Feedback on SONI Forward Work Plan" in the subject heading.

# Introduction





## Introduction

As part of its Final Determination of the SONI Price Control 2020-25 the UR introduced an Evaluative Performance Framework<sup>2</sup>, with the aim of:

- ❑ SONI taking an open, flexible and collaborative approach to responding to stakeholders and considering new innovative ideas.
- ❑ SONI developing greater transparency and accountability to its operations in both its planning and performance reporting.
- ❑ Bringing additional skills, insights and knowledge to the UR's review of SONI's performance using independent experts.
- ❑ Encouraging action from SONI that contributes to the positive outcomes for NI Consumers (SONI Outcomes).

The framework includes the publication of this Forward Work Plan, a stakeholder discussion on the plan, an interim performance update and an annual performance report. The UR has established an expert Independent panel to assess these documents and will use the output from the process to inform its assessment of SONI's performance.

SONI's Forward Work Plan 2024-2025 highlights our key priorities for the year ahead which will help us to deliver on our obligations to the Northern Ireland consumers considering the drivers for change in 2024 as demonstrated below. The UR has asked that we structure our plan around four roles that we deliver.

This Forward Work Plan 2024-2025 is supplemented by seven appendices:

- ❑ Appendix 1: SONI Deliverables Role 1 System Operation and Adequacy
- ❑ Appendix 2: SONI Deliverables Role 2 Independent Expert
- ❑ Appendix 3: SONI Deliverables Role 3 System Planning
- ❑ Appendix 4: SONI Deliverables Role 4 Commercial Interface
- ❑ Appendix 5: SONI Performance Measures
- ❑ Appendix 6: SONI Stakeholder Engagement
- ❑ Appendix 7: SONI Self-Assessment

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<sup>2</sup>[epf-guidance.pdf \(uregni.gov.uk\)](https://www.uregulation.gov.uk/epf-guidance.pdf)

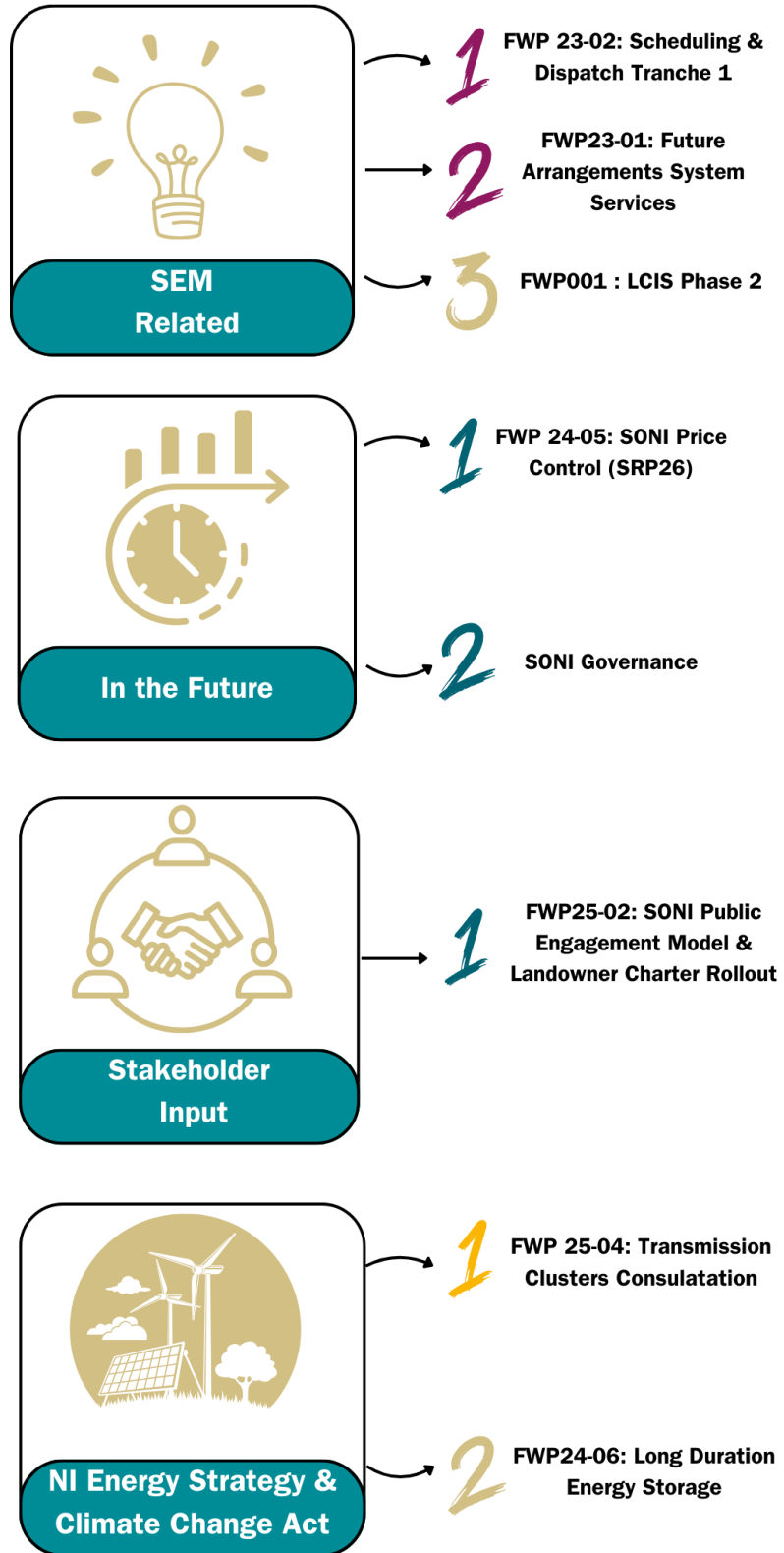
We have included an overview of the process in Appendix 7: SONI Self-Assessment, where we also include the criteria used to assess SONI’s plans. A key function of the performance framework is listening to stakeholders when developing our Forward Work Plan. We would like to thank everyone who has shared their views with us.



*SONI Chief Executive Officer, Alan Campbell presenting at SONI’s Annual Industry Business Breakfast Event –June 2024*

The diagram below highlights the key areas of focus for each role over the period October 2024 to September 2025.

### Key Areas of Focus



## SONI Governance

Following the introduction of new obligations in relation to Governance and independence, in October 2023, SONI appointed a new, independent Board to drive a fresh vision and direction. Our Board has led in the development of a new organisational design to build further expertise and capability to deliver on that vision and direction.

SONI has introduced a new executive team and management structure over the summer of 2024. The team will lead on the implementation of the SONI strategy and equip our organisation with the leadership, purpose and accountability to succeed in this next phase of our journey.

We continue to work closely with EirGrid, our counterpart in Ireland, as System Operators and Market Operators to support the functioning of the All-Island Single Electricity Market which is overseen by the regulatory authorities in both jurisdictions through the Single Electricity Market Committee.

Work is ongoing on how we will work together as we implement the new obligations. This work will continue in parallel with the projects set out in this plan.



*SONI Board meeting with Minister for Economy, Conor Murphy, MLA, April 2024*

# Section 1

## Overview of SONI





## Section 1: Overview of SONI

SONI is the Transmission System Operator (TSO) for Northern Ireland. We are responsible for the safe, secure, efficient, and reliable operation of the high voltage electricity system.

SONI's statutory obligations to NI consumers include<sup>3</sup>:

- ❑ Developing and maintaining an efficient, coordinated, and economical Transmission Network capable of meeting the long-term reasonable demands for the transmission of electricity.
- ❑ Contributing to Security of Supply through adequate capacity and reliability, and
- ❑ Facilitating competition in Supply and Generation.

A key strand of these obligations is that we take a whole system, collaborated, and coordinated approach to working with all relevant organisations. In fulfilling our role, SONI:

- ❑ Operates and plans the development of the Transmission Network to meet reliability and capacity requirements in the short and longer term.

- ❑ Operates and plans the development of the Transmission Network in a way that best balances short term costs and the longer-term needs for the benefit of the NI consumer and user.
- ❑ Works in conjunction with parties across the whole supply chain to improve competition, deliver innovation and minimise short and long-term costs to the NI consumer.
- ❑ Supports users to make informed decisions through seeking and embracing their requirements for openness and transparency.



