



SONI Annual Performance Report 2023-24

Appendix 3 System Planning

Northern Ireland
December 2024

Role 3 System Planning Assessment Criteria

SONI's performance will be assessed by an independent panel and the UR on the following criteria:

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

01

DELIVERY

The extent to which SONI deliver against:
(a) the specified deliverables and/or performance commitments from its Forward Work Plan, and
(b) the specified price control outputs (or deliverables) set by the Utility Regulator for new initiatives, and the justification for this delivery.

02

STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

The extent to which stakeholders are satisfied with performance of SONI, taking its performance in 2019/20, as supplemented by its Forward Plan, as its Baseline.

03

ADAPTABILITY

The extent to which SONI has shown successful adaption

For consistency and based on the advice contained in the UR's Evaluative Performance Framework Guidance document, we have applied the above criteria to the SONI Performance Report.

Cost Scale

SONI have created a Cost Scale in order to assist the audience in understanding the scale and/or importance of a project, and 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 said project.

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



Cost Scale Gauge

Key Areas of Focus

In the 2023/24 Forward Work Plan, SONI highlighted our key areas of focus for the period, which include strategic projects that SONI deems to be of utmost importance for both SONI and Northern Ireland consumers. These projects are highlighted throughout this document and delivery of these areas of work is summarised below.

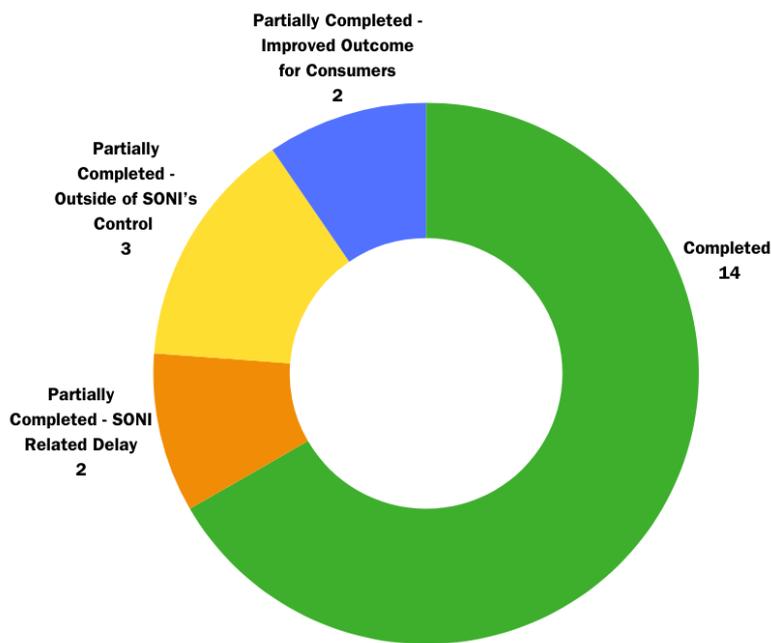


Role 3 System Planning

Plan Delivery



Summary of Role 3 Deliverables



21 Milestones:

- **14** Completed
- **2** partially completed - **Within SONI's Control**
- **3** partially completed - **Outside of SONI's control**
- **2** partially completed - **Improved Outcome for Consumers**

Project	Milestone	Status
FWP027 : Energising Belfast: Castlereagh – Hannahstown	SONI issues Partial TPI to NIE Networks for works at Finaghy Main Substation and works at Castlereagh Substation.	
	Secure options to purchase two sites for substation developments	
	Commence 2c Stakeholder Engagement	
FWP026 :North South 400kV Interconnector	Issue Transmission Project Instruction (OHL)	
	SONI to enter into a Transmission Project Agreement	
FWP028: Airport Road Main 110/33 kV Substation	Secure legal agreements for substation site acquisition	
	SONI issues Transmission Project Instruction to NIE Networks	

