



Delivering a cleaner
energy future

Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan

2023-2024



About us

SONI is Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator (TSO). That means we manage the 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, second-by-second, every day of the year, to ensure power can flow safely, securely and reliably to homes, farms and businesses across Northern Ireland. We don't generate or sell electricity, rather we balance consumer demand with the generation made available by the companies who produce it.

We are licensed and regulated by the Utility Regulator and we work together to operate the All-Island Single Electricity Market with our counterparts in the Republic of Ireland.

Electricity systems across the world are changing. At SONI, we also plan grid to meet Northern Ireland's future energy needs. The Northern Ireland Energy Strategy and Climate Change Act set an ambitious and challenging legal target that 80% of all electricity consumed must come from renewable sources by 2030.

By working together, we can deliver a cleaner, more secure energy future for everyone in Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, we have made significant progress so far – Northern Ireland was among the first regions in the world to have 75% of electricity flowing through the grid at any moment in time coming from variable renewable sources. In 2023, approximately 50% of our electricity comes from renewable sources.

To reach the ambitious and challenging targets, SONI has the crucial task of transforming the electricity system and how we operate it in an unprecedented way. This means we need to plan for more and different types of grid infrastructure to facilitate the flow of more renewable energy across Northern Ireland and an increase in the demand for electricity as our economy grows.

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

At SONI, we have a plan to ensure the grid is ready to support Northern Ireland's cleaner energy future. *Shaping Our Electricity Future* is our roadmap for the changes we need to make across the whole power system.

This will be the largest body of work that SONI has undertaken and will match rural electrification in terms of its long-term impact on consumers and society.

As Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator, we understand that people must be at the heart of our energy transition. That's why we discuss our plans extensively with local communities to listen and understand their views before we develop any infrastructure project.

Action Plan 2023-24

This Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan, covering the period from October 2023 to September 2024, is the first in a series of Annual Action Plans designed to deliver SONI's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2024-2026.

Given the significant level of engagement that takes place at every level of our organisation throughout the year, this Action Plan sets out the key engagement activity that SONI will deliver and, as such, is not exhaustive.

Coordinated through SONI's internal Stakeholder Engagement Coordination Group, we will report progress and delivery against this Action Plan through the annual Performance Report as part of the Evaluative Performance Framework.



Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
Office of the Chief Executive				
SONI/NI Chamber Energy Forum	Thought leadership event partnership with the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce. Four events to be delivered over 2023/24.	Office of the Chief Executive	Society/ Industry	Q1-Q4
RenewableNI Biannual Roundtable	Biannual roundtable with RenewableNI to discuss engagement priorities and update on key developments.	Office of the Chief Executive	Industry	Q2-Q4
Mutual Energy Quarterly Roundtable	Quarterly roundtable event with Mutual Energy to discuss collaboration and areas of mutual interest.	Office of the Chief Executive	Industry	Q2-Q4
SONI Energy Business Breakfast	Annual business engagement event with key business representative organisations.	Office of the Chief Executive	Society	Q3
SONI Industry Business Breakfast with RenewableNI	Annual industry engagement event with RenewableNI members	Office of the Chief Executive	Industry	Q3
Bilateral engagement programme	Programme of bilateral engagement with key strategic stakeholders across all groupings.	Office of the Chief Executive	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q1-Q4
Smart Energy Conference 2023	Exhibition at the Smart Energy Conference and sponsorship support.	Office of the Chief Executive	Industry	Q1 – Completed
Agenda NI Energy Forum	Partnership with Agenda NI to support the delivery of the NI Energy Forum.	Office of the Chief Executive	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q4
Linen Quarter BID members event	An engagement event with Linen Quarter BID members in relation to SONI's role and the Energising Belfast project.	Office of the Chief Executive	Society	Q3
North-West Energy Forum	Participation in security of supply panel and exhibition.	Office of the Chief Executive	Society	Q1 – Completed
Stakeholder Engagement Strategy	Call for views on SONI Consultation Portal and bi-lateral engagements with key partners.	Office of the Chief Executive	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q2 – Completed

Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive Engagement	Minister for the Economy visit to SONI.	Office of the Chief Executive	Statutory/ Society	Q3 – Completed
	SONI Oral Evidence at the Committee for the Economy.	Office of the Chief Executive	Statutory/ Society	Q3 – Completed
	Committee for the Economy visit to SONI.	Office of the Chief Executive	Statutory/ Society	Q4
	Energy spokespeople/elected representative briefings.	Office of the Chief Executive	Statutory/ Society	Q1-Q4
UK Government and House of Commons Engagement	Northern Ireland Affairs Committee oral evidence.	Office of the Chief Executive	Statutory/ Society	Q2 – Completed
	Northern Ireland Affairs Committee visit to SONI.	Office of the Chief Executive	Statutory/ Society	Q2 – Completed
	Minister for Northern Ireland Office visit to SONI.	Office of the Chief Executive	Statutory/ Society	Q2 – Completed
	Shadow Secretary of State briefing.	Office of the Chief Executive	Statutory/ Society	Q2 – Completed
	DfE Permanent Secretary visit to SONI.	Office of the Chief Executive	Statutory/ Society	Q3
Electricity Networks Commissioner visit	A visit to Northern Ireland from Nick Winser CBE, Electricity Networks Commissioner for Great Britain. Series of workshops with key statutory, society and industry partners.	Office of the Chief Executive	Statutory/ Society/ Industry	Q3 – Completed
CBI Energy Working Group	SONI update briefing to CBI Energy Working Group.	Office of the Chief Executive	Society/ Industry	Q1 – Completed
	CBI Energy Working Group visit to SONI.	Office of the Chief Executive	Society/ Industry	Q4
IOD Skills Think Tank	SONI partnership and participation in IOD Skills Think Tank initiative.	Office of the Chief Executive	Society/ Industry	Q1-Q4
IOD Women in Leadership Conference	SONI partnership and participation in IOD Women In Leadership conference.	Office of the Chief Executive	Society/ Industry	Q2 – Completed
Business in the Community Climate Steering Group	SONI partnership and participation in Business Climate Pledge and Climate Steering Group.	Office of the Chief Executive	Society	Ongoing

Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
SONI-NIE Directors engagement	Senior leadership engagements between SONI and NIE Networks.	Office of the Chief Executive	Industry	Ongoing
SONI-UR Directors engagements	Senior leadership engagements between SONI and NIE Networks.	Office of the Chief Executive	Society	Ongoing
ENTSO-E Assembly	Participation in quarterly assembly meetings and provision of resources into strategically important sub-groups.	Office of the Chief Executive	Industry	Ongoing
Networks				
<i>Shaping Our Electricity Future</i> Advisory Council	Meetings of the <i>Shaping Our Electricity Future</i> Advisory Council.	Future Networks	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q1-Q4
<i>Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios</i>	Open consultation via SONI consultation portal and industry workshop engagements. Several rounds of engagement during different phases. TES published on SONI website.	Future Networks	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q1-Q3
Eden-Carnmoney Project	Part 2a community engagement for the Eden-Carnmoney network development project. Call for views on SONI consultation portal and community events.	Networks	Society	Q2 – Completed
Armagh Project	Part 1 community engagement for the Armagh network development project.	Networks	Society	Q1 – Completed
Tamnamore-Drumnakelly Project	Part 2a community engagement for the Tamnamore-Drumnakelly network development project. Call for views on SONI consultation portal and community events.	Networks	Society	Q4
Energising Belfast	Part 2c community engagement for the Energising Belfast network development project. Call for views on SONI consultation portal and community events.	Networks	Society	Q4

Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
East Tyrone Project	Part 2c community engagement for the East Tyrone network development project. Call for views on SONI consultation portal and community events.	Networks	Society	Q4
Cam Cluster	Part 2a community engagement for the Cam Cluster network development project. Call for views on SONI consultation portal and community events.	Networks	Society	Q3 – Completed
Mid Antrim Upgrade	Landowner engagement for the Mid Antrim Upgrade project. Bilateral face-to-face engagement.	Networks	Society	Q2-Q4
North South Interconnector	Landowner engagement for the North South Interconnector project. Bilateral face-to-face engagement.	Networks	Society	Q1-Q4
Energising Belfast	Landowner engagement for the Energising Belfast project. Bilateral face-to-face engagement.	Networks	Society	Q2-Q4
Eden-Carnmoney Project	Landowner engagement for the Eden-Carnmoney project. Bilateral face-to-face engagement.	Networks	Society	Q2-Q4
Cam Cluster	Landowner engagement for the Cam Cluster project. Bilateral face-to-face engagement.	Networks	Society	Q3-Q4
Public Engagement Model revision	Call for views on SONI Consultation Portal and four stakeholder roundtable events.	Networks	Society	Q2 – Completed
Balmoral Show engagement	Attendance and engagement at the Balmoral Show to engage with landowners and key civic society organisations.	Networks	Society	Q3 – Completed
Landowner Charter	Call for views on SONI Consultation Portal and four stakeholder roundtable events.	Networks	Society	Q2 – Completed

Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
Landowner compensation review	Programme of engagement with the Utility Regulator on SONI's proposals for a revised landowner compensation model.	Networks	Society/ Statutory	Q1-Q4
Rural Support mentors training programme	Engagement with Rural Support to support rural support mentors with information on SONI's role	Networks	Society	Q3 – Completed
Landowner Charter implementation with Rural Support	Engagement with Rural Support to assist SONI with materials to support landowner charter rollout.	Networks	Society	Q4
Connections Policy Review	A review of SONI's Connections Policy to improve efficacy and efficiency and support the delivery of 2030 targets. Review to include formal consultation and engagement workshops.	Networks	Industry	Q3-Q4
SONI Connections Offer process	General engagement with potential and existing customers on SONI's Connection Offer process.	Networks	Industry	Ongoing
Transmission Connection Charging Methodology Statement review	Open consultation on the SONI consultation portal.	Networks	Industry	Q3-Q4
Transmission Cluster Policy Workshop	Series of industry workshops to develop Transmission Cluster Policy.	Networks	Industry	Q3-Q4
Firm Access Quantity Policy	Review of the Firm Access Quantity policy to ensure it is appropriate going forward. Industry workshops and consultation.	Networks	Industry	Q3-Q4
Renewable Grid Liaison Group	Continue to participate in the quarterly meetings to both update and seek feedback from industry.	Networks	Industry/ Statutory	Quarterly
Draft Transmission Development Plan consultation	Formal consultation and series of engagements on draft Transmission Development Plan.	Networks	Society/ Industry/ Statutory	Q1-Q2 – Completed

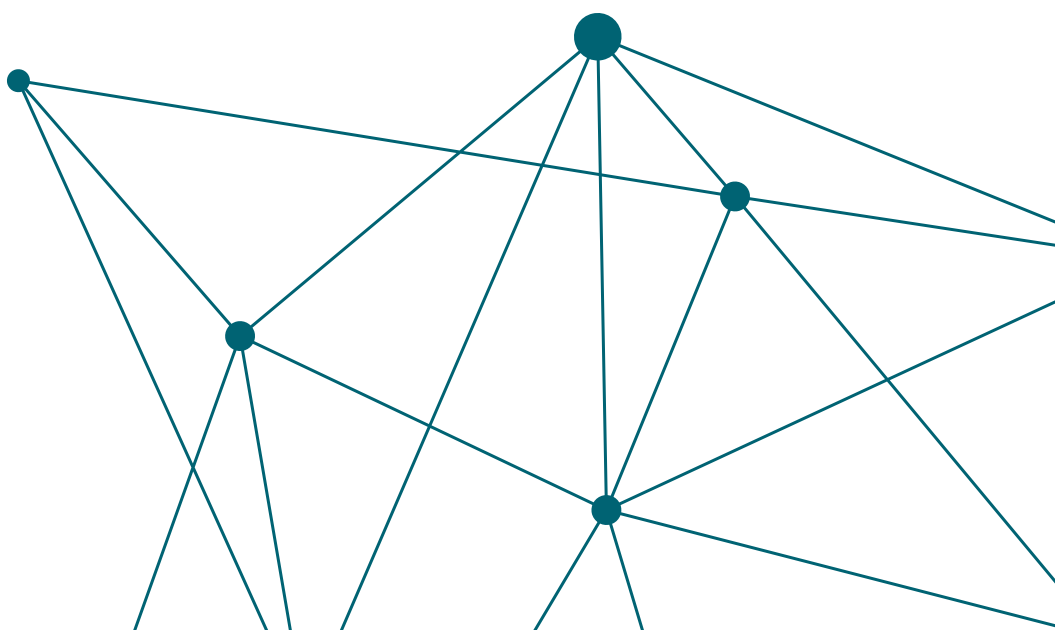
Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
Transmission Development Plan Working Group	SONI partnership with NIE Networks to deliver Transmission Development Plan and identify opportunities for acceleration.	Networks	Industry	Q1-Q4
Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan Working Group	SONI participation in Department for the Economy Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan Working Group.	Networks	Statutory/ Industry	Q1-Q4
Acceleration Project engagement	A programme of engagement with key industry stakeholders on SONI's grid development acceleration programme.	Networks	Statutory/ Industry	Q3-Q4
80x30 Working Group	SONI participation in Department for the Economy 80x30 Working Group to consider opportunities to accelerate progress against 2030 targets.	Networks	Statutory/ Industry	Q3-Q4
NIE-SONI TIA meetings	Bilateral engagements with NIE Networks to operate and enhance the Transmission Interface Arrangements.	Networks	Industry	Monthly