*Former Minister of State for Northern Ireland, RT Hon Steve Baker visits Castlereagh House, February 2024*

<sup>3</sup> Please see Article 12 of the Northern Ireland Electricity 1992 Order

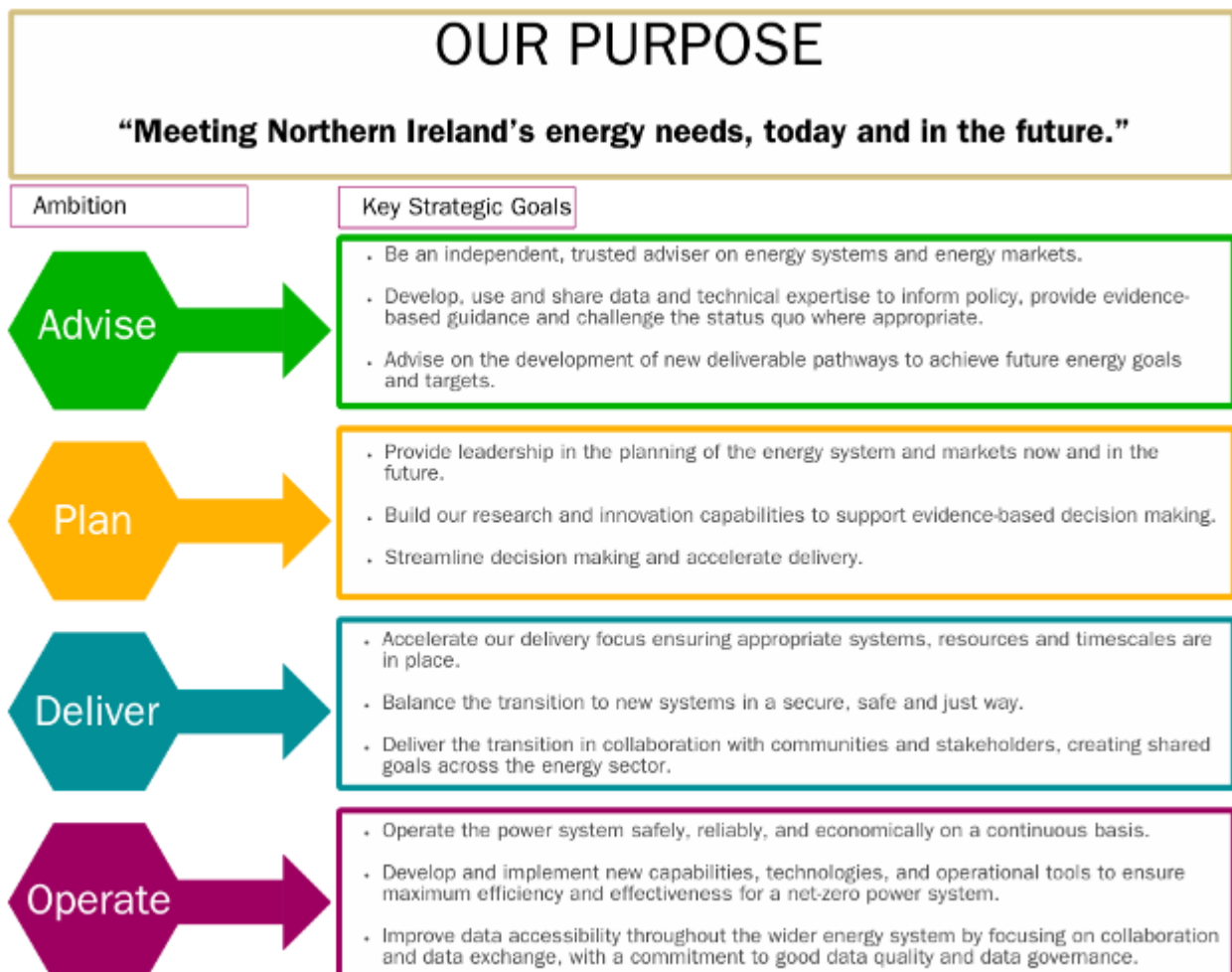
# Section 2 Strategy



## Section 2: Strategy

SONI has engaged with many stakeholders and customers as we developed our Strategy for 2025 – 2031. In September 2024, SONI launched a consultation on SONI’s draft Strategy 2025-2031<sup>4</sup>. This draft strategy has been developed in collaboration with SONI employees and key stakeholders, after an extensive programme of engagement. The Strategy sets out SONI’s mission, values and strategic delivery objectives. This draft Strategy also provides a strategic framework to drive the development and delivery of SONI’s detailed multi-year Business Plan with purpose, ambition and integrity.

The table below provides information on SONI’s proposed Purpose, Ambition and Goals detailed in our draft Strategy for 2025-2031.



<sup>4</sup> [SONI Draft Strategy 2025-2021 Consultation Paper](#)

SONI have been actively supporting the Department for the Economy (DfE) in its Action plans and will continue to support where possible in the Action plan for 2025. We expect that many of the Initiatives detailed in this Forward Work Plan will complement the work we are already undertaking, and SONI are keen to continue to support the delivery of Government Policy.

# Section 3 Stakeholders

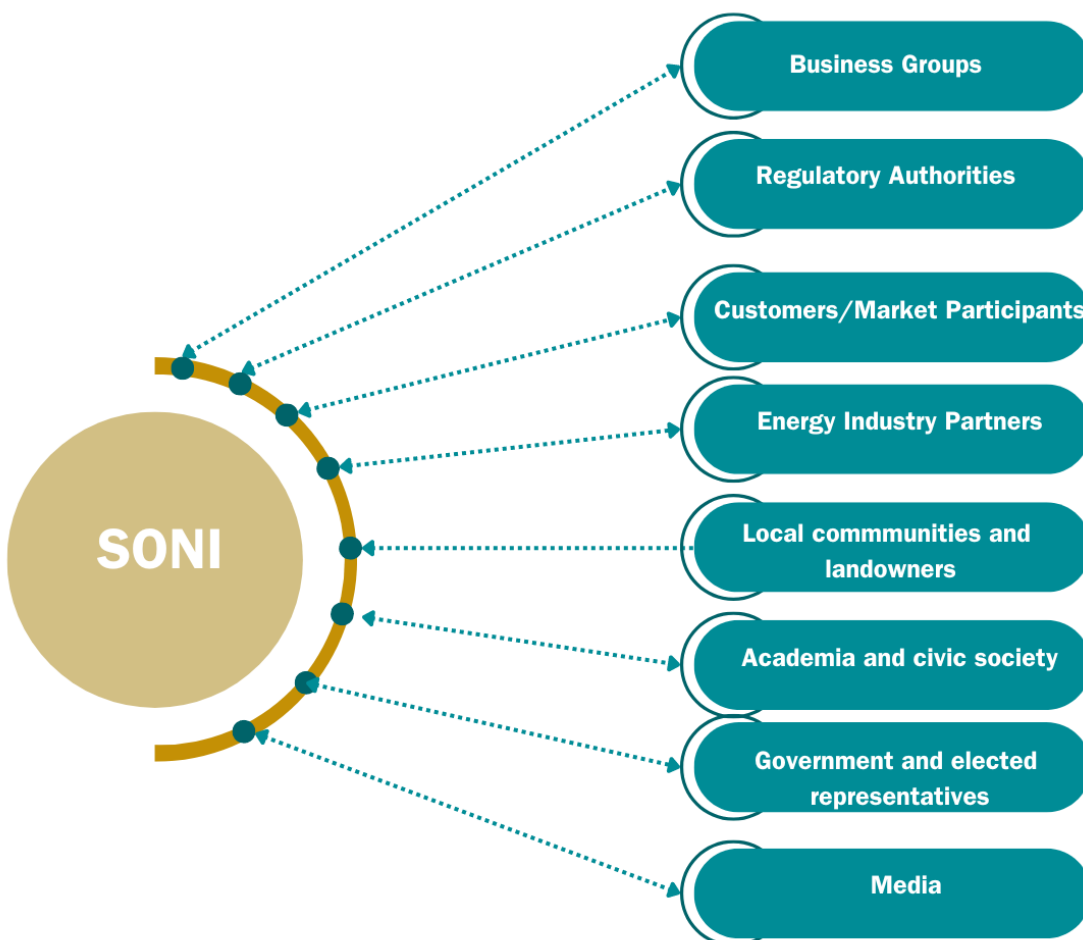


## Section 3: Stakeholders

### Overview

Stakeholder engagement is the key to successful delivery for SONI, across all four Roles. This year, we will be engaging extensively around changes to the wholesale electricity market, including changes to the commercial arrangements for providing system services and other major projects detailed under Role 1.

This section focuses on our planned engagements across the four roles during 2024/25. Appendix 6: SONI Stakeholder Engagement contains more information on how SONI engages, why we engage and what we do with the feedback we receive during this engagement process.



## Grid Delivery Optimisation Project

Fundamentally, public acceptance is at the heart of our approach to grid delivery in Northern Ireland. With less than six years until 2030, SONI has recognised the need to accelerate the delivery of network development projects to support delivery in Northern Ireland. SONI commenced a project to reform its grid development process to accelerate delivery.

This included an extensive internal audit of current processes and timelines and an impact/risk assessment process for “Options for Change”. These “Options for Change” detail a series of internal and external process improvement recommendations to accelerate the existing grid development process.