FWP034 : Mid Antrim Upgrade	Complete Part 2b Stakeholder Consultation	
	Secure Option for switching substation site.	
FWP036 : Eden – Carnmoney	Issue Outline Functional Specification	
	Complete Part 2a Stakeholder Engagement	
FWP037 : Drumnakelly and Armagh Reinforcement	TNPP Submission	
FWP040: East Tyrone Reinforcement	Secure Control Point 1 Approval	
	Commence Part 2c Stakeholder Engagement	
FWP033: Mid Tyrone Upgrade	TNPP Submission	
FWP039: Moyle 275kV Reinforcement	Secure Control Point 1 Approval	
FWP029: Coolkeeragh 110kV Extension	Part 2 SONI Pre-Construction Works Commence	
FWP23-30: Tamnamore— Drumnakelly Restrung	Secure Control Point 1 Approval	
	Commence 2a Stakeholder Engagement	
FWP030: 275kV Substation Fault Level Solutions	Agree option appraisal scope of works required with NIE Networks for Coolkeeragh and Magherafelt.	
FWP23-26: Delivery Programme for NI Infrastructure Projects	Joint SONI- NIE Networks Delivery Programme for NI Infrastructure projects	

Detailed Programme of Deliverables

FWP027: Energising Belfast: Castlereagh—Hannahstown

Description of Activities	<p>This 'Energising Belfast' project is formerly known as Part 1 of the Belfast Metropolitan Redevelopment Project (Castlereagh - Hannahstown 110kV reinforcement). SONI received approval for the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) submission in June 2021. Since then, the project has entered into Part 2 of the Grid Development Process.</p> <p>Planned activities for the future include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SONI to issue partial TPI to NIE Networks for the works at Finaghy Main and Castlereagh substations in December 2023. This will lead to an estimate completion date of June 2025, but the site will not be energised until the City Centre works are completed in 2028. 2. SONI aim to secure options to purchase two substation sites. This is expected by March 2024. 3. SONI will commence part 2c of the stakeholder engagement plan in July 2024 which will involve meetings with local representatives and public information events.
Delivery	<p>Position as of 30 September 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> SONI issues Partial TPI to NIE Networks for works at Finaghy Main Substation and works at Castlereagh Substation - Complete <input type="checkbox"/> Secure Options for 2 no. City Centre Substation Sites - In progress <input type="checkbox"/> Commence 2C Stakeholder Engagement - Complete
Date Revision	<p>There has been a number of complexities with securing 2 no. lands in the city centre region for proposed substations. There is a real lack of valid, non-constraint stock available. The land which is viable is of high monetary value which involves complex and drawn-out negotiation periods and the completion of due diligence activities and site investigations in parallel.</p>

<p>Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement</p>	<p>The delivery milestone of commencing 2c stakeholder engagement was met by advancing efforts to enhance support from key stakeholders in advance of the Pre-Application Community Consultation.</p> <p>Select engagement with stakeholders in localised areas of strategic interest to the development of the project remains ongoing. This engagement activity includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Informative engagement with the business community through several communications channels including the placement of advertorials in trade press and digital outlets. ❑ Engagement with Belfast Chamber and Linen Quarter BID remains ongoing; feedback from these stakeholders will be considered during the engagement planning for the Pre-Application Community Consultation. ❑ Localised political engagement has commenced. ❑ Participative engagement through a bespoke in-person event with key business stakeholders and sectoral partners afforded local business stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on plans and identify areas of concern and/or opportunity. ❑ SONI are continuing to engage with relevant officials from Belfast City Council to identify collaboration opportunities in areas that align with the council’s strategic aims and ambitions. <p>Survey findings from SONI's first Annual Stakeholder Engagement Pulse Survey show that 96% of stakeholders were either ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with their engagement with SONI in the period 23/24.</p>
<p>Adaptability</p>	<p>SONI have been engaging with Translink and NIEN collectively in order to assess the feasibility of completing a section of advanced ducting through the Belfast Grand Central station in the west of the city centre in order to expedite the program and provide a cost saving with an overarching benefit to the local communities which includes less disruption and lower risk of affecting high quality public realm and to minimise special engineering difficulties.</p> <p>SONI have taken an agile approach to stakeholder engagement by commencing 2c stakeholder engagement well in advance of the Pre-Application Community Consultation to ensure the management and involvement of a large stakeholder cohort across the political, business and civic spheres.</p>

