



# Draft Strategy 2025-2031

SONI – System  
Operator for Northern  
Ireland

Consultation Paper

# Foreword



The publication of the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy and the passage of the Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act were seminal moments in our net zero journey.

Northern Ireland has made significant progress in recent history, being among the most successful power systems globally in the integration of renewable energy into our energy system.

Our new collective objective in Northern Ireland to ensure that 80% of all electricity consumed comes from renewable sources by 2030, and our wider 2050 net zero obligations, is hugely challenging in its scale, pace, and complexity whilst also ensuring a just transition.

Our collective success to date in achieving renewables targets has been built on whole system collaboration between government, industry, regulatory partners, elected representatives and wider society both in a Northern Ireland and Single Electricity Market (SEM) context. Ambitious, challenging stretch targets are important to focus minds on further detailed collaboration to succeed in the next phase of our journey to decarbonise our society and economy.

It does, however, offer untold opportunities to transform the energy sector in Northern Ireland to delivering a cleaner, more secure, and affordable energy future for everyone, and the potential to foster sustainable, green economic growth which will create the jobs of the future.

As we reach the middle of the decade, SONI is entering into a new, exciting phase on our journey as Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator.

We are building new capacity and capability in our organisation to deliver on our mission to be a strong and effective Transmission System Operator working for everyone in Northern Ireland. This new phase marks a pivotal period in our organisation's history and presents significant potential for change and innovation. We are actively looking at a more plan-led approach and how this could help us more effectively deliver against the challenges ahead.

During this period, I believe SONI will be uniquely placed in the Northern Ireland energy sector to lead considerations of what is needed to deliver the ambition net zero targets and, drive forward a tailored approach to the planning and operation of the energy system. This includes our relationship with EirGrid, our counterpart in Ireland, as System Operators and Market Operators to support the functioning of the All-Island Single Electricity Market.

Our draft *Strategy 2025-2031* sets out how we intend to play our part in a transformative whole energy system, coupled with a whole society effort, to meet Northern Ireland's renewable energy and net zero ambitions and realise the potential of a cleaner, affordable, more secure energy future for everyone.

We know we can't do this by ourselves. With less than six years until 2030, our new multi-year draft Strategy is a vital opportunity to engage meaningfully with partners to align on a compelling vision for the future, the strategic investment priorities required to get us there and how we accelerate the delivery of this collective vision together.

This draft Strategy, developed in collaboration with our key partners and after an extensive programme of engagement, sets out our mission, values and strategic delivery objectives. It provides a strategic framework to drive the development and delivery of our detailed multi-year Business Plan with purpose, ambition and integrity.

This is a pivotal moment for SONI and by working together with our key partners across society, industry and government, we can enable a cleaner, affordable and more secure energy future for everyone in Northern Ireland.



**Alan Campbell**  
Chief Executive  
SONI

# About this Paper

SONI is currently preparing for its next price control which is due to begin in October 2026. It is referred to SRP26. The timeframes for this process have been set out by the Utility Regulator (UR) in its published Approach paper<sup>1</sup> for SRP26.

The first key milestone in the process is the development of a new strategy for SONI. We have engaged with our staff, stakeholders and the wider consumer base to understand your key priorities for SONI in the future and what you expect from the TSO for Northern Ireland. These inputs have been key in developing our draft Strategy. We are grateful for the input and insights received thus far in the development of this draft Strategy.

This consultation offers an opportunity for everyone to provide feedback. We welcome any additional expertise and experience our stakeholders can offer as we seek to finalise our approach and publish our final strategy.

This Strategy will fundamentally shape our detailed plans as we develop our next multi-year Price Control business plan submission to the Utility Regulator. The multi-year Business Plan which will be published as part of the upcoming Price Control (SRP26) will provide information on what SONI plans to deliver up to 2031. It will include measures and metrics that will be used to assess SONI's performance and how we will deliver against the ambitions set out in our strategy. The timeline for the SRP26 Price control is set out in figure 1 below.