Following completion of this internal project in Q3 2024 SONI is continuing to engage with NIE Networks to discuss opportunities for further collaboration to develop a programme of work for future grid developments. This is a significant project for SONI and will have a positive impact for customers, industry by supporting the delivery of Northern Ireland’s statutory renewable energy targets for 2030 and net zero.

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## Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Following engagement with our partners as part of the Evaluative Performance Framework process, SONI undertook an extensive, independent Stakeholder Needs Assessment exercise in 2023 to inform the development of SONI’s first public Stakeholder Engagement Strategy<sup>5</sup>.



Following the completion of the Stakeholder Needs Assessment in October 2023 and an extensive desk-based review of approaches taken by other comparable organisations. SONI published a ‘Call for Views’ based on proposals for our first public Stakeholder Engagement Strategy in February 2024. This was underpinned by reviews of two further core enabling strategies: Our Public Engagement Model; and our Landowner Charter.

The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2024-26, designed to enable our engagement for the remaining years of SONI’s current five-year Strategy (Strategy 2020-2025), Business Plan and Price Control period represents the culmination of this extensive consultation and engagement process.

<sup>5</sup> [SONI Stakeholder Engagement Strategy \(2024-26\)](#)

Following a detailed Stakeholder Needs Assessment and mapping exercise, and after further engagement and consultation with our stakeholders, we have identified three core stakeholder categories: Society, Industry and Statutory. This was a key focus when devising the planned engagements in 2024/25 set out below.



As part of our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2024-2026, SONI established the following principles and engagement approach.

## Engagement Principles



### **Inclusivity**

We will seek to engage as widely as possible on our plans at the earliest possible stage, use accessible terminology and utilise methods of engagement proportionate to the needs of our stakeholders.



### **Transparency**

We will seek to be open and transparent, act with integrity and be clear on the parameters of influence throughout our engagement. We will be clear about the need to balance the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders in addition to our legal and licence obligations



### **Consistency**

We will seek to be consistent in both the quality and quantity of our engagement.



### **Responsiveness**

We will seek to be proactive and receptive to the needs of our stakeholders and respond in a timely manner



### **Impact**

We will seek to prioritise the areas that matter most to our stakeholders, proactively identify opportunities to co-develop balanced solutions and meaningfully incorporate input where possible.



### We communicate throughout



### Enhanced Public Engagement Model and Landowner Charter

As part of our commitment to improve our engagement, SONI published two additional supplementary engagement strategies following a separate and extensive programme of engagement and consultation.

SONI’s public engagement already goes far above and beyond the statutory requirements outlined in the planning system. However, in June 2024, SONI published an enhanced Public Engagement Model which sets out how we will go even further to engage local communities in the development of our network infrastructure projects.<sup>6</sup>

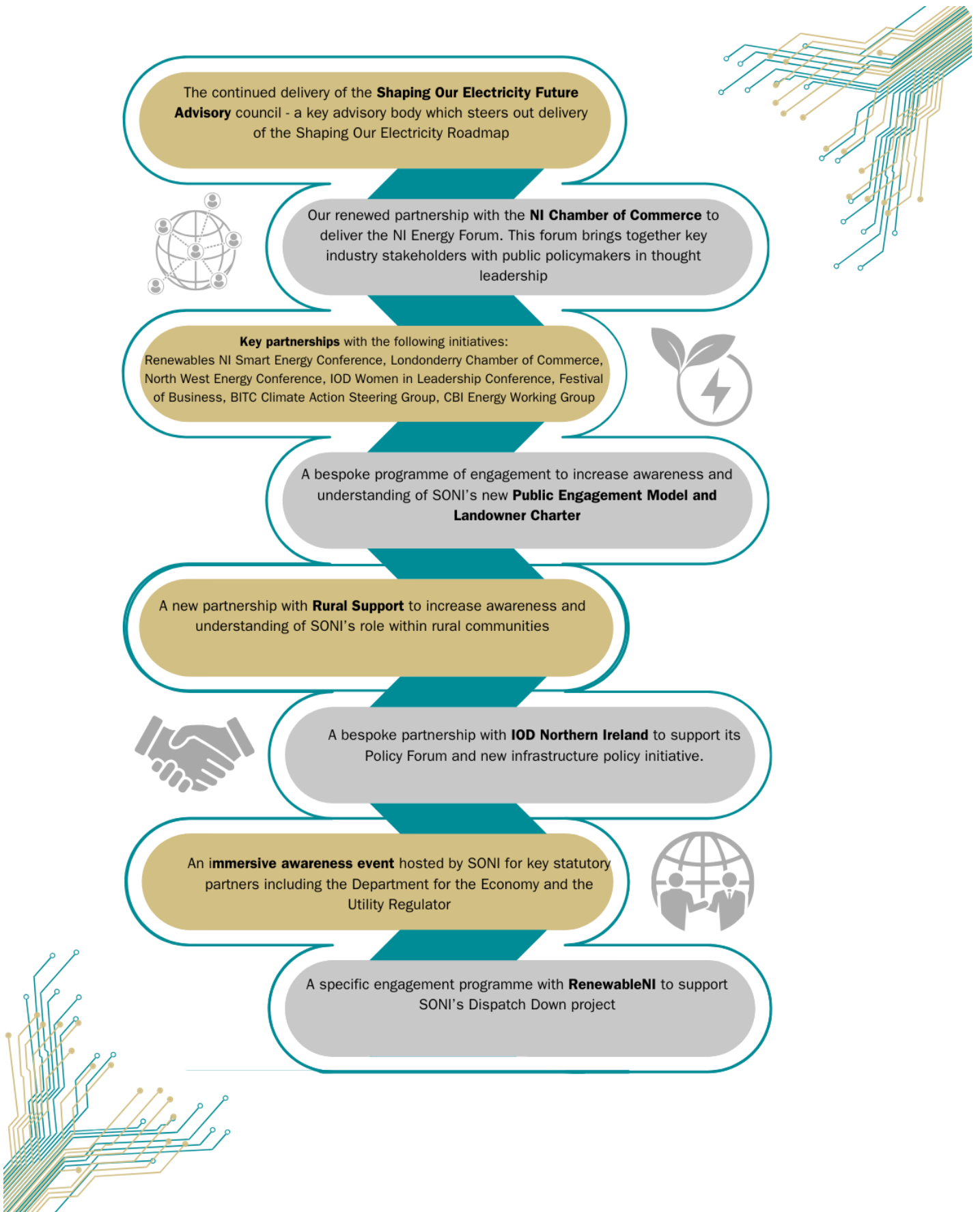
We also published a revised Landowner Charter setting out our engagement commitments to the landowners who are crucial to hosting the network infrastructure for the benefit of everyone. Public Engagement Model.<sup>7</sup>

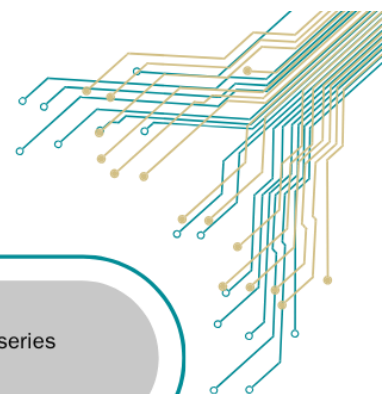
<sup>6</sup> [SONI Public Engagement Model](#)

<sup>7</sup> [SONI Landowner Charter](#)

## Planned Engagement 2024-25

Further details of our planned engagements are detailed in SONI's Stakeholder Action Plan, however we can confirm the following strategic engagements for 2024/25:





A programme of briefing sessions on **SONI's Winter Outlook** with key stakeholder groupings.

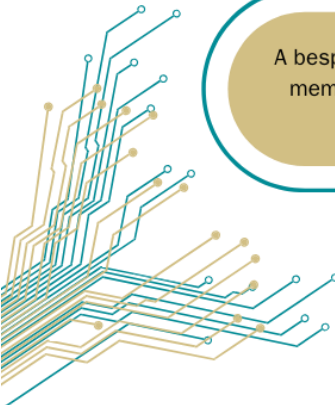


Delivery of SONI's **Annual Energy and Business** event series

A vast programme of **community and landowner engagement** to support the delivery of SONI's infrastructure projects



An extensive three-phased programme of engagement to support the development of SONI's **SRP26 Business Plan** including a series of bi-lateral engagements with key partners, the administration of an Advisory and Challenge Group and a workshop series.



A bespoke partnership event with **IOD Northern Ireland** and its members on SONI's role in supporting the energy transition

# Section 4

## Role Overview







# Section 4: Role Overview

The Forward Work Plan is presented across four TSO roles as demonstrated in the diagram



## Purpose of SONI Roles

For each TSO role, we have provided a summary of the key deliverables and a breakdown of each deliverable in turn. We also highlight the benefits these deliverables will bring, and we provide alignment from these benefits to each of the four SONI outcomes.