Cost Scale



FWP026: North South 400kV Interconnector

Description of Activities	<p>In the SONI Forward Work Plan for 2022-2023 SONI was continuing work for land access.</p> <p>The key activities planned for the period include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ SONI to issue a Transmission Project Instruction (TPI) to NIE Networks for construction of Overhead line that have easements and wayleaves secured. This is targeted to be complete by March 2024. ❑ SONI to prepare TPI for substation by December 2024, this is later than Overhead line and post TPA due to the phasing in procurement for the substation contractor. ❑ SONI will enter into a Transmission Project Agreement with NIE Networks in June 2024*. <p>The North South 400kV Interconnector is estimated to be operational in 2026.</p> <p><i>*Item 3 is also dependent on ESB Networks progressing to Project Agreement in ROI.</i></p>
Delivery	<p>Position as of 30 September 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ SONI to issue a Transmission Project Instruction (TPI) to NIE Networks for construction of Overhead line that have easements and wayleaves secured – Complete ❑ SONI will enter into a Transmission Project Agreement with NIE Networks – In Progress
Date Revision	<p>The milestones set for this project were delayed due to challenges with DfE issuing the required Wayleaves, which caused initial delivery dates to be pushed back. Progress was contingent on securing these permissions, and access to sites remained limited until the first batch of Wayleaves was issued. Despite this delay, we achieved 70% access by August, enabling the project to regain momentum and move closer to progressing the milestones detailed.</p>
Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement	<p>Significant progress has been made in engaging with 180 impacted landowners with ongoing discussions to address their concerns and secure their cooperation. This engagement has been supported by proactive collaboration with political stakeholders and community representatives to ensure alignment and transparency. These efforts aim to build trust, foster understanding, and facilitate the smooth progression the project while addressing the interests of all parties involved.</p>

Adaptability	<p>We have demonstrated adaptability throughout this project by maintaining a strong focus on stakeholder engagement despite challenges with wayleaves. Recognising the projects critical importance for reinforcing the grid across Northern Ireland and Ireland, we have worked tirelessly to reassure landowners of its significance and long-term benefits. This project addresses essential infrastructure needs and reflects our strategic approach to market development. By fostering extensive collaboration with landowners, political stakeholder, and the broader community, we have ensured transparency and alignment, reinforcing our commitment to delivering impactful and forward-looking solutions.</p>
Cost Scale	

FWP028: Airport Road Main 110/33 kV Substation

<p>Description of Activities</p>	<p>It is planned to construct a new 110/33 kV substation in the Belfast Harbour Estate, close to the existing Airport Road 33/6.6 kV substation. The substation will be connected to the existing Rosebank substation via the existing 110 kV tower line (currently operated at 33 kV) from Rosebank to Sydenham Road.</p> <p>During the period 2023-2024, SONI continued to progress the substation site and securing legal agreements for the site acquisition.</p> <p>Issues have persisted over the past year in relation to the legal agreements and as such these have impacted the timeline. These issues have eased, and legal agreement security recommenced in Summer 2023.</p> <p>SONI will continue towards finalisation and signing of the landowner agreements. The project is planned for estimated energisation in Q3 2026</p>
<p>Delivery</p>	<p>Position as of 30th September 2024: Complete</p>
<p>Date Revision</p>	<p>Due to ongoing challenges with legal agreements the delivery date for securing legal agreements for substation site acquisition has been revised. As a result of these delays, the second milestone for issuing the TPI to NIE network, has also been impacted. We are now targeting completion of the legal agreements by December 2024, with the TPI expected to be issued to NIE Networks in January 2025.</p>
<p>Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement</p>	<p>Stakeholder engagement continued throughout the course of the 2023/2024 period. There are a number of key stakeholders attributed to this project. In terms of the 33kV cable routing: NIE Networks and Harland and Wolff along with SONI are continuing to negotiate and discuss the securing of easements for the proposed 33kV cables.</p> <p>With regards the remainder of the project (proposed 110/33 kV substation and associated 110 kV cables) SONI continue to engage with three main stakeholders namely NIE Networks, Titanic Quarter Limited and Belfast Harbour Commissioners. Outside of this, extensive Stakeholder engagement has taken place and continues to take place. This includes locally elected representatives, Belfast City Council, members of the public etc. Queens University Belfast have continued dialogue with SONI to discuss their plans in the Harbour Estate and how the new substation will help facilitate future growth in the area ensuring their plans align with SONIs.</p>