Operations

TSO-DSO Operating Model	A programme of consultation and engagements with NIE Networks to support reduction in congestion on distribution network.	System Operations	Industry	Ongoing
Transmission Outage Plan/ Generation Outage Plan	Engagements with generators through the Generator Forum and workshops on outage planning. Online publications.	System Operations	Industry	Ongoing
Security of supply	Engagement through multi-party workstreams and working groups on security of supply, including mitigations, emergency planning.	System Operations	Industry/ Statutory	Monthly
Winter Outlook	Online publication of Winter Outlook and series of stakeholder briefings on winter preparedness.	System Operations	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q4
TCG publications	Weekly online publications to inform industry of existing network limitations and near-term expectations of dispatch.	System Operations	Industry	Weekly

Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
Adequacy publications	Weekly online publication to provide information on adequacy and system strength.	System Operations	Industry/ Statutory	Weekly
Emergency preparedness	Ongoing engagement with partners to test the Power System Emergency Communications Plan and Power System Restoration Plan. Workshops planned with the Department for the Economy and Civil Contingencies Group to embed further collaboration.	System Operations	Statutory/ Industry	Q2-Q4
DS3 System Services Tariff Consultation	An open all island consultation to determine payment rates for DS3 System Services with outcomes published in a Recommendations paper.	System Support and Analysis	Industry	Q2-Q3
Harmonised Other System Charges Annual Consultation	An open all island consultation to review Other System Charges with outcomes published in a Recommendations paper.	System Support and Analysis	Industry	Q2-Q3
Curtailement and constraints	Workshop with RenewableNI to discuss current challenges with curtailment and constraints and highlight potential mitigations.	System Operations/ System Services/ Power System Insights and Research	Industry	Q3
SEMC Consultations on Capacity Market Policy	Response to consultations. Provision of system operator view on SEMC policy development, including early delivery incentives and intermediate length contracts.	Operations Development and Compliance	Statutory	Ongoing
Ongoing Regulatory Authority Grid Code engagement	Ongoing, regular engagements to discuss modification proposals and consultations in progress, to prepare for consultation workshops and to ensure early awareness of future modification proposals.	Operations Development and Compliance	Statutory	Ongoing
Grid Code Review Panel	Regular meetings to discuss ongoing issues and modifications.	Operations Development and Compliance	Statutory/ Industry	Ongoing

Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
Market Operations and SEMO Market Interface				
Market Operator User Group	To update Market Participants on ongoing/upcoming projects, provide updates in areas such as Settlements, Trading, Future Markets, IT releases SEMOpx, etc. Six meetings per year.	SEMO Market Interface	Industry	Q1-Q4
Weekly Participant Call	To provide Settlement and Trading updates.	SEMO Market Interface	Industry	Weekly
SEMO Helpdesk	A service which provides daily support to Market Participants and operate as a contact point SEMO queries across all internal teams.	SEMO Market Interface	Industry	Daily – ongoing
Participant Information Session	An engagement to provide participants information on the Qualification process where they also have the opportunity to submit or ask questions on the call.	SEMO Market Interface	Industry	Based on auctions timetable
Capacity Auctions	SONI engages with market participants during the process, providing the timetable for the auctions in advance, providing auction packs and associated information and dealing with participant queries. SONI is also actively engaged with the Utility Regulator as part of the process via weekly calls.	Market Operations	Industry/ Statutory	Based on auctions timetable



Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
Future Operations and Future Power Markets				
RA-TSO SOEF Operations Programme Update meeting	Monthly meeting to discuss previous actions and project status and to discuss future consultations/decisions.	Future Operations	Statutory	Monthly
TSO-DSO Joint Programme of Work	Quarterly progress update meetings with NIE Networks.	Future Operations	Industry	Quarterly
Low Carbon Inertia Services – Phase 1	Information published on the SONI website on award of contracts for Low Carbon Inertia Services – Phase 1.	Future Operations	Industry	Q2 – Completed
Low Carbon Inertia Services – Phase 2	Begin engagement with stakeholders ahead of a future Phase 2 procurement of Low Carbon Inertia Services.	Future Operations	Industry	Q3
2024 QTP Process	Launch of 2024 QTP Process on SONI website.	Future Operations	Industry	Q3
Operational Policy Roadmap	Publish Updated Operational Policy Roadmap on the SONI website.	Future Operations	Industry	Q4
Scheduling and dispatch programme	Monthly industry workshops to take forward next phase of project following SEM Committee approval.	Future Power Markets	Industry/ Statutory	Monthly
Long Duration Energy Storage	Call for Evidence on market procurement options for Long Duration Energy Storage.	Future Power Markets	Industry	Q1 – Completed
Future Power Markets Monthly Newsletter	Monthly published newsletter of latest activity across Future Power Markets Team.	Future Power Markets	Industry	Monthly
Future Power Markets Workshop	All-island forum which meets throughout the year to discuss updates and mutual areas of interest.	Future Power Markets	Industry	Monthly
Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS)	Open consultation on the SONI consultation portal to seek feedback on the enduring FASS product review.	Future Power Markets	Industry	Q3-Q4
Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS)	Open consultation on the SONI consultation portal to seek feedback on the enduring FASS volume forecasting methodology.	Future Power Markets	Industry	Q3-Q4

Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
Power system insights and research				
Annual Innovation Report	Open consultation via SONI consultation portal.	Power System Insights and Research	Industry/ Statutory	Q2 – Completed
National Resource Adequacy Assessment	Open consultation on National Resource Adequacy Assessment Methodology for Ireland and Northern Ireland. Engagement workstreams with the Department for the Economy and the Utility Regulator.	Power System Insights and Research	Industry/ Statutory	Q1 – Completed
National Resource Adequacy Assessment	Open consultation on National Resource Adequacy Assessment Northern Ireland – Inputs & Assumptions Consultation. Engagement workstreams with the Department for the Economy and the Utility Regulator.	Power System Insights and Research	Industry/ Statutory	Q2 – Completed
National Resource Adequacy Assessment	Engagement workstreams with the Department for the Economy and the Utility Regulator.	Power System Insights and Research	Industry/ Statutory	Q4
Northern Ireland Constraints Report	Published on SONI website and industry webinar held on 2023 study in December 2023. Assumptions webinar in Q2 and report published in Q4.	Power System Insights and Research	Industry/ Statutory	Q1-Q4
Generation Capacity Statement 2023-2032	Generation Capacity Statement 2023-2032 published on SONI website. Engagement workstreams with regulatory authorities.	Power System Insights and Research	Industry/ Statutory	Q1-Q2 – Completed

Engagement Activity	Description	Area	Audience	Timescales/ Status
Commercial and Regulation				
SONI's new five-year strategy, Business Plan and Price Control process.	Comprehensive engagement process commences to inform new SONI five-year strategy and Price Control process, to include one-to-one engagements with key strategic stakeholders, workshops and consumer insights research.	Commercial and Regulation	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q3-Q4
SONI Performance Report	Publication of the SONI's Performance Report on SONI website and stakeholder workshop as part of Evaluative Performance Framework process.	Commercial and Regulation	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q1 – Completed
Mid-Year Performance Review	Publication of SONI's Mid-Year Performance Review on SONI website and stakeholder workshop as part of Evaluative Performance Framework process.	Commercial and Regulation	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q3-Q4
SONI Forward Work Plan 24/25	Publication and consultation on SONI Forward Work Plan 2024-25.	Commercial and Regulation	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q4
SONI Forward Work Plan 23/24	Stakeholder workshop for SONI Forward Work Plan 23/24.	Commercial and Regulation	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q1 – Completed
Supporting the NI Energy Strategy	SONI continues to support the Department for the Economy as a trusted adviser in the delivery of the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy. Attendance at various workshops and briefings.	Commercial and Regulation	Industry/ Statutory/ Society	Q1-Q4





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