Symbol	SONI Outcome	Description
	Decarbonisation	The Northern Ireland electricity system supports government decarbonisation policy and targets
	Grid Security	Northern Ireland electricity consumers receive secure and reliable electricity supplies.
	System-Wide Cost	Northern Ireland electricity consumers get good value for money which reflects efficiency within, and across, different parts of the Northern Ireland electricity system and All Island system, over the short term and the longer term.
	SONI Service Quality	SONI provides an appropriate range and quality of services to participants in the Northern Ireland electricity system and other stakeholders.

For deliverables progressing through a programme of work which were detailed in previous plans (2021-2022 Plan<sup>8</sup>, 2022-2023 Plan<sup>9</sup> or 2023-2024 Plan<sup>10</sup>), we have retained the same project ID in order to maintain consistency so there is a clear continuation from the previous publication. For new projects detailed in the plan, a new project ID has been assigned to comply with the UR's Guidance requesting unique project IDs.

<sup>8</sup>SONI Forward Work Plan 2021/22, <sup>9</sup>SONI Forward Work Plan 2023/23, <sup>10</sup>SONI Forward Work Plan 2023/24

## Evaluation Engagement Framework

As part of the Stakeholder Needs Assessment project detailed in the 2022/23 Forward Work Plan, in June 2024 we published SONI's first public Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. This strategy is underpinned by the Engagement Evaluation Framework, which has been designed to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of our performance.

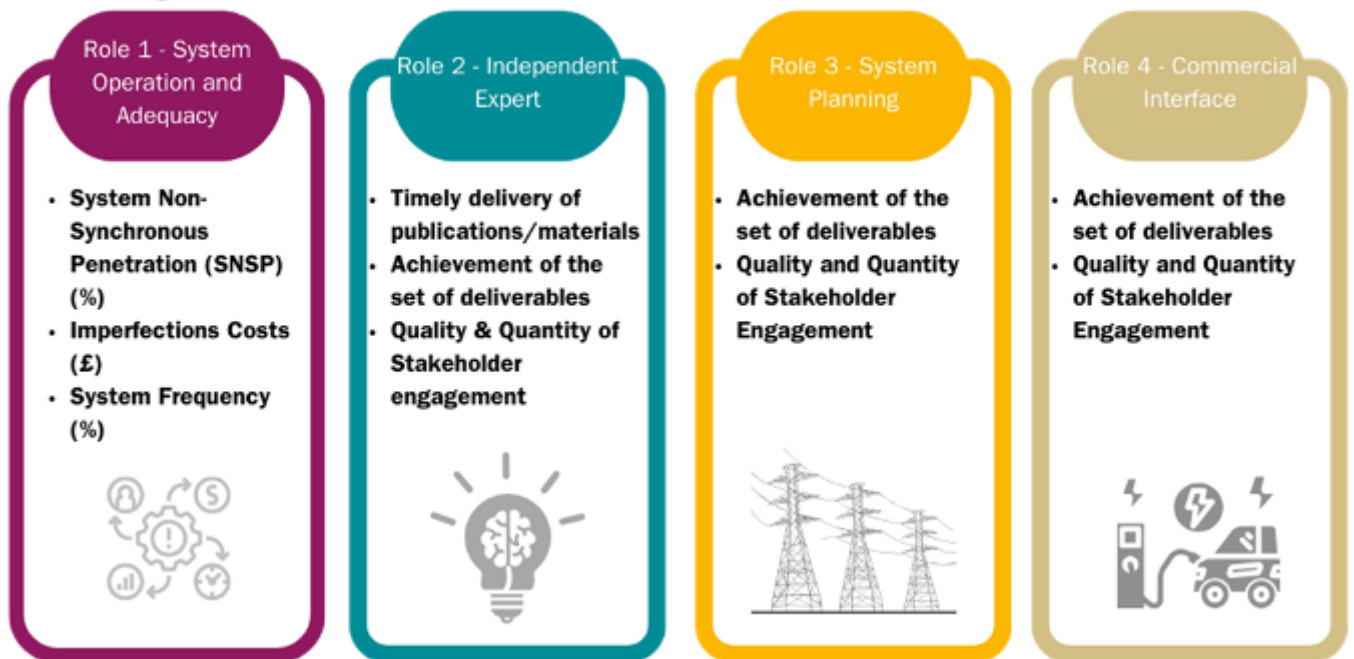
The framework utilises a range of metrics, assessment of planned engagement activities, quantitative data from post-engagement surveys and an annual pulse survey, as well as qualitative insights from focus groups and case studies. These evaluation tools will ensure SONI's strategy is both responsive and adaptive to stakeholder needs.

## Performance Measures

SONI aim to evaluate two key aspects of our plan's implementation: the performance of individual projects and the successful delivery of each role.

The table below outlines the key performance indicators (KPIs) that will be used to assess the successful delivery of each role. Further details on each performance measure can be found in Appendix 5, Performance Measures .

# Key Performance Indicators



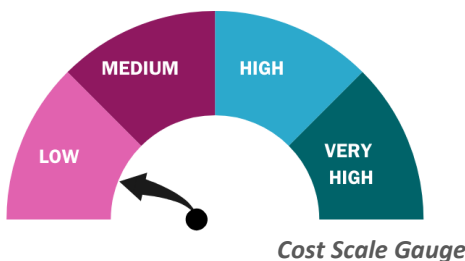
## Cost Scale

Following the publication of the 2022/2023 Forward Work Plan, SONI received feedback from the UR and the Independent Panel surrounding the potential inclusion of cost information, which they considered would assist the audience in understanding the scale and/or importance of a project. SONI has created a Cost Scale, and throughout the plan, we have detailed where on this scale each project lies. The costs indicated are SONI related costs and do not cover any costs accrued by any stakeholder SONI may be collaborating with on the projects/initiatives.

This scale applied is detailed in the table below, the gauge icon will be used in the detailed project information for each deliverable.

LOW	£0-£500K
MEDIUM	£500K-£1M
HIGH	£1M-£5M
VERY HIGH	£5M+

*Cost Scale Table*



## Business-as-Usual (BAU) activities

Following stakeholder feedback on SONI's Forward Work Plan for 2023-24 relating to Business-as-Usual activities in the Forward Work Plan, SONI developed criteria to distinguish between BAU and non-BAU activities. Although the projects identified as BAU involve established processes, there is a substantial amount of additional work that goes beyond BAU, which justified their inclusion in the 2023-24 Forward Work Plan. However, based on the newly developed criteria, SONI have now removed all BAU projects from the plan to focus on innovation.

The projects identified as BAU from last year's FWP are listed below

Project ID	Project Name
FWP004	Capacity Auctions Schedule
FWP012	End of Life Assets – System Refresh
FWP013	End of Life Assets – EMS Upgrade
FWP23-15	SONI Mid-Year Performance Review
FWP022	Publish SONI's 2024/25 Forward Work Plan
FWP021	Balancing Market Principles Statement
FWP019	Annual Innovation Report
FWP23-22	Security of Supply Publications
FWP23-28	Connection Offer Applications



# Section 5

## Role 1 System Operations and Adequacy



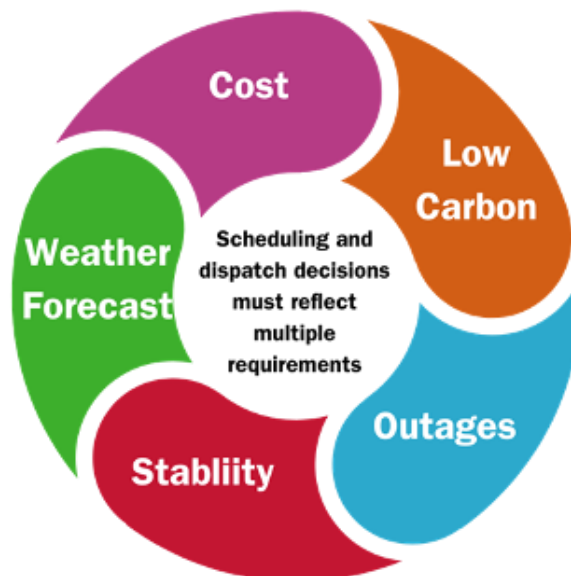
# Section 5: Role 1 System Operations and Adequacy