Adaptability	Throughout the course of the project, extensive engagement and negotiation, has, and continues to take place. SONI has engaged to explore a number of options to unlock the challenges faced in this project to allow the milestone to be achieved.
Cost Scale	

FWP034: Mid Antrim Upgrade

Description of Activities	<p>In order to ease the existing and future congestion on the Kells to Rasharkin 110kV circuit, the following is proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Update of the existing Kells to Creagh side of the 110kV circuit to Terrygowan; <input type="checkbox"/> Construction of a new 110kV switching substation in the Terrygowan area; and <input type="checkbox"/> Construction of a new 110kV twin pole circuit between the new Terrygowan switching substation and Rasharkin substation (with allowance for cabling through Rasharkin town). <p>SONI received approval for the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) submission in February 2022. Since this, the project has entered into Part 2 of the Grid Development Process and has completed 2a stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Planned activities for the future include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> SONI to complete Part 2b Stakeholder Consultation where several route and switching substation site options are presented to stakeholders. Feedback from this is then gathered to determine the preferred route and substation option. <input type="checkbox"/> SONI aim to secure an option to purchase the land for the Terrygowan substation within the study area. This is expected by May 2024.
Delivery	<p>Position as of 30th September 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Part 2b Stakeholder Consultation Completed – Complete <input type="checkbox"/> Option for Substation Site Secured - In Progress
Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement	<p>No further stakeholder engagement beyond 2b has happened in line with project timescales.</p> <p>Survey findings from SONI's first Annual Stakeholder Engagement Pulse Survey show that 96% of stakeholders were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their engagement with SONI in the period 23/24.</p> <p>The initial round of engagement was advanced and completed in the summer of 2024, during which the SONI LOE team directly engaged with affected landowners, presenting them with a potential 100-meter buffer corridor from Terrygowan to Rasharkin for the proposed overhead line (OHL).</p>

Adaptability	Given the geographical spread of the project, in depth engagement with the local community was considered a challenge. The use of the deliberative engagement model through the establishment of the Community Forum and Citizen Sounding Board, helped us to overcome this challenge by acting as a population sample and ensuring SONI had the thoughts and opinions of citizens from across the three local council areas.
Cost Scale	

Description of Activities	<p>This project (Eden – Carnmoney 110kV Circuit Uprate / Reconfiguration) forms part 2 of the Energising Belfast project (previously named Belfast Metropolitan Project). The existing tower line is due for refurbishment due to the condition of the assets.</p> <p>Following an option assessment, the preferred option involves the uprate of a large portion of the existing Carnmoney to Eden overhead line but also removal of a portion of the existing overhead line in urban and residential areas in Carnmoney and Carrickfergus which will be replaced with underground cable. A second transformer at Glengormley Main substation will also be required to facilitate this uprate.</p> <p>SONI received approval for the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) submission in August 2023. Since this the project has entered into Part 2 of the Grid Development Process.</p> <p>Planned activities for the future include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SONI to issue outline functional specification to NIE Networks in December 2023. 2. SONI to complete 2a stakeholder engagement in Mid Antrim Borough Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council as the project spans both councils by June 2024. <p>The above detail provides an estimated timeline for the project overall. Over the period of this plan the main activity will be the progression of an indicative cable route and initial stakeholder engagement.</p>
Delivery	Position as of 30th September 2024: In Complete
Date Revision	The Functional Specification for Glengormley 2 nd Transformer was issued to NIE Networks on 17 th October 2023
Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement	<p>SONI have engaged extensively on this project with both political stakeholders and councils, with notable engagements being held in late 2023.</p> <p>Political engagement – John Stewart (UUP) was engaged in November 2023, followed by Sammy Wilson (DUP) and John Blair (Alliance) in December 2023. With the project being a positive news story, our stakeholder engagement has been highly successful with all three politicians expressing strong support and offering assistance to advance the project.</p>