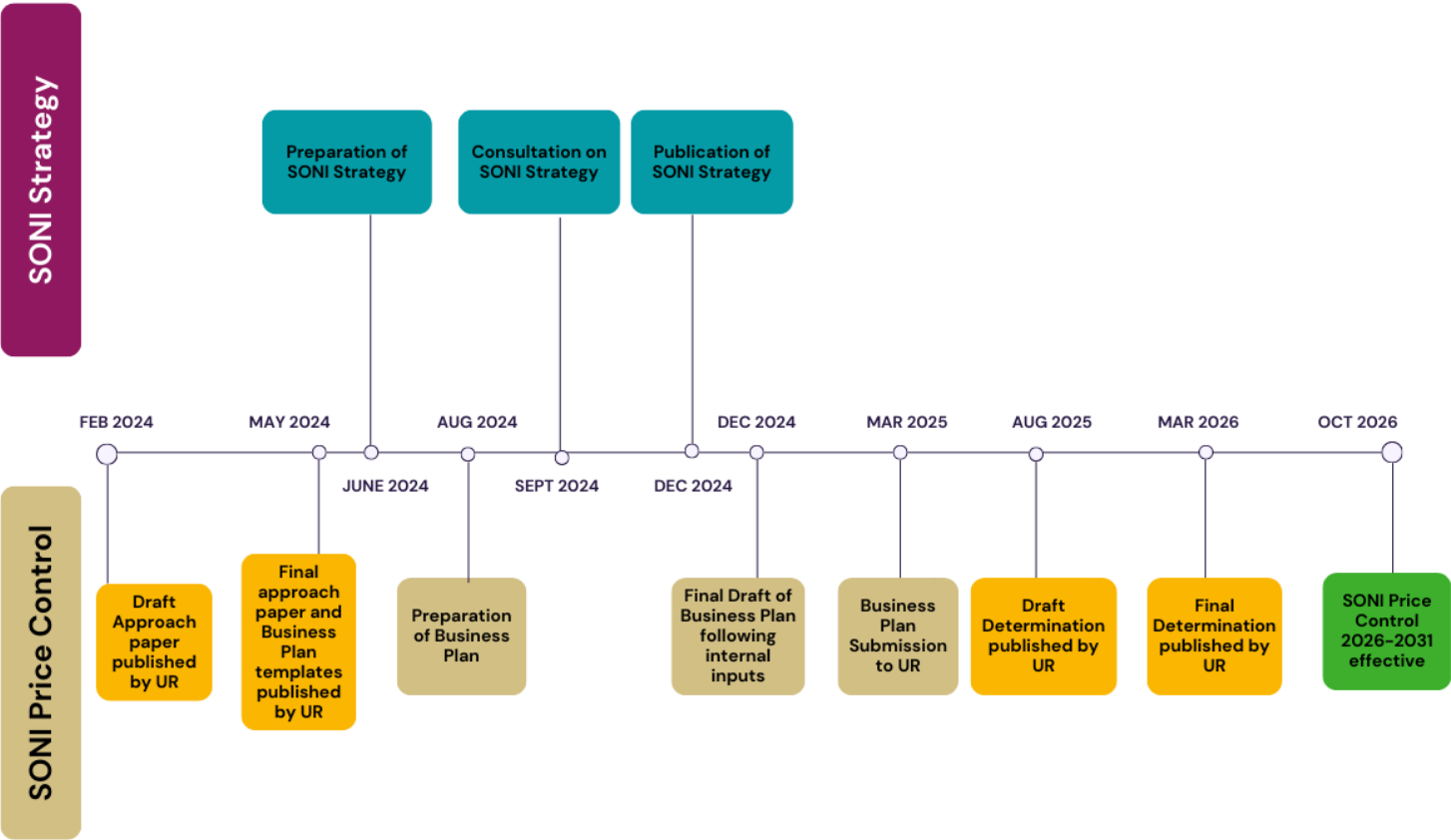
Over the coming months, we will deliver an extensive three-phase programme of engagement with our partners and stakeholders, which will include:

- The formation of a deliberative and consultative Advisory and Challenge Group comprising key partners from across society, industry and other statutory partners;
- An extensive body of quantitative and qualitative research directly with consumers;
- An open stakeholder industry survey;
- A programme of detailed bi-lateral engagements with key partners; and,
- A workshop and events series.

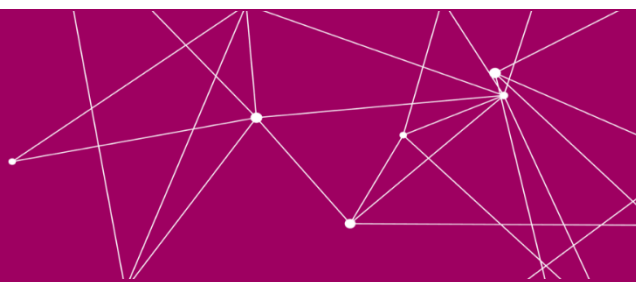
---

<sup>1</sup> [SRP26 Approach Decision \(uregni.gov.uk\)](https://www.uregni.gov.uk/srp26-approach-decision)

Figure 1: The SONI Price Control (SRP26) Timeline



# Contents



01: ABOUT US	5
02: DEVELOPING OUR DRAFT STRATEGY	9
03: CURRENT CONTEXT	10
04: STRATEGY OVERVIEW	12
05: OUR PURPOSE	13
06: OUR STRATEGIC AMBITIONS	13
07: ENGAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION	22
08: CONCLUDING REMARKS	24
09: HOW TO RESPOND	24
APPENDIX: SUMMARY	25



# 1: About us

SONI (System Operator for Northern Ireland) is Northern Ireland's electricity Transmission System Operator (TSO).

We operate the transmission system to ensure that power can flow safely, securely and reliably from where it is generated to where it is needed in homes, farms, businesses and public services across Northern Ireland.

We do not generate or sell electricity and nor do we own any of the assets associated with Northern Ireland's electricity grid. In delivering our role, we are licensed and regulated by the Utility Regulator.

We also 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.

Our role in operating the electricity grid extends beyond the present and is growing in importance. As the Transmission System Operator, we also have the vital job of planning for Northern Ireland's energy future.

We advise on the future direction of the energy system, plan the changes and investments that are required to the power system, in both an operational and physical context and deliver on these plans through key projects and initiatives.

Embedded within each of these interrelated activities is a need to partner with statutory bodies, industry, and society to meet the energy needs of today as well as those of in the future.