## Role Overview

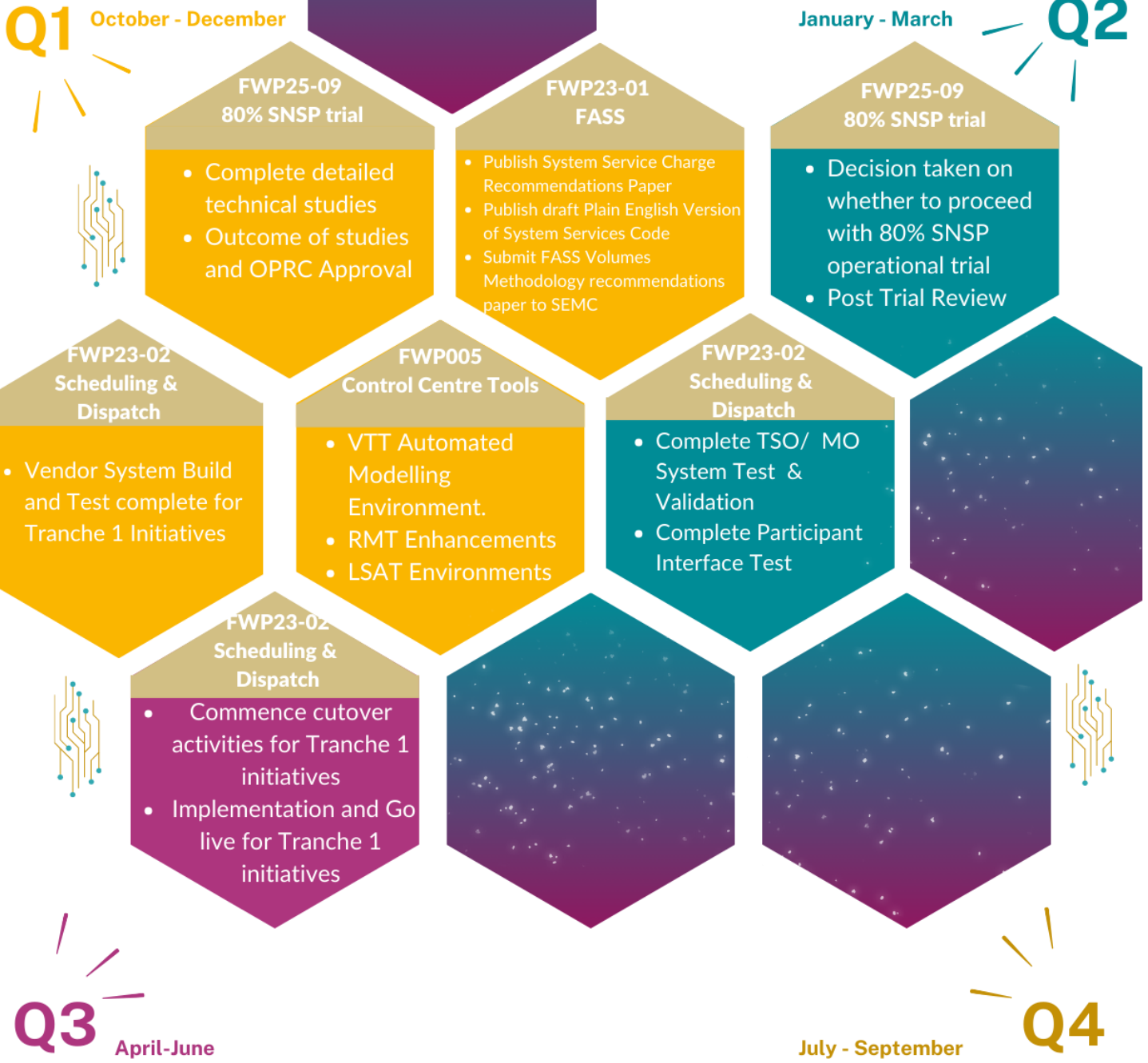
Role 1 captures the associated deliverables linked to System Operation and Ensuring System Adequacy.



Role 1 primarily relates to our operational and market related activities including scheduling and dispatch, future arrangements for system services, emergency preparedness and contributing to security of supply. Our work to facilitate of renewable generation is also covered here and is key in the context of the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy. This role is fully aligned with the requirements under the Single Electricity Market (SEM).



# Summary of Deliverables



The table below provides a full list of the projects and deliverables associated with Role 1 System Operation and Adequacy<sup>11</sup>

It is important to note that Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS) and the Scheduling and Dispatch Programme, in particular, have significant dependence on SEMC decisions. A delay in SEMC decisions could have implications on delivering on the scope detailed in this Forward Work Plan.

Project	Milestone	Timescale	Performance Measure	Project Carried forward
<b>FWP23-01: Future Arrangements System Services (FASS)</b>	1. Publish System Service Charge Recommendations Paper	November 2024	Performance for the period will be measured against the successful progression of deliverables listed.  *All dates will be confirmed in the Phased Implementation Roadmap (PIR V2.0 to be published end of September)	Yes
	2. Publish draft Plain English Version of System Services Code	December 2024		
	3. Submit FASS Volumes Methodology recommendations paper to SEMC	December 2024		
<b>FWP23-02: Scheduling and Dispatch</b>	1. Vendor System Build and Test Complete for Programme Tranche 1 Initiatives	December 2024	Successful achievement of the Phased activities	Yes
	2. TSO/MO System Test and Validation Complete for Scheduling and Dispatch Programme Tranche 1 Initiatives	March 2025		
	3. Participant Interface Test (PIT) Complete for Tranche 1 Initiatives	March 2025		
	4. Cutover activities Commences for Tranche 1 Initiatives	April 2025		
	5. Implementation and Go Live for Tranche 2 Initiatives	April 2025		

<sup>11</sup> Additional detail on these projects is provided in Appendix 1: SONI Deliverables for Role 1 System Operation and Adequacy

<b>FWP25-09: 80% SNSP operational trial (FO)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Detailed technical studies to be completed</li> <li>2. Studies outcome and results approved by OPRC</li> <li>3. Decision taken on whether to proceed with 80% SNSP operational trial</li> <li>4. Post Trial Review</li> </ol>	<p>December 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>June 2025</p>	<p>Operational capability trialled to 80% SNSP</p>	<p>No</p>
<b>FWP005: Control Centre Tools</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. VTT Multi-Timepoint Solution Live and Operational</li> <li>2. VTT Automated Modelling Environment</li> <li>3. RMT Enhancements</li> <li>4. LSAT Environments</li> </ol>	<p>October 2024</p> <p>November 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p>	<p>Delivery of the Voltage Trajectory Tool enhancements .</p> <p>Timescales are dependent on funding approvals</p>	<p>Yes</p>

## Benefit of Deliverables



### Decarbonisation

The power system will undergo a radical transformation to meet the 2030 renewables targets. This includes 2 new HDVC Interconnectors to Great Britain and France being connected, the integration of large offshore wind farms and solar generation, advancement of hydrogen energy production and the adoption of demand response and energy innovations. The work on SNSP operational policy will be key to facilitating this transition while maintaining system security, as outlined in the two roadmaps to 2030. These activities will collectively push Northern Ireland towards its decarbonisation goals. A key focus of SONI's work is supporting the integration of new technologies into the power system, enabling a significant increase in electricity generated from renewable sources. To ensure a level playing field for these essential technologies, SONI are developing commercial arrangements through the Future Arrangements for System Services projects. Additionally, our efforts in Scheduling and Dispatch will ensure that SONI remain on track to meet the requirements of the Clean Energy Package. Together, these initiatives are critical to achieving the target of 80% renewable electricity by 2030



### Grid Security

Grid security is of significant importance for Northern Ireland. To ensure the safe, secure and reliable operation of the Transmission System, SONI is focused on updating our IT systems and control centre tools. As the environment we are operating in is becoming increasingly more complex, with more electricity coming from weather dependent, non-synchronous sources, it is vital that SONI remain a prudent operator. Many of the activities outlined in this section will contribute to strengthening grid security. In particular our efforts to relating to Control Centre Tools will improve system planning and reinforce grid security outcomes.



### System Wide Costs

These are a key focus for SONI as they directly impact the efficiency, reliability and affordability of electricity delivery. It is important that SONI manage these costs currently to ensure that the grid operates optimally and maintains grid stability. Once the Future Arrangements for System Services have been implemented, it will foster increased competition among providers, helping to reduce costs among all markets. Our efforts in Scheduling and Dispatch will allow us to better utilise the available grid technologies, exerting downward pressure on prices. While these initiatives will take time to fully implement, the progress made in 2023/24 lays a strong foundation for future developments. SONI remain committed to minimising dispatch and balancing costs and will report on the outcomes once the assessment is complete.



### SONI Service Quality

SONI is continuously engaging with stakeholders and market participants to tailor our services to meet their evolving needs. This includes providing reliable and timely system information and maintaining a balanced and secure electricity supply. SONI's investments in grid modernisation, advanced technologies, and renewable energy integration will enhance service quality, making the system more efficient and responsive. SONI are prioritising open communication and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that our services align with their expectations. SONI will provide a detailed timeline of planned engagements for communication plans for 2024/25 relating to Role 1.

# Key Performance Indicators

Performance measures<sup>12</sup> which pertain to SONI TSO Role 1 are summarised below.