<p>Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement</p>	<p>John Stewart pledged to promote the project through this platform as an MLA and committed to attending the public consultation event in Carrickfergus in March 2024, bringing along local councillors from his constituency. Sammy Wilson agreed to promote the event on his Facebook page, ensuring representation from his party at the public consultation. John Blair demonstrated a clear understanding of the projects strategic significance, particularly its role in enhancing grid infrastructure to support renewable energy and achieve climate action targets. He expressed his willingness to actively advocate for the projects importance in advancing the transition to net-zero carbon emissions.</p> <p>Local Council Engagement – We engaged with Mid & East Antrim Council Planning department in November 2023 and the Antrim & Newtownabbey Council Planning department in December 2023 engagement with both councils have been constructive and well received.</p> <p>The Mid & East Antrim Planning department welcomed the early engagement and expressed satisfaction that the new infrastructure would not exceed 15 metres in height. As this aligns with the councils recently adopted Local Development Plan Strategy, which includes conditions on tall structures in the area to safeguard telecommunications and electricity infrastructure.</p> <p>The Antrim & Newtownabbey Planning department were supportive of the projects potential to alleviate existing grid constraints and provide a reliable supply of electricity to support business growth. They highlighted the benefits for such keys sites such as the Global Point Business Park in Newtownabbey, which is poised to benefit significantly from improved grid capacity to accommodate growing energy demands,</p>
<p>Adaptability</p>	<p>To ensure the project’s adaptability and maintain its timeline and deliverability, a decision was made to proceed with a Certificate of Lawful Use of Development (CLUD) application for the installation of the second transformer at Glengormley Main, rather than pursuing a full planning application. This approach allows the project to remain on track to achieve its energisation target date and facilitates the timely decommissioning of the 110Kv line associated with the project. .</p>



FWP037: Drumnakelly and Armagh Reinforcement

Description of Activities	<p>There is a need to reinforce the distribution system supplying Armagh city and the surrounding area due to increasing demand. It is also forecast that demand will exceed capacity at the existing Drumnakelly 110/33 kV substation. Options being considered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Establishing a new 110/33 kV substation adjacent to the existing Drumnakelly Main along with associated 33 kV reinforcements to the Armagh area; and ❑ Establishing a new 110/33 kV substation at Armagh with new 110 kV circuits from Tandragee and/or Drumnakelly. <p>NIE Networks and SONI are jointly working on their respective areas of this project.</p> <p>As part of Forward Work Plan 2023-2024 the following activities are required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Finalising option appraisal and joint reports with NIE Networks, including the outcome of the environmental study. ❑ Carry out Part 1 Stakeholder engagement with elected representatives in the project area and key stakeholders. ❑ Finalise and submit a TNPP submission. This is currently expected to be complete by March 2024, subject to stakeholder engagement commencing in October 2023.
Delivery	Position as of 30th September 2024: In Progress
Date Revision	<p>As outlined in the mid-year performance report, the milestone for TNPP submission, originally scheduled for March 2024, was revised to a delivery date of May 2024. However, the revised delivery date has not been achieved, and the work remains in progress. The reason for delay is primarily due to the additional effort required by both SONI and NIE Networks to thoroughly review the project need and evaluate the shortlisted options. Furthermore, the prioritisation of other TNPP submissions and ongoing network projects with higher urgency, such as the North-South Interconnector project have impacted resource availability and contributed to the delay. Efforts are ongoing to progress this milestone, ensuring the necessary rigor and</p>

Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement	<p>SONI delivered Part 1 Stakeholder Engagement from January 2024 - March 2024. Feedback from these meetings was used to inform our preferred option and to help finalise our TNPP submission.</p> <p>Part 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ SONI communicated the options and project benefits in writing to local councillors in the relevant district electoral areas impacted. ❑ SONI presented the options and project benefits to the MP and MLAs representing the parliamentary constituency where the project will be built. ❑ High-level engagement with the local planning authority was undertaken to ensure early engagement with officers.
Adaptability	<p>In our efforts to delivery this milestone, we sought additional support from NIE Networks to finalise key report for the TNPP submission, particularly those addressing the project need and shortlisted options. NIE Networks worked on these updated during summer 2024, ensuring progress despite competing priorities. Both SONI and NIE Network remain committed to supporting the TNPP submission, which will move forward once the necessary resources, currently allocated to higher-priority projects become available.</p>
Cost Scale	