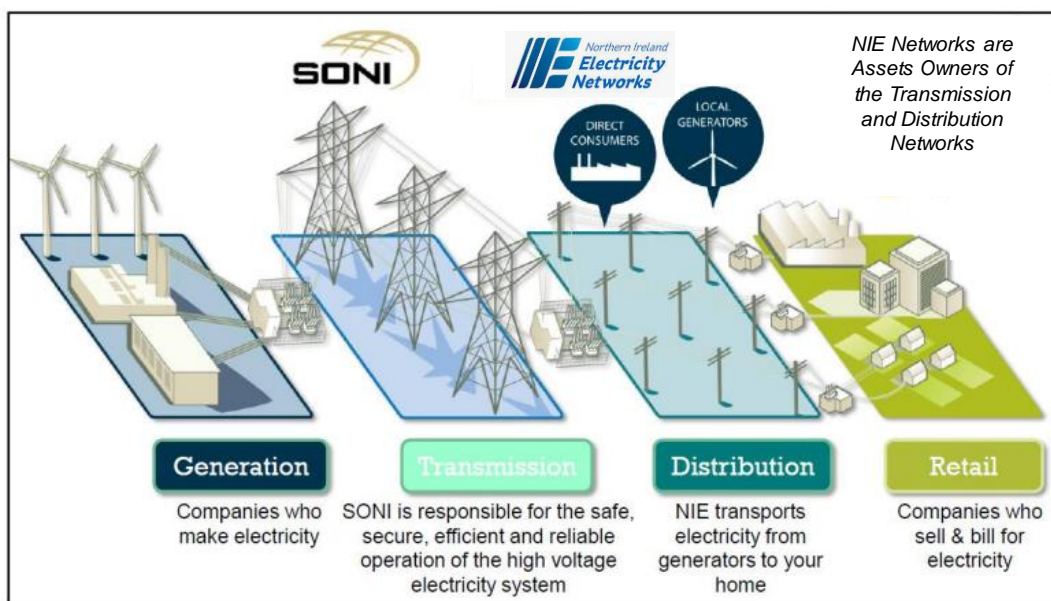


Figure 2: The structure of the electricity system in Northern Ireland

Following the introduction of new obligations in relation to Governance and independence, in October 2023, SONI appointed a new, independent Board<sup>2</sup> 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.

The expertise and capability of our people empowers us to develop the balanced solutions required, within the confines of our legal and licence obligations, to successfully decarbonise our society and economy, ensuring the consumer is always at the heart of Northern Ireland’s energy transition.

We see our people as one of our key assets and we will continue to growth, develop and invest in our teams to ensure we have the capacity and capabilities to meet the challenges and ambitions set out in the draft Strategy. This will be a key aspect of the SONI multi-year business plan and will be fundamental to the success of SONI in the future.

In summary, our specific and unique position with the energy system means we have the ambition to be a trusted adviser to government, industry and regulatory partners in the pursuit of our collective net zero ambition.

Figure 3: Supporting the delivery of the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy

Energy Strategy Pillar	Examples of strategic enabling activity
Placing you at the heart of our energy future	<p>We published an enhanced Public Engagement Model and Landowner Charter to ensure local communities and landowners are at the heart of our plans.</p> <p>We have piloted new deliberative community engagement initiatives to enable local communities to co-develop our plans for the grid.</p> <p>We published our first public Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, recognising the need for even greater collaboration going forward.</p>
Grow the green economy	<p>Through projects like “Energising Belfast”, the “Mid Antrim Upgrade” and the “Mid Tyrone Project”, we are planning the future of the grid to facilitate green economic growth and an increase in demand for clean, green electricity.</p> <p>We continue to work closely with Northern Ireland’s business community to understand their needs as the driver of the green economy.</p>



<p><b>Do more with less</b></p>	<p>We continue to develop Northern Ireland’s grid on a “least cost, technically feasible” basis, protecting the investment made by consumers and targeting projects which deliver the most value.</p> <p>We are engaging with the Utility Regulator to move towards more of a plan-led approach, rather than being reactive, which we consider will deliver more efficient outcomes for consumers and industry.</p>
<p><b>Replace fossil fuels with renewable energy</b></p>	<p>We continue to provide timely connection offers across an increasing number of technology types to meet our renewable energy ambitions and we plan the future of network to enable the integration of more renewable energy.</p> <p>We support government in the delivery of key enabling policies, including the Offshore Energy Action Plan, and provide data and insight for key programmes such as the Climate Action Plan and Carbon Budgets.</p> <p>Through initiatives such as Low Carbon Inertia Services, we are developing the tools, through the implementation of our operational roadmap, to reduce our reliance on conventional fossil fuel generation while maintaining a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity. The SEM was among the first systems in the world to reach 75% System Non-Synchronous Penetration.</p>
<p><b>Create a flexible, resilient and integrated energy system</b></p>	<p>Our <i>Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap</i> was specifically designed as a key enabler of the Energy Strategy, setting out everything we need to do to transform the power system to enable Northern Ireland’s renewable energy ambitions. It sets out what needs to happen across networks, operations, markets and the engagement needed up to 2030.</p> <p>We published Tomorrow’s Energy Scenarios which set out potential integrated pathways to a net zero power system from 2030 to 2050.</p> <p>We continue to work closely with Northern Ireland’s gas Transmission System Operators to work towards further whole system energy planning.</p>

## 2: Developing our Draft Strategy

We understand that meeting Northern Ireland's collective renewable energy ambitions can only be achieved through deep collaboration and partnership working.

That's why we have undertaken an extensive engagement process, led by our Board, to co-develop a vision for the future with our employees and our partners across government, industry and society.

This process of engagement has been integral in enabling us to gain a better understanding of the opportunities, challenges and priorities that are important today and will shape Northern Ireland's energy sector in the future. We outline the key milestones in this process below.