Role 1 KPIs			
PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET	2019 BASELINE	COMMENTARY
Imperfections Costs	Determined Annually Ex-Post	To be considered over the period	This will be determined for the December 2025 Performance Report as it requires the use of the plexos backcast model, and this information is not available at the date of preparing this plan.
System Non-Synchronous Penetration (SNSP)	80%	65%	Further increases to the SNSP limit will require enhanced capabilities including system services provision to be incentivised through implementation of the Future Arrangements for System Services programme. The focus now in terms of SNSP is on planning and preparations to increase this target, for 2024 – 2025 we plan to increase the SNSP limit from 75% to 80%.
System Frequency	Within the range 50 Hz ± 0.2 Hz for 98% of time	98% <sup>13</sup>	To ensure that SONI manages the system frequency within Grid Code requirements.

<sup>12</sup> A detailed description of all key performance indicators is provided in Appendix 5: SONI Performance Measures.

<sup>13</sup> 2019 figure was 99.66%, over a 5-year period the system frequency was between 98.6% and 99.6% and as such the target is set at 50Hz± 0.1 Hz for 98% of the time.

## Renewable Dispatch Down

In previous Forward Work Plans, SONI included a KPI relating to Renewable Dispatch Down. For this Forward Work Plan, SONI have made the decision not to include this as a KPI due to a material change in Dispatch Down in 2023 due to a number of key drivers.

These drivers have continued in 2024 and will continue in future years while the power system transitions.

The key driver for change in Dispatch Down that is not within SONI's control are the Interconnector imports (On Moyle and EWIC) which have increased since 2022. These imports are based on market prices and SONI does not trade in the Markets. After the Markets close, SONI will trade (priority dispatch) with National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) when agreed.

SONI has established a working group internally to look at the reasons for the changes in detail and assess what is within SONI's control. We are liaising closely with industry, government and the Utility Regulator on this topic.



*SONI Control Room*



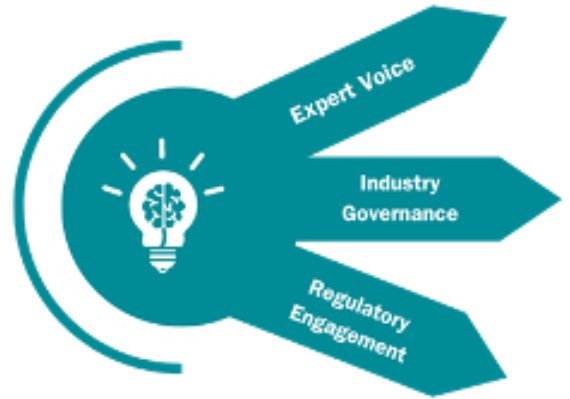
**Section 6:  
Role 2  
Independent  
Expert**



# Section 8: Role 2 Independent Expert

## Role Overview

The Independent Expert role covers our engagement activities and involves providing an expert voice for stakeholders and actively listening to their views and concerns. This role also includes activities such as preparations for the next SONI Price Control, SRP26 and SONI’s Communications and Engagement Strategy.



*SONI’s Annual Industry Business Breakfast Event –June 2024*

# Summary of Deliverables



All Year - FWP25-03 SONI Price Control Engagement Programme: Delivery of extensive stakeholder engagement programme to support the development of the SONI business plan.  
 FWP23-14 Support the NI Energy Strategy: Continue to support DfE via Annual action plan and established working groups  
 Support next stages of DfEs Smart Systems Flexibility Plan

A table below has been included to provide a full list of the projects and deliverables associated with Role 2 Independent Expert<sup>14</sup>

Project	Milestone	Timescale	Performance Measure	Project Carried forward
<b>FWP25-02: SONI Public Engagement Model and Landowner Charter rollout</b>	1. Development of evidence-based Community Benefit proposal for Utility Regulator.	October 2024	Stakeholder feedback recorded and actioned.	No
	2. Development of new Community Forum model for future network projects with independent partner	June 2025		
	3. Programme of strategic engagement on new Public Engagement Model	September 2025		
	4. Programme of strategic engagement in new Landowner Charter	September 2025		
	5. Partnership with Rural Support to develop Landowner Engagement Pack and outreach project	March 2025		
	6. Development and implementation of new Landowner compensation model	September 2025		
<b>FWP25-03: SONI Price Control Engagement Programme</b>	Delivery of extensive stakeholder engagement programme to support the development of the SONI Business Plan submission.	Ongoing October 2024 – September 2025	SONI Engagement Evaluation Framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-engagement satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Delivery metrics</li> <li>• Social media metrics</li> <li>• Case Studies</li> <li>• Testimonials</li> </ul>	No

<sup>14</sup> Additional detail on these projects is provided in Appendix 2: SONI Deliverables for Role 2 Independent Expert

FWP23-08 TSO-DSO Future Operating Model	1. Update model proposals following lessons learned from the Flex trial and Control Centre of the Future (CCOTF) Implementation Plan.	October 2024	Development of a high-level enduring operating model implementation plan	Yes
	2. Update documents for operating model following Flex trial lessons learned	December 2024		
FWP25-11 Future Energy System Shared Paper (FPS)	1. Agree modelling approach and carry out Power System Studies	March 2025	Preparation of Future Energy system Shared Paper	No
	2. Prepare Shared Future Energy paper	June 2025		
FWP25-12: Dispatch Down Action Plan	Publish Dispatch Down Action Plan	December 2024	Publication of the Action plan	No
FWP23-14 Support the NI Energy Strategy	1. Continue to support DfE via Annual action plan and established working groups	Ongoing throughout the year	This programme of work will be monitored throughout the period.	Yes
	2. Review DfE Action plan for 2025 and identify areas where SONI can support	September 2025		
	3. Support next stages of DfEs Smart Systems Flexibility Plan	Ongoing throughout the year		
FWP24-05 SONI Price Control (SRP26)	1. Business plan submission to UR	March 2025	Business Plan submission	Yes
	2. Supporting query process after Business plan submission to UR	July 2025		
FWP24-05: Tomorrows Energy Scenarios Northern Ireland (TESNI)	Publication of final TES System Needs Assessment (SNA) 2023 Report	November 2024 (subject to TES 2023 Scenarios being finalised)	Publication of final TES System Needs Assessment (SNA) 2023 Report	Yes

## Benefit of Deliverables



### **Decarbonisation**

The decarbonisation outcome remains a critical focus throughout Role 2. SONI is advancing projects to support Northern Ireland's Energy Strategy. SONI's expert advice and insights will support renewable generation developers and inform policy decision-makers. SONI aim to become a trusted advisor to the Utility Regulator (UR) and Department for Economy (DfE). By working closely with stakeholders, including the UR and DfE, energy providers and consumers, SONI can collectively drive the transition to a low-carbon energy system. The Future Energy Modelling project detailed in role 2 will provide relevant organisations with a technical document to support policy decision and shaping recommendations for future planning options for the energy system in Northern Ireland. Open dialogue and partnership will accelerate progress towards a cleaner, more resilient energy future while maintaining the reliability and efficiency of the transmission network in Northern Ireland.



### **Grid Security**

Grid Security is a vital responsibility for SONI, consumers and our stakeholders. SONI's Public Engagement model and the rollout of Landowner Charter project plays a crucial role in raising awareness and understanding of our role in safeguarding the grid. By fostering transparency and trust, SONI aim to improve public and landowner acceptance of necessary network infrastructure. This increased engagement will not only help ensure grid security but also enhance stakeholder satisfaction, contributing to the smooth delivery of critical infrastructure projects. The ongoing work for SONI's next Price Control is significant in ensuring SONI has the capability and capacity to ensure grid security in an increasingly complex energy system



### **System Wide Costs**

System Wide Costs is an equally important SONI outcome, especially in the current economic climate. The work on SONI's Communications and Engagement Strategy plays a crucial role in shaping how consumers and stakeholders understand and participate in the transition to net zero. Raising awareness about the benefits and necessity of transforming the power system along with the transition to net zero empowers consumers and stakeholders to make informed decisions that align with sustainability goals.



### **SONI Service Quality**

SONI will seek stakeholder input on the deliverables listed within role 2. This includes SONI's Communication and Engagement plan for 2024/25. This plan will involve monitoring media sentiment, tracking social media metrics and gathering feedback and data from stakeholder engagement. By doing so, we will ensure a consistent approach to engagement, making sure our stakeholder clearly understand what they can expect from SONI. Key activities, such as the PriceControl Engagement Project and SONI's Public Engagement Model and Landowner Charter, will continue driving our step change in engagement

## Key Performance Indicators

Performance measures<sup>15</sup> which pertain to SONI TSO Role 2 are summarised below.