FWP040: East Tyrone Reinforcement

<p>Description of Activities</p>	<p>NIE Networks and SONI have jointly assessed the level of security of supply 110/33kV substation at Dungannon. It is forecast that demand will exceed capacity at the existing Dungannon 110/33kV substation.</p> <p>In addition, there is a particular risk to supplies following a second circuit outage. The option being considered that best addresses the objectives of this project include the extension of the existing Dungannon Main substation compound to construct a second 110/33kV substation. This will involve additional land purchase and relocation of existing infrastructure to facilitate this extension.</p> <p>SONI aim to submit the TNPP submission in Autumn 2023 so following UR review, it is expected that approval will be secured in January 2024 which will be followed by SONI internal governance and approval of Control Point 1 in April 2024.</p>
<p>Delivery</p>	<p>Position as of 30th September 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Secure Control Point 1 Approval— Complete <input type="checkbox"/> Commence Part 2c Stakeholder Engagement—In Progress
<p>Date Revision</p>	<p>The TNPP was submitted to the UR on 1st July 2024. The revision to the TNPP submission date was necessitated by the time required to prepare an outline design for the substation extension and conduct a high-level environmental appraisal following feedback received during engagement with elected representatives. Despite this, we completed the Control Point 1 approval on 2nd September 2024, ahead of the TNPP approval.</p>
<p>Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement</p>	<p>SONI has commenced the project on risk with NIE Networks.</p>
<p>Adaptability</p>	<p>SONI has obtained CP1 approval and has commenced early engagement with NIE Networks on the design at risk in advance of TNPP approval.</p>
<p>Cost Scale</p>	

FWP033: Mid Tyrone Upgrade

Description of Activities	<p>NIE Networks and SONI have jointly assessed the level of security of supply 110/33kV substation at Dungannon. It is forecast that demand will exceed capacity at the existing Dungannon 110/33kV substation.</p> <p>In addition, there is a particular risk to supplies following a second circuit outage. The option being considered that best addresses the objectives of this project include the extension of the existing Dungannon Main substation compound to construct a second 110/33kV substation. This will involve additional land purchase and relocation of existing infrastructure to facilitate this extension.</p> <p>SONI aim to submit the TNPP submission in Autumn 2023 so following UR review, it is expected that approval will be secured in January 2024 which will be followed by SONI internal governance and approval of Control Point 1 in April 2024.</p>
Delivery	<p>Position as of 30th September 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> TNPP Submission: In progress
Date Revision	<p>The delivery date was changed due to new information forcing a change in the scope of the project. This will ensure that the revised options can deliver long term value for consumers by ensuring that it is of sufficient scope and scale to minimise the need for future additional network reinforcement in the area. The key activity over the last period was the extensive constraint mapping required to progress the project.</p> <p>The 110 kV circuits between Omagh and Tamnamore is subject to high levels of constraint under high RES conditions. This project will increase network capacity in this area.</p> <p>The preliminary preferred option for this was previously the establishment of a new 110kV circuit between Dromore and Tamnamore Substation and the extension of Tamnamore Substation. The circuit is expected to be composed of primarily overhead line with cabling sections in more urban areas.</p>

	<p>Through the development of the Transmission Cluster policy and engagement with Renewable NI on the pipeline of generation connections it has become clear that the scale of generation development in the Fermanagh and West Tyrone areas is higher than previously anticipated. The project has been revisited and the preferred option has changed to a 275 kV circuit between Turleenan and Dromore substations. Work is ongoing to determine the appropriate technology for this circuit.</p> <p>This project has now been renamed to Connect West.</p>
<p>Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement</p>	<p>SONI began part 1 engagement with key stakeholders following a detailed stakeholder mapping exercise to ensure engagement was as broad and inclusive as possible.</p> <p>Engagement included a detailed briefing with the Department for Infrastructure planning team and Director of Regional Planning Policy and Casework Alistair Beggs. Departmental officials acknowledged the efforts to engage with them at this early juncture.</p> <p>Since the completion of part 2b, SONI continue to liaise with interested parties in relation to the progress of the project when required.</p>
<p>Adaptability</p>	<p>This project was close to the point of TNPP submission when a review found that it was likely not of sufficient scale to fully address the needs in the area. The team quickly adapted and re-appraised the multicriteria analysis in light of new information. This led to the emergence of a new preliminary preferred option, and an update to the stakeholder engagement. Although this is a delay to the previous target, this project demonstrates SONI’s commitment to ensuring that network development projects deliver value to the consumer.</p>
<p>Cost Scale</p>	