1. A **comprehensive body of desk-based research** to understand the intricacies, challenges, and opportunities in Northern Ireland's energy landscape, as well as examining the best practices implemented by other Transmission System Operators (TSOs) across Europe.
2. An extensive body of **quantitative and qualitative independent research directly with Northern Ireland consumers**.
3. Led by the SONI Board, and supported by our Executive Team, we undertook a deep process of **qualitative and quantitative engagement with our employees** to garner their experience, expertise and insights on our internal challenges and potential areas for growth.
4. We engaged with **partners through an external survey and a series of one-to-one in-depth conversations** to understand our stakeholders' priorities and challenges and to listen to their ambitions for our future.
5. We facilitated a number of **workshop events with industry and the business community** to understand how we can support their objectives.
6. Led by the SONI Board, we collated this feedback to develop this draft Strategy for consultation. The feedback from this consultation will shape our final Strategy.
7. As a strategic framework, which sets out our purpose and strategic ambitions, this Strategy will **fundamentally inform the development and delivery of the multi-year Business Plan** that forms the basis of our next Price Control (SRP26). The Business Plan will set out the detailed activity we intend to undertake over the period 2026 to 2031.
8. The publication of our final Strategy will not mark the end of our engagement, collaboration and partnership. We will **continue to engage extensively throughout** the delivery of our ambitions in the coming years.

### 3: Current Context

Northern Ireland's energy landscape is undergoing a transformative shift towards sustainability and decarbonisation, targeting 80% electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030 and net-zero emissions across the sector by 2050.



Northern Ireland has made significant progress so far and has been historically world-leading in the integration of renewable energy into our electricity system. As a small island-based power system, Northern Ireland was among the first power systems in the world to be able to operate with 75% renewable energy at any one moment in time. Collectively, we achieved our 2020 renewable energy target of 40%, a year early in 2019. This progress was realised through detailed and enduring collaboration across the whole energy system.

Achieving the next phase of collective progress towards 80% by 2030, and net zero by 2050 requires a transformation of the energy system that is unprecedented in its scale, pace and level of complexity.

To meet this increased ambition, we recognise that significant further and accelerated progress is needed through even deeper, whole system collaboration.

This section summarises some of the key drivers and challenges faced across the sector through the lens of each of our key partner groups.



## Society

Electricity demand in Northern Ireland is anticipated to significantly increase by 2050, potentially doubling or even tripling. This is primarily driven by population growth, the demands of our economy and the electrification of transport and heating.



## Industry

Industry is increasingly seeking to meet statutory objectives in line with the overall net zero commitments. To do this, businesses are seeking clarity on the future direction of energy provision, energy mix and how this will impact them.

Increasing numbers of businesses and developers want connections to the grid to provide new sources of renewable energy. These connections need to be planned and implemented in a way that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship whilst being managed in a strategic, coordinated, timely and cost-efficient way.



## Statutory

Government and regulatory bodies have critical roles in setting Northern Ireland's energy targets and ensuring that entities such as SONI have the resources and guidance to fulfil legislative responsibilities as well as net-zero and decarbonisation objectives.

The pressure to deliver on these commitments is increasing, placing greater emphasis on the need for clear multi-year plans as well as a shift towards policy innovation and agility and accelerated delivery. Policymakers and regulatory authorities must be supported with robust data-driven evidence and technical expertise to track progress and inform decision-making.

# 4: Strategy Overview

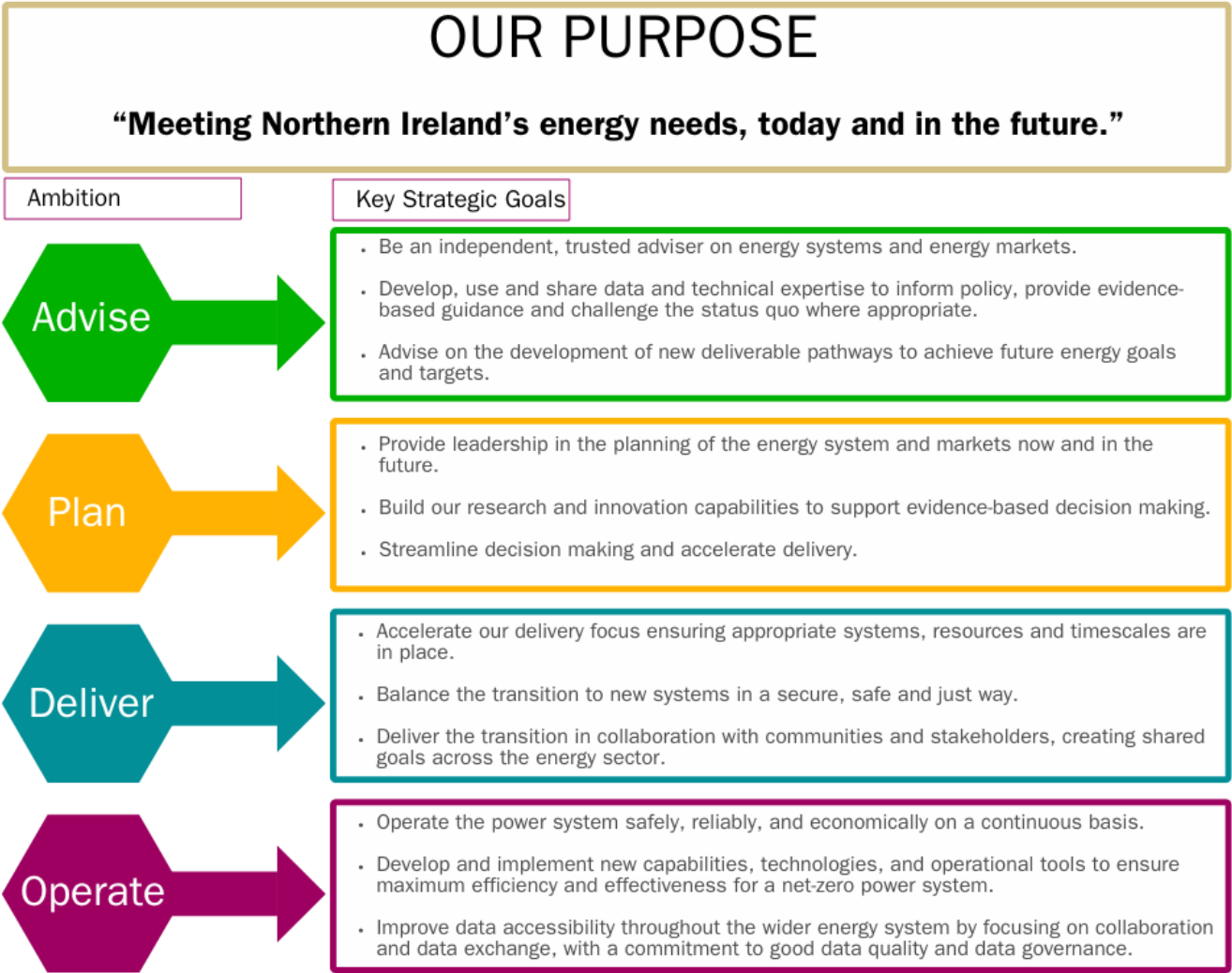
Our draft *Strategy 2025-2031* is built around our collective purpose, our ambition for the future, and the enabling actions we need to take to realise this ambition.

