



Delivering a cleaner
energy future

Landowner Charter





**Working with
Northern Ireland's
landowners to
deliver a cleaner
energy future**

Our commitments

01

Build a trusted working relationship with landowners from the start of a project

02

Be a direct point of contact for any issues along the landowner engagement process

Have respectful engagement with landowners regarding their property

03

Act with integrity, honesty and fairness

04

05

Never compromise on safety

06

Hire people who have the correct skill set to engage with landowners

Consult regularly and consistently with landowners

07

Show our appreciation for the role landowners play in hosting this infrastructure

08



Welcome to our Landowner Charter

As Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator, SONI is committed to ensuring our network of transmission infrastructure delivers electricity safely, reliably and securely to homes, farms and businesses across Northern Ireland.

We recognise it would be impossible to do this without the co-operation of the thousands of landowners who allow us to plan to install new transmission infrastructure equipment on, or under, their land.

The electricity grid is vital public infrastructure for ensuring power can flow from where it is generated to where it is needed while also supporting Northern Ireland's decarbonisation journey.

In this Charter, we detail our commitment to landowners and the standards of engagement you can expect from us when we are discussing proposed apparatus on your land.

William Sufferin

Senior Landowner Engagement Lead

About SONI

SONI is Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator (TSO). That means we manage the operation of the high voltage electricity grid to ensure that power can flow from where it is generated to where it is needed.

Our team of experienced, expert engineers manage the electricity grid, every second of the day, to ensure power can flow safely, securely, and reliably to homes, farms, and businesses across Northern Ireland. We also plan upgrades to the grid, together with NIE Networks, to support Northern Ireland's future energy needs.



Our role in working with Northern Ireland's landowners

As part of our process to develop the grid, SONI is obligated to secure consents, accesses and planning permissions to the required lands on behalf of NIE Networks, who will construct and maintain the infrastructure, as part of network projects.

SONI makes every possible effort to secure this access by voluntary agreement, either through voluntary easement which often has a compensation package attached or by voluntary wayleave which includes a defined annual rental payment.

We understand the importance of fair and reasonable compensation for landowners, and we acknowledge their views that the current model is insufficient. Given that the costs associated with grid infrastructure are paid by consumers through their bills, funding decisions for these projects are made by the Utility Regulator.

Based on feedback from landowners, SONI has formally recommended a revised, more generous model for compensation to the Utility Regulator.

Why we need grid infrastructure

As the electricity transmission grid operator, SONI has a legal responsibility to plan the upgrade of the grid in an efficient, economic and coordinated manner. This means we plan for more and different types of grid infrastructure to support the flow of more renewable energy across Northern Ireland.

The grid was built at a moment in time and for an electricity system largely based on fossil-fuel generation. To facilitate new types of electricity generation, which can be more variable and weather dependent, the grid needs to be upgraded. SONI has the responsibility for gaining planning permissions and landowner consents for these new infrastructure projects on behalf of NIE Networks.

The more renewable generation we require in the form of turbines and solar farms, the more, or different, grid infrastructure we need to transport it in the form of underground cables, overhead lines and pylons.

We know this transition will have a major impact on our local communities and landowners. We need to work together to explain why we're undertaking this important task to ensure they are at the heart of this change and feel its benefits in the form of cleaner, cheaper, more secure electricity in the future.

As we continue this crucial body of work in the coming years, SONI will continue to listen to the needs of local communities and landowners to understand what more we can do to ensure they have a central role in a cleaner, cheaper, more secure energy future.



Our commitment to you

At SONI, we recognise and understand that proposed infrastructure on your land can initially be a challenging issue and not always welcome. We recognise, respect and celebrate the crucial role landowners play in hosting this vital infrastructure across Northern Ireland.

As Northern Ireland's grid operator, we are committed to working constructively, openly and respectfully with landowners at all stages of our project development process to ensure a satisfactory outcome is met for all.

We will provide landowners with clear steps to the landowner engagement process when we begin to speak with potential affected landowners across route corridors so that you can understand what we will request from you.

We strive to have a good working relationship from our first initial meeting until we hand our projects over to NIE Networks for construction. We believe that positive, clear and open communication with landowners can help us achieve our targets and goals.

Importantly, we will explain why a particular development project is needed. We will do this in the most timely and efficient manner possible.

Our Landowner Charter describes the level and quality of services that you can expect from us.

Professional representation

We are acutely aware that some of the conversations and discussions we have with landowners are difficult and sometimes hard to understand.

We understand that not all landowners wish to represent themselves for various reasons. If you do not feel comfortable dealing with SONI directly, we are committed to covering reasonable professional agent and legal costs for any required advice.

Details of our cover will be communicated on each specific project.



Contact SONI

We are committed to engaging with all stakeholders in a courteous, clear and respectful way. If you have any queries or questions regarding proposed apparatus or existing infrastructure, please contact our Landowner Engagement Team.

William Sufferin

Senior Landowner Engagement Lead

07392 280905

william.sufferin@soni.ltd.uk

Jason Kerr

Landowner Engagement Officer

07876 686301

jason.kerr@soni.ltd.uk

SONI website

<https://www.soni.ltd.uk/about/in-the-community/landowner-engagement/>

Additional useful contacts

Ulster Farmers Union

The largest democratic voluntary organisation representing farmers and growers in Northern Ireland.

475 Antrim Road, Belfast,
County Antrim, BT15 3DA

info@ufuhq.com

NIE Networks

Northern Ireland Electricity Networks (NIE Networks) is the owner of the electricity transmission and distribution networks in Northern Ireland, transporting electricity to over 910,000 customers including homes, businesses and farms.

120 Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 5HT

www.nienetworks.co.uk/contact

Rural Support

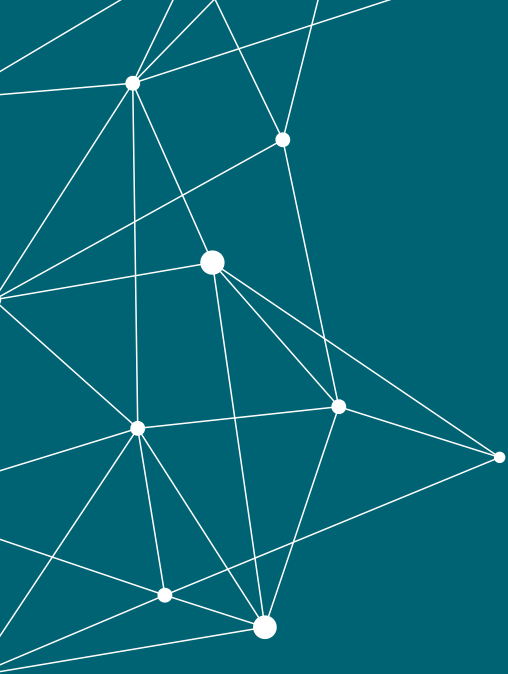
Rural Support provides a listening and signposting service for farmers and farming families across Northern Ireland through its support line. It can also provide face to face support, help with sourcing information and advice about a wide range of issues.

Unit 3, Part 2nd Floor, Molesworth Place, Molesworth Street, Cookstown, County Tyrone, BT80 8NX

info@ruralsupport.org.uk

Support line: 0800 138 1678





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