FWP039: Moyle 275kV Reinforcement

<p>Description of Activities</p>	<p>At present, full utilisation of the 500 MW export capability of the Moyle Interconnector is prevented by the potential for network overloads and voltage steps in the event of the loss of the 275 kV double circuit between the Moyle converter station at Ballycronan More and the nearby Ballylumford and Hannahstown substations.</p> <p>This project involves works to allow reconfiguration of the connection to Ballycronan More Converter Station, which then connects to Moyle Interconnector.</p> <p>To address these contingencies, the option being considered is based in connecting directly Ballycronan More Converter Station to Ballylumford Power Station through two underground circuits.</p> <p>SONI submitted the TNPP in September 2023. TNPP Approval from the Utility Regulator was received in March 2024. Control Point 1 Approval was obtained in March 2024.</p>
<p>Delivery</p>	<p>Position as of 30th September 2024: Completed</p>
<p>Date Revision</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement</p>	<p>SONI have completed stakeholder engagement for part 2C of this project. Stakeholder engagement included the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement with political representatives in the East Antrim constituency <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement with planning officials from Mid and East Antrim Borough Council <input type="checkbox"/> Open public consultation between 10 October 2024 and 6 December 2024 <input type="checkbox"/> A public drop-in event was held in October 2024 <input type="checkbox"/> A campaign of social media activity took place on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn – 100% of respondents found out about the events through family/friends and social media and there was a total of 208 engagements on project specific social media posts <p>In terms of stakeholder satisfaction, 100% of stakeholders who attended the public engagement event were satisfied with the engagement with SONI.</p>

FWP029: Coolkeeragh 110kV Extension

<p>Description of Activities</p>	<p>This project will facilitate the future connection of a third interbus transformer, the restoration of the second busbar coupler and section switches and other improvements.</p> <p>SONI received approval for the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) submission in March 2023. SONI is progressing site investigations (to determine treatment options) through our environmental consultant.</p>
<p>Delivery</p>	<p>Position as of 30th September 2024: Complete</p>
<p>Date Revision</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement</p>	<p>The following stakeholders were consulted this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> ESB <input type="checkbox"/> NIEA <input type="checkbox"/> Derry City and Strabane District Council <input type="checkbox"/> NIE Networks <p>Due to the complexities involved in the site investigation works, particularly regarding the treatment of bunds, it was decided to postpone the project release until all samples had been collected, a treatability study had been drafted, and planning consents had been determined. As part of this process, consultations were held with four individual stakeholders. In the next phase of SONI's three-part grid development process, public engagement will be expanded in Q1 2025 to include public information events and follow-up briefings with key stakeholders.</p> <p>In response to environmental constraints identified at the site, SONI collaborated with NIEA, NIE Networks, and Derry City and Strabane District Council to develop a plan for the safe transportation of protected species. The majority of the feedback received was positive, with stakeholders acknowledging the project's necessity and the broader benefits it would bring, including future investment and enhanced economic development in the Northwest. Additionally, SONI held multiple meetings with ESB to ensure the safe drainage and effective treatment of Bund 1 at ESB's Coolkeeragh site. The complexity of the bund drainage process spanned several months, resulting in a significant extension to the overall project timeline.</p>