Whilst our more detailed programme of work will be included in our multiyear Business Plan (2026-31), we have set out a number of key strategic goals and delivery themes that will drive our approach.

We have endeavoured to build a strategic approach that is forward-thinking, collaborative, innovative and aligned to the needs of the energy system, wider society, and our people.

This approach is designed to set us on the best possible course to deliver on our aspiration to be a strong and effective Transmission System Operator enabling a cleaner, affordable, more secure energy future for everyone in Northern Ireland.

We have summarised our Purpose and Strategic Ambitions below and we discuss these in the following sections



## 5: Our purpose

**“Meeting Northern Ireland’s energy needs, today and in the future.”**

Our purpose reflects our dual commitment of delivering on our responsibilities today as well as enabling a cleaner, affordable, more secure energy tomorrow.

Our knowledge, experience and expertise mean we can support Northern Ireland’s needs in the present, and our unique position within the energy system means we can support decision-makers to develop the energy policies for the future.

## 6: Our Strategic Ambitions

Our mission is to be a strong and effective Transmission System Operator working for everyone in Northern Ireland and our purpose is to meet Northern Ireland’s energy needs, today and in the future.

We want to grow in our role as a trusted advisor to the government and energy sector in Northern Ireland to support the delivery of a cleaner, more secure, affordable energy system in Northern Ireland.

To achieve this, we have identified **strategic goals and delivery themes** across each of our **four core areas of responsibility** in energy systems and markets. These four core areas span our activity in real-time to the long-term.

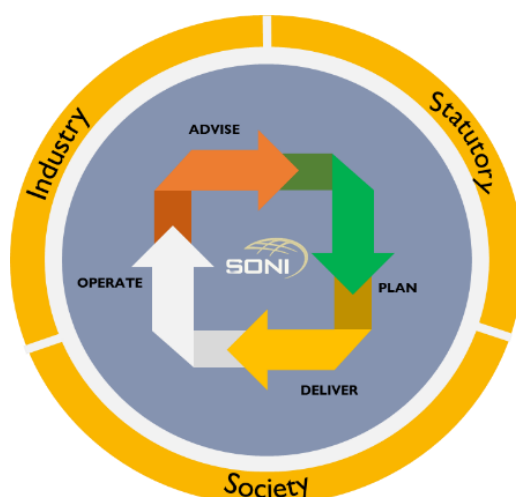
More specifically, we:

Advise

Plan

Deliver

Operate



**Figure 3: Our Strategic Ambitions**

Recognising the critical importance of whole system collaboration in achieving our ambition and Northern Ireland’s wider collective ambition, we have placed “Engagement, Partnership and Collaboration” as a fundamental underpinning pillar of this draft Strategy.



## Advise

SONI's advisory role will be pivotal in shaping the energy landscape of Northern Ireland for the future. We want to build trust with our partners in the guidance we provide.

This requires absolute confidence in our ability to balance the needs and aspirations of all our stakeholders who often have differing, and sometimes competing, priorities. Our unique position with the energy system allows us to develop balanced solutions.

We intend to deliver on this objective through robust data-led evidence, underpinned by open and transparent engagement which captures different perspectives.

Our **three key strategic goals** are:



Be an independent, trusted adviser on energy systems and energy markets.



Develop, use and share data and technical expertise to inform policy, provide evidence-based guidance and challenge the status quo where appropriate.



Advise on the development of new deliverable pathways to achieve future energy goals and targets.

To enable this objective, we have identified the following **Strategic Delivery Themes**:

1. **Support the delivery of the Energy Strategy** – We will continue to engage with the Department for the Economy (DfE) and other stakeholders to support the delivery of the Annual Energy Strategy Action Plans and the wider Energy Strategy.
2. **Provide expert independent advice to support the development of key enabling policies** – Utilising our knowledge, experience and expertise in operating and planning the power system, we will provide key contributions in the coming years in areas such as movement to more of a plan-led approach, a strategic spatial energy plan and the introduction to system flexibility. We will support government with the development of key enabling policies in areas such as smart systems and flexibility, interconnection, hydrogen and whole-system operations.
3. **Enhance our data offer** – We will ensure that the information, data and evidence SONI provides continues to be reliable, robust and that the data is more easily accessible.

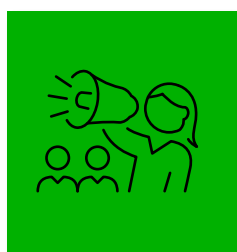
## Plan

We are committed to planning the optimal future design of the electricity network and the all-island electricity markets.