Role 2 KPIs			
PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET	2019 BASELINE	COMMENTARY
Timely delivery of publications and agreed programmes	100%		Where SONI has provided a date or range of dates for the publication of documents/reports or availability of materials for use, we may measure our performance, alongside other KPIs, as the “timely delivery” of the described deliverable.
Quality & Quantity of Feedback	Maintain or improve upon 23/24 Stakeholder Satisfaction benchmark figure	N/A as Engagement Evaluation framework only developed in 2024	<p>SONI has made significant progress on a key deliverable from the 2022/23 Forward Work Plan, FWP23-12 Stakeholder Needs Assessment, which was essential to inform the development of SONI’s Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>This strategy, published in June 2024, is underpinned by an Engagement Evaluation framework designed to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of our performance.</p> <p>The framework utilises a range of metrics, assessment of planned engagement activities, quantitative data from post-engagement surveys and an annual pulse survey, as well as qualitative insights from focus groups and case studies.</p> <p>These evaluation tools will ensure SONI’s strategy is both responsive and adaptive to stakeholder needs.</p> <p>The Engagement Evaluation Framework was published in June 2024. The initial benchmark dashboard will be published in the 23/24 Performance Report</p>

<sup>15</sup> A detailed description of all key performance indicators is provided in Appendix 5: SONI Performance Measures.

**Section 7:  
Role 3  
System  
Planning**

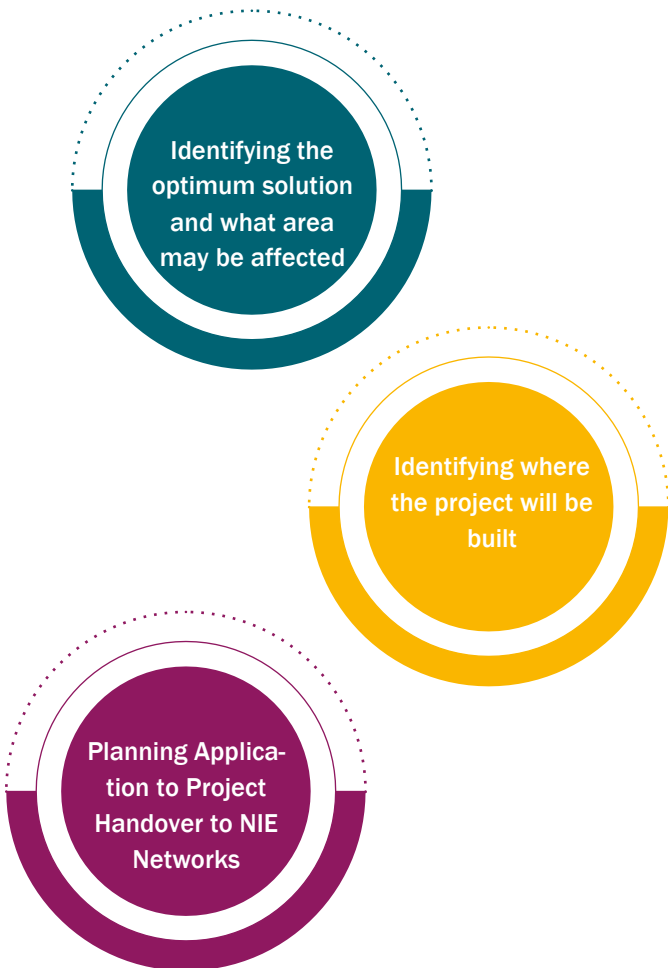




## Section 7: Role 3 System Planning

### Role Overview

SONI is independent of interests in the generation and supply of electricity, and therefore we are responsible for planning the configuration of the transmission system and obtaining all of the consents necessary for it. Role 3 covers SONI's activities in the System Planning area, our approach is set out in our three-part Grid Development Process.



Coordination with NIE Networks underpins this three-part Grid Development Process. We work every day with NIE Networks who own, build and maintain the grid transmission assets. We engage with NIE Networks in relation to the functional specification and design specification documents and on any associated options reports.

As demand and generation change, or as the transmission network becomes more interconnected with neighbouring transmission networks<sup>16</sup>, the flow of electrical energy throughout the transmission network changes. To accommodate these changes in power flows it is necessary to modify or strengthen the transmission network to ensure performance and reliability levels are upheld. SONI and NIE Networks are obliged to develop an economic, efficient, and coordinated transmission system<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> The European electric power transmission networks are interconnected, so as to be able to transmit energy from one jurisdiction to others.

<sup>17</sup> The Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992, Article 12

NIE Networks is responsible for maintaining the transmission network in Northern Ireland, including replacing assets that have reached the end of their useful life. SONI's 3 Part Grid Development Framework is heavily reliant on third parties, particularly through Part 2 (the pre-construction phase) such as NIE Networks, the Utility Regulator, communities and landowners, government departments to name a few, which perhaps isn't evident from our FWP goals for Role 3. The framework also involves necessary, but sometimes complex, processes with NIE Networks (in their role as Transmission Owner) under the Transmission Interface Arrangement.



# Summary of Deliverables

**Q1** October - December

January - March

**Q2**



**Q3** April-June

July - September

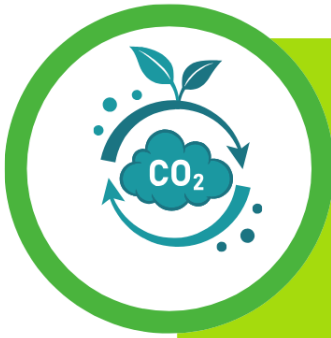
**Q4**

A table below has been included to provide a full list of the projects and deliverables associated with Role 3 System Planning<sup>18</sup>.

Project	Milestone	Timescale	Performance Measure	Project Carried forward
<b>FWP25-04: Transmission Clusters policy</b>	Develop approach with NIEN and industry and issue for consultation	December 2024	Issuance of Transmission Clusters consultation	No
<b>FWP25-05: Limavady TNPP</b>	<b>Currently in Part 1</b> TNPP Submission	October 2024	TNPP submitted to UR	No
<b>FWP25-06: Transmission nodes at reaching/ capacity</b>	1. Complete review of obligations and identify solutions 2. Stakeholder engagement with NIEN/UR & industry on way forward	November 2024 February 2025	Timely engagement with stakeholders to discuss way forward after review and Identification of solutions.	No
<b>FWP25-07: FAQ methodology</b>	Publication of Consultation paper on changes to FAQ methodology	March 2025	Timely publication of paper	No
<b>FWP 25-08: Joint SONI-NIEN Project Management Office</b>	Development of joint multi-year delivery programme	June 2025	Delivery programme communicated externally	No
<b>FWP027: Energising Belfast: Castlereagh—Hannahstown</b>	1. Secure options to purchase two sites for substation developments 2. SONI to issue TPI to NIEN for the post connection works at Flinagh	March 2025 July 2025	1. Secure options to purchase substation developments 2. TPI issued to NIEN	Yes
<b>FWP25-08: Airport Road Main 110/33 kV Substation</b>	1. Finalisation of the Landowner Agreements for the site and indicative cable routes 2. Transmission Project instruction issued to NIEN	October 2024 October 2024	1. Finalisation of the Landowner Agreements 2. TPI issued to NIE to NIEN	Yes
<b>FWP026: North South 400kV Interconnector</b>	1. Issue TPI (OHL) 2. SONI to enter into a Transmission Project Agreement (TPA)	October 2024 November 2024	1. TPI Issued 2. SONI enter into TPA	Yes

<sup>18</sup> Additional detail on these projects is provided in Appendix 3: SONI Deliverables for Role 3 System Planning

## Benefit of Deliverables



### **Decarbonisation**

As previously mentioned, mitigating the risks associated with facilitating the connection of increased renewable generation to the transmission system is crucial for streamlining the connection offer process. This also helps reduce the challenges faced by SONI, NIE Networks and potential developers throughout the complete 3-Part Grid Development Process, construction and connection delivery following offer acceptance. The SONI-NIEN Joint Programme Management Office is critically important for SONI in demonstrating effective collaboration with NIEN on the delivery of all transmission network upgrades and connections. This collaboration is important in accelerating and managing the delivery of infrastructure projects.



### **Grid Security**

Enhanced interconnection between transmission network will lead to a larger energy market. This increased market integration fosters greater competition and can potentially lower prices. Secure system planning for the grid will contribute to a more dependable and efficient electricity transmission network, this will benefit both operators and consumers. The Energising Belfast projects is crucial for ensuing long-term stability and security of electricity suppliers in the greater Belfast area.



### **System Wide Costs**

Integrating RES and other low carbon generation sources significantly enhances power exchange opportunities across Northern Ireland. SONI's 3 Part Grid Development Process is designed to identify the most economical solution for each grid requirement, ensuring the best value for customers. This process includes checkpoints to promptly halt projects that are deemed unnecessary.