<p>Adaptability</p>	<p>Throughout this project, SONI engaged in a lengthy process with ESB to drain the bunds sufficiently, allowing us to progress with our site investigation works. However, the negotiations took longer than initially anticipated. To mitigate this, SONI proactively developed risk assessments and method statements for various methodologies to drain Bund 1 more efficiently, as ESB's on-site drainage system was overwhelmed by the large volumes of water. The approved methodology was implemented in May 2024, and the bunds were drained in June 2024.</p> <p>The discovery of smooth newts introduced further environmental constraints, leading to unexpected delays. In response, SONI adapted the site investigation methodology, procuring a second drilling rig and switching from trial pits to boreholes, which enabled the completion of all site investigation works by September 2024, removing them from the critical path.</p> <p>These unforeseen circumstances, outside of our control, caused delays in the project's delivery. Nevertheless, over the next 6-12 months, SONI will work diligently to accelerate the project's energisation date, making up for the unexpected delays.</p>
<p>Cost Scale</p>	

FWP23-30: Tamnamore – Drumnakelly Restrung

Description of Activities	<p>These circuits may be subject to overload under high wind generation conditions and are operated out of service. This project is to replace the conductor on these circuits with higher capacity conductor. This will allow these circuits to fully return to service and reduce constraints on renewables. However, as part of the existing line over sails the village of Killyman and cannot be upgraded in situ, this section will be replaced by an underground cable section on a different route.</p> <p>SONI submitted the TNPP submission in August 2023 so following UR review, it is expected that approval will be secured by January 2024 which will be followed by approval of Control Point 1 in April 2024 and commencing part 2a stakeholder consultation in August 2024.</p>
Delivery	Position as of 30th September 2024: Complete
Date Revision	At FWP 23–24-year end in September this milestone was not completed. Additional works were required by both SONI and NIE Networks to review the project need and evaluate the shortlisted options. Additionally, prioritisation of other TNPP submissions and with ongoing network projects with higher priority, including the North – South Interconnector project, this resulted in this milestone being delayed further due to resources.
Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement	<p>SONI commenced Part 2a Stakeholder Engagement activity in August 2024. This engagement included information briefings with key stakeholders within the study area affected by the project. SONI sought meetings with all parties which had Northern Ireland Assembly and Parliamentary representation in the constituencies affected by the project (Mid Ulster, Fermanagh & South Tyrone, Upper Bann and Newry & Armagh). Where parties had more than one MP / MLA for the area, representatives were grouped together or the most appropriate representative to engage with was identified.</p> <p>Engagement with planning officials from Mid Ulster District Council and Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council was completed. Information was also relayed to business and civic stakeholders within the study area. SONI facilitated a public engagement event in September 2024 to give stakeholders and the local community an opportunity to hear more about our plans and help shape them. The event took the form of a staffed exhibition where the plans for the project were clearly displayed, with detailed maps available for more specific discussions with attendees as required.</p>

	<p>Stakeholder satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ 100% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they understand what the Tamnamore - Drumnakelly Project involves ❑ 100% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they understand why the project is needed ❑ 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the engagement with SONI ❑ 100% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the Tamnamore - Drumnakelly Project will benefit the local community
<p>Adaptability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ SONI requested further support from NIE Networks for the final reports forming part of the TNPP submission, particularly around the project need and shortlisted options. NIE Networks progressed these updates in Summer 2024. SONI and NIE Networks continue to support the submission of the TNPP. This will be progressed when resources that are currently being utilised elsewhere become available.
<p>Cost Scale</p>	

FWP030: 275kV Substation Fault Level Solutions

<p>Description of Activities</p>	<p>This project covers five substations which require a redevelopment (detailed below).</p> <p>275kV Redevelopment</p> <p>An appraisal of the original design using modern standards has found that the concrete structures at Castlereagh, Coolkeeragh, Kells, Magherafelt and Tandragee whilst sufficient to meet expected mechanical loading under a fault, would lead to deflections beyond standard.</p> <p>This is being managed through additional inspections by NIE Networks. Long-term refurbishment of the five substations is required.</p> <p>The key activities over the 2023/24 period will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Magherafelt and Coolkeeragh 275kV Consultant procurement towards option appraisal <p>Agree option appraisal scope of works required with NIE Networks for Coolkeeragh and Magherafelt and commence the progression of procurement and award of contract for optioneering with the substation design consultant. It is expected that a contract to appraise Kells options will already be awarded in September 2023.</p>
<p>Delivery</p>	<p>Position as of 30th September 2024: Complete</p>
<p>Date Revision</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement</p>	<p>Throughout the year