Design must take place collaboratively and be guided by a vision to futureproof the grid and the energy system, underpinned by shared assumptions and outcomes.

Early involvement and integration of our industry, statutory and regulatory partners in the planning process will offer a clear line of sight for the future, guide future investment decisions and accelerate implementation in the delivery phase.

Our **three key strategic goals** are:



Provide leadership in the planning of the energy system and markets now and in the future.



Build our research and innovation capabilities to support evidence-based decision making.



Streamline decision making and accelerate delivery.

To enable this objective, we have identified the following **Strategic Delivery Themes**:

1. **Meeting Northern Ireland's future generation needs** – We will further evolve and improve our methodologies to forecast future demand for electricity and the associated generation requirements to plan for Northern Ireland's energy needs. This forecasting is vital for sending signals to the market to ensure to delivers the generation we need. Over the coming years, we will implement and improve the National Resource Adequacy Assessment approach to replace the Generation Capacity Statement based on best practice across Europe.
2. **Transmission Forecasting** - robust, reliable and accessible data on the power system is vital enabling information for industry. Over the coming years, we will continue to provide key information such as the Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement to support industry with planning and investment decisions.
3. **Undertake the Tomorrows Energy Scenarios initiative** - Looking beyond 2030, Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios outlines a range of potential pathways for Northern Ireland's clean energy transition, with specific focus on what this means for the electricity transmission system from 2030 to 2050. We will continue to publish new iterations in the coming years alongside the associated comprehensive System Needs Assessment. Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios is a crucial initiative to support the development of more detailed plans, such as the Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland.

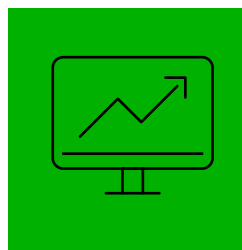
## Deliver

To enable Northern Ireland's collective renewable energy ambitions, the transmission system needs to be transformed, in a physical and operation context, at a scale, pace and level of complexity that is unprecedented.

The continued evolution of the transmission system will see the development of new, innovative systems, the integration of new technologies and the requirement for new infrastructure and connections. Timely and successful delivery of this whole network transformation, while maintaining a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity, is crucial for enabling a cleaner, affordable, more secure energy future for everyone.

Whether it be in the operational integration of new technologies, for the design and implementation of important new IT systems or developing the transmission network, the highly interdependent nature of the energy system in Northern Ireland means that government, industry, regulatory partners and civic society will need to work closely together to ensure success.

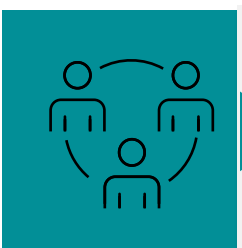
Our **three key strategic goals** are:



Accelerate our delivery focus ensuring appropriate systems, resources and timescales are in place.



Balance the transition to new systems in a secure, safe and just way.



Deliver the transition in collaboration with communities and stakeholders, creating shared goals across the energy sector.

To enable this objective, we have identified the following **Strategic Delivery Themes**:

1. **Deliver the Shaping our Electricity Future Roadmap** - *Shaping Our Electricity Future* is our roadmap to transform the power system to enable Northern Ireland's renewable energy ambitions. It was developed following extensive stakeholder engagement to understand the electricity system investments required to facilitate decarbonisation while ensuring security of supply up to 2030. The roadmap includes a considerable programme of work across four pillars: Operations, Networks, Markets and Engagement. Over the coming years, we will continue to work with the *Shaping Our Electricity Future* Advisory Council to deliver on this ambitious programme of work.
2. **Deliver on the Transmission Development Plan** – The Transmission Development Plan sets out an ambitious package of infrastructure upgrades over a ten-year period. The project proposals detailed within the Plan, such as the North-South Interconnector, the Mid Antrim Upgrade and the Mid Tyrone Project, outline essential upgrades which will help to improve reliability and strengthen the electricity network. It will also help to bring the cost for consumers down over time as it will enable us to bring more cleaner, renewable sources of electricity onto the system and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. While the timescales for this vast programme of infrastructure upgrades are profoundly challenging, we will continue to work closely with NIE Networks on a joint delivery programme. We have also recognised the urgent need to change. We have listened to the concerns of the industry and acted. We are developing an Action Plan for Change which outlines proposals to significantly reduce grid development timescales and move to a more plan-led approach.
3. **Implement our Operational Roadmap 2030** – Our Operational Roadmap is a pivotal plan to enable the power system to operate in a fundamentally renewables-based context. It identifies the operational changes required, and the programme of work to enable them. It is refreshed every two years to acknowledge any relevant changes. Over the coming years, we will continue to deliver on key projects, such as Low Carbon Inertia Services, energy storage initiatives and Scheduling and Dispatch to ready for the power system for a cleaner energy future.



## Operate

As Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator, our priority is always to operate the electricity network to ensure that power can flow safely, securely and reliably from where it is generated, at the power stations, wind farms and solar farms, to where it is needed in homes, businesses, farms and public services across Northern Ireland.

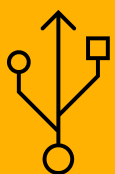
This includes real-time management of the power system and collaborating closely with our partners to maintain system balance and responding to outages or disruptions promptly and safely.

We will continue to operate the Single Electricity Market in conjunction with EirGrid, taking careful coordination to ensure robust and fair market operation that benefits consumers.

Our **three key strategic goals** are:



Operate the power system safely, reliably, and economically on a continuous basis.