### **SONI Service Quality**

Engaging with all parties is crucial for understanding the broader perspectives of stakeholders. SONI's three-part Grid Development Process incorporates engagement at various stages to ensure that all relevant parties are consulted appropriately. With advancement in data and digitisation, SONI now employ a more targeted approach to stakeholder engagement in system planning. SONI plan to use geo-targeted locations for our online messaging to raise awareness among communities affected by transmission projects.

## Key Performance Indicators

Performance measures<sup>19</sup> which pertain to SONI TSO Role 3 are summarised below.

Role 3 KPIs			
PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET	2019 BASELINE	COMMENTARY
Timely delivery of publications and agreed programmes	100%		Where SONI has provided a date or range of dates for the publication of documents/reports or availability of materials for use, we may measure our performance, alongside other KPIs, as the “timely delivery” of the described deliverable.
Quality & Quantity of Feedback	Maintain or improve upon 23/24 Stakeholder Satisfaction benchmark figure	N/A as Engagement Evaluation framework only developed in 2024	<p>SONI has made significant progress on a key deliverable from the 2022/23 Forward Work Plan, FWP23-12 Stakeholder Needs Assessment, which was essential to inform the development of SONI’s Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>This strategy, published in June 2024, is underpinned by an Engagement Evaluation framework designed to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of our performance.</p> <p>The framework utilises a range of metrics, assessment of planned engagement activities, quantitative data from post-engagement surveys and an annual pulse survey, as well as qualitative insights from focus groups and case studies.</p> <p>These evaluation tools will ensure SONI’s strategy is both responsive and adaptive to stakeholder needs.</p> <p>The Engagement Evaluation Framework was published in June 2024. The initial benchmark dashboard will be published in the 23/24 Performance Report</p>

<sup>19</sup> A detailed description of all key performance indicators is provided in Appendix 5: SONI Performance Measures.

**Section 8:  
Role 4  
Commercial  
Interface**



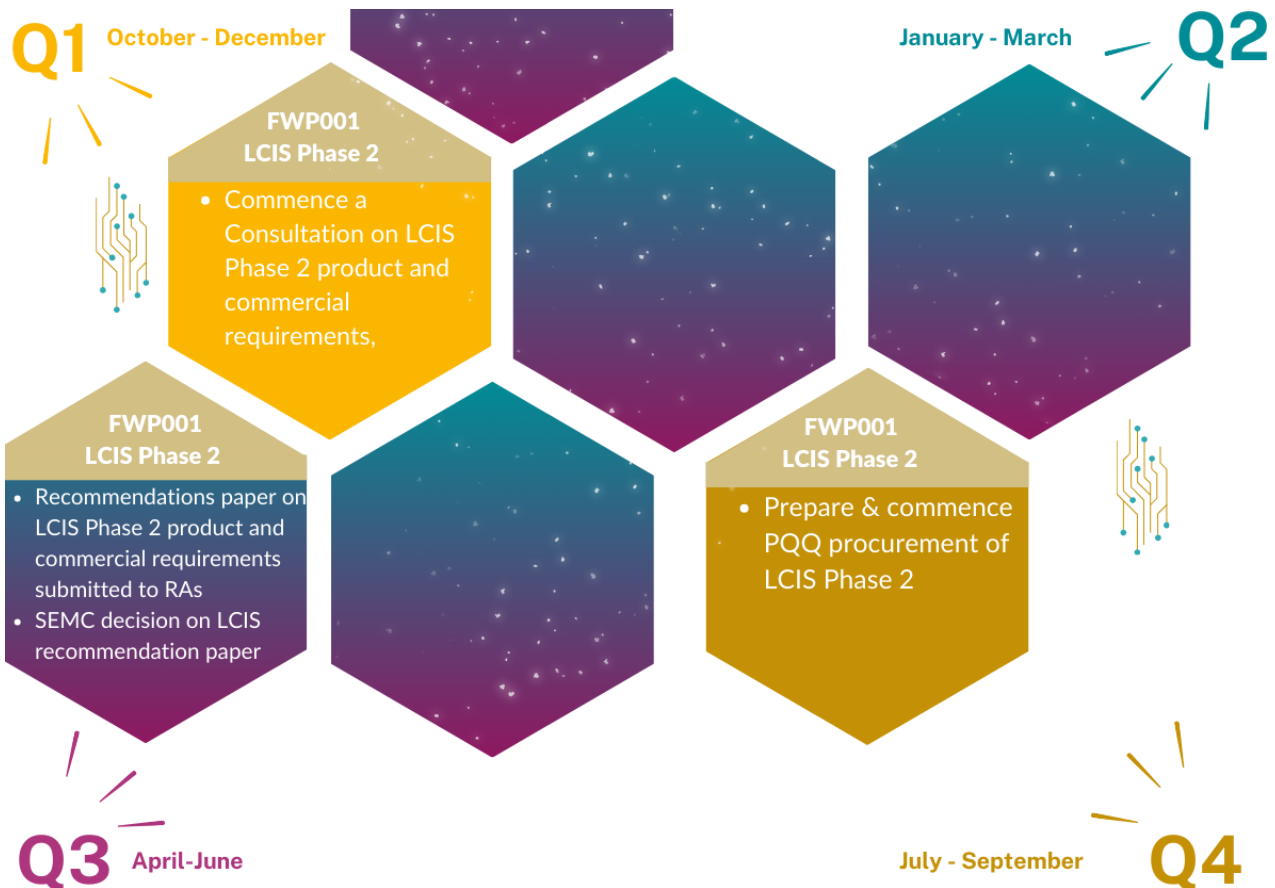
# Section 8: Role 4 Commercial Interface

## Role Overview

Role 4 covers SONI's activities as a Commercial Interface. Role 4 primarily focuses on our interactions with customers through the Connection Offer Process, engaging with NIE Networks through associated Construction Offers and Preparation of Connection Agreements and Transmission Use of System Agreements. It also looks at the Moyle Interconnector and the contractual arrangements we facilitate for



## Summary of Deliverables





A table below has been included to provide a full list of the projects and deliverables associated with Role 4 Commercial Interface<sup>20</sup>.

Project	Milestone	Timescale	Performance Measure	Project Carried forward
<b>FWP001 LCIS Phase 2</b>	1. Consultation on LCIS Phase Two product and commercial requirements	December 2024	Timely delivery of recommendations paper to Regulatory Authorities	Yes
	2. Recommendations paper on LCIS Phase 2 product and commercial requirements submitted to Ras	April 2025		
	3. SEMC decision on LCIS recommendation paper	May 2025		
	4. Prepare & commence PQQ procurement of LCIS Phase 2	July 2025		

<sup>20</sup> Additional detail on these projects is provided in Appendix 4: SONI Deliverables for Role 4 Commercial Interface

## Benefit of Deliverables



### **Decarbonisation**

Decarbonisation is central to SONI's role in facilitating the connection of new technologies to the network and increasing the adoption of renewable technologies to meet the targets set by the Department for the Economy in the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy. Decarbonisation within role 4 encompasses engaging with the network on construction offers and preparing connection and transmission use of system agreements. SONI is prioritising decarbonisation to ensure that our processes and agreements support the integration of renewable technologies and align with sustainability targets. This not only helps facilitate smoother connections for low carbon projects but also strengthens SONI's commitment to supporting the transition to a greener energy system. Initiatives like the Low Carbon Inertia Services Phase 2 are key to progressing this outcome.



### **Grid Security**

As we advance the facilitation of renewable generation, SONI has identified several key initiatives that need to be pursued in preparation for 2030. Notable among these are Phase 2 for the Low Carbon Inertia Services projects. These initiatives are crucial for enhancing and future proofing the security of the system, ensuring its resilience as we integrate more renewable technologies. Ensuring robust grid security helps SONI to manage and coordinate connections effectively, providing customers with reliable and safe integration of their projects. By prioritising grid security SONI is not only protecting the integrity of the network but also enhancing the reliability of construction offers and connection agreements, thus supporting a stable and efficient energy system for all stakeholders involved.



### **System Wide Costs**

SONI considers that the work we are undertaking in relation to the procurement of new services and the investigation into potential contractual arrangements for Low Carbon Inertia Services, demonstrates that we are taking a system wide approach of to the costs associated with network, operations and market-based solutions



### **SONI Service Quality**

Engagement and transparent communication are crucial for SONI's Service Quality outcomes. By considering the projects we are advancing and engaging in detailed collaboration with all stakeholders, we demonstrate our commitment to achieving a high service quality

## Key Performance Indicators

Performance measures<sup>21</sup> which pertain to SONI TSO Role 4 are summarised below.

Role 4 KPIs			
PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET	2019 BASELINE	COMMENTARY
Timely delivery of publications and agreed programmes	100%		Where SONI has provided a date or range of dates for the publication of documents/reports or availability of materials for use, we may measure our performance, alongside other KPIs, as the “timely delivery” of the described deliverable.
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<sup>21</sup> A detailed description of all key performance indicators is provided in Appendix 5: SONI Performance Measures.