Develop and implement new capabilities, technologies, and operational tools to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness for a net-zero power system.



Improve data accessibility for everyone throughout the wider energy system by focusing on collaboration and data exchange, with a commitment to good data quality and data governance.

To enable this objective, we have identified the following **Strategic Delivery Themes**:

1. **Security of supply** – We will continue to operate the system securely, safely and efficiently in line with our operational standards and deliver the best value for money for consumers. We will continue to evolve and improve our emergency planning in line with best practice standards. We will work with government and regulatory partners on a strategic security of supply programme, working with industry to ensure the timely delivery of new generation and scope new demand flexibility initiatives to support the power system to manage peak demand.
2. **Efficient operation of the market** – Working closely with EirGrid, we will continue to operate the All-Island Single Electricity Market and facilitate the necessary support functions in areas such as auctions and settlement based on the governing parameters set by the Regulatory Authorities and the SEM-Committee. Over the coming years, we will implement our Strategic Markets Programme and advocate changes to the market to deliver better outcomes for Northern Ireland consumers.
3. **Future Arrangements of System Services (FASS)** - The existing system services arrangements (DS3) were designed to meet the 2020 renewable targets of 40% RES-E and will not be sufficient to deliver the needed capability to achieve the Northern Ireland target of 80% renewable generation by 2030. Attracting investment and procuring sufficient volumes of system services capability from both existing service providers and new prospective providers, will be critical to meeting Northern Ireland's Energy Targets.

## 7: Engagement, Partnership and Collaboration

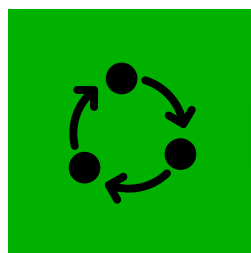
Recognising the crucial importance of working together across every level of the energy system, the foundation of our Strategy's success will be built on engagement, partnership and collaboration. This underpinning pillar recognises that engagement doesn't just stop with the publication of our final Strategy, it is crucial to successful delivery each and every day.

Our commitment is to build deep, constructive, and transparent working relationships with our partners, understanding their goals and working collaboratively to achieve them.

We will help them better understand our role as the Transmission System Operator and the need for us to develop balanced solutions that account for the priorities of all our stakeholders.

We will prioritise three core elements as key strategic drivers that need to be met in a balanced and proportionate way: Security, Sustainability, and Affordability.

Our **three key strategic goals** are:



Promote a culture of consistent, meaningful and high-quality engagement, reinforced with actions and clear decisions.



Build knowledge and trust across all partner groups through regular engagement and transparent decision making.



Seek opportunities proactively for deeper working with society and collaboration across the system to align goals, simplify relationships and improve co-ordination.

To enable this objective, we have identified the following **Strategic Delivery Themes**:

1. **Stakeholder Engagement Strategy** - We will develop and publish a new multi-year Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and a series of annual action plans to accompany our Business Plan (2026-31). This will include a programme to drive a culture of continuous improvement in our approach to engagement, collaboration and partnerships.
2. **Awareness and understanding of our role** – Given our expanding role to support Northern Ireland to meet its renewable energy ambitions, we will undertake a new programme of outreach and public awareness communications to support all our stakeholders to better understand our role.
3. **Best practice engagement techniques** – Building on recent success, we will continue to explore options to implement best practice in our engagement with local communities. We will implement our new Public Engagement Model and Landowner Charter and a new community forum model to deliver best in class public engagement.

## 8: Concluding Remarks

This draft Strategy marks a new milestone in our journey as Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator.

It has been co-developed following an extensive programme of engagement because we recognise the importance of collaboration and partnership in delivering on our core purpose and supporting Northern Ireland's wider collective renewable energy ambitions.

This draft Strategy reaffirms our mission to be a strong and effective Transmission System Operator, working for everyone in Northern Ireland. It sets out a clear purpose, ambitions to deliver on our four key areas of responsibility, and a series of goals and delivery themes to drive everything we do.

It provides a framework for how we will deliver against the extensive programme of work which will be set out in our multi-year Price Control Business Plan (2026-31).

We understand that we can't deliver this Strategy or our Business Plan on our own. Only by fostering further, deeper engagement, collaboration and partnership across the whole system can we deliver on our commitments.

By working together, we can collectively realise the huge societal, environmental and economic potential of Northern Ireland's energy transition and delivery a cleaner, affordable, more secure energy future for everyone.

### Performance and Evaluation

Our new strategy will facilitate projects, initiatives and workstreams, that will help us achieve our key strategic goals. We plan to measure the performance of achieving our strategic goals via our future Annual Forward Work Plans and Performance Reports.

## 9: How to respond to this consultation

We welcome the views of our stakeholders, partners and interested parties on our draft Strategy. Submissions can be made through the SONI Consultation Portal or by email to [info@soni.ltd.uk](mailto:info@soni.ltd.uk).

The deadline for responses is **Friday 8th November 2024**.

## Appendix A: Summary of our Purpose, Ambitions, Goals and Delivery themes

<div>OUR PURPOSE</div> <div>“Meeting Northern Ireland’s energy needs, today and in the future.”</div>		
Ambition	Key Strategic Goals	Strategic Delivery Themes
Advise	<p>Be an independent, trusted adviser on energy systems and energy markets.</p> <p>Develop, use and share data and technical expertise to inform policy, provide evidence-based guidance and challenge the status quo where appropriate.</p> <p>Advise on the development of new deliverable pathways to achieve future energy goals and targets.</p>	<p><b>Support the delivery of the Energy Strategy</b> – We will continue to engage with the Department for the Economy (DfE) and other stakeholders to support the delivery of the Annual Energy Strategy Action Plans and the wider Energy Strategy.</p> <p><b>Provide expert independent advice to support the development of key enabling policies</b> – Utilising our knowledge, experience and expertise in operating and planning the power system, we will provide key contributions in the coming years in areas such as movement to more of a plan-led approach, a strategic spatial energy plan and the introduction to system flexibility. We will support government with the development of key enabling policies in areas such as smart systems and flexibility, interconnection, hydrogen and whole-system operations.</p> <p><b>Enhance our data offer</b> – We will ensure that the information, data and evidence SONI provides continues to be reliable, robust and that the data is more easily accessible.</p>
Plan	<p>Provide leadership in the planning of the energy system and markets now and in the future.</p> <p>Build our research and innovation capabilities to support evidence-based decision making.</p>	<p><b>Meeting Northern Ireland’s future generation needs</b> – We will further evolve and improve our methodologies to forecast future demand for electricity and the associated generation requirements to plan for Northern Ireland’s energy needs. This forecasting is vital for sending signals to the market to ensure to delivers the generation we need. Over the coming years, we will implement and improve the National Resource Adequacy Assessment approach to replace the Generation Capacity Statement based on best practice across Europe.</p>



	Streamline decision making and accelerate delivery.	<p><b>Transmission Forecasting</b> - robust, reliable and accessible data on the power system is vital enabling information for industry. Over the coming years, we will continue to provide key information such as the Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement, in line with our licence requirements, to support industry with planning and investment decisions.</p> <p><b>Undertake the Tomorrows Energy Scenarios initiative</b> - Looking beyond 2030, Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios outlines a range of potential pathways for Northern Ireland's clean energy transition, with specific focus on what this means for the electricity transmission system from 2030 to 2050. We will continue to publish new iterations in the coming years alongside the associated comprehensive System Needs Assessment. Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios is a crucial initiative to support the development of more detailed plans, such as the Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland.</p>
<b>Deliver</b>	<p>Accelerate our delivery focus ensuring appropriate systems, resources and timescales are in place.</p> <p>Balance the transition to new systems in a secure, safe and just way.</p> <p>Deliver the transition in collaboration with communities and stakeholders, creating shared goals across the energy sector.</p>	<p><b>Deliver the Shaping our Electricity Future Roadmap</b> - Shaping Our Electricity Future is our roadmap to transform the power system to enable Northern Ireland's renewable energy ambitions. It was developed following extensive stakeholder engagement to understand the electricity system investments required to facilitate decarbonisation while ensuring security of supply up to 2030. The roadmap includes a considerable programme of work across four pillars: Operations, Networks, Markets and Engagement. Over the coming years, we will continue to work with the Shaping Our Electricity Future Advisory Council to deliver on this ambitious programme of work.</p> <p><b>Deliver on Transmission Development Plan</b> - The Transmission Development Plan sets out an ambitious package of infrastructure upgrades over a ten-year period. The project proposals detailed within the Plan, such as the North-South Interconnector, the Mid Antrim Upgrade and the Mid Tyrone Project, outline essential upgrades which will help to improve reliability and strengthen the electricity network. It will also help to bring the cost for consumers down over time as it will enable us to bring more cleaner, renewable sources of electricity onto the system and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. While the timescales for this vast programme of infrastructure upgrades are profoundly challenging, we will continue to work closely with NIE Networks on a joint delivery programme. We have also recognised the urgent need to change. We have listened to the concerns of the industry and acted. We are developing an Action Plan for Change which outlines proposals to significantly reduce grid development timescales and move to a more plan-led approach.</p>

		<p><b>Implement our Operational Roadmap 2030</b> – Our Operational Roadmap is a pivotal plan to enable the power system to operate in a fundamentally renewables-based context. It identifies the operational changes required, and the programme of work to enable them. It is refreshed every two years to acknowledge any relevant changes. Over the coming years, we will continue to deliver on key projects, such as Low Carbon Inertia Services, Future Arrangements for Systems Services, Long Duration Energy Storage and Scheduling and Dispatch to ready for the power system for a cleaner energy future.</p>
<b>Operate</b>	<p>Operate the power system safely, reliably, and economically on a continuous basis.</p> <p>Develop and implement new capabilities, technologies, and operational tools to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness for a net-zero power system.</p> <p>Improve data accessibility throughout the wider energy system by focusing on collaboration and data exchange, with a commitment to good data quality and data governance.</p>	<p><b>Security of supply</b> – We will continue to operate the system securely, safely and efficiently in line with our operational standards and deliver the best value for money for consumers. We will continue to evolve and improve our emergency planning in line with best practice standards. We will work with government and regulatory partners on a strategic security of supply programme, working with industry to ensure the timely delivery of new generation and scope new demand flexibility initiatives to support the power system to manage peak demand.</p> <p><b>Efficient operation of the market</b> – Working closely with EirGrid, we will continue to operate the All-Island Single Electricity Market and facilitate the necessary support functions in areas such as auctions and settlement based on the governing parameters set by the Regulatory Authorities and the SEM-Committee. Over the coming years, we will implement our Strategic Markets Programme and advocate changes to the market to deliver better outcomes for Northern Ireland consumers.</p> <p><b>Future Arrangements of System Services (FASS)</b> - The existing system services arrangements (DS3) were designed to meet the 2020 renewable targets of 40% RES-E and will not be sufficient to deliver the needed capability to achieve the Northern Ireland target of 80% renewable generation by 2030. Attracting investment and procuring sufficient volumes of system services capability from both existing service providers and new prospective providers, will be critical to meeting Northern Ireland’s Energy Targets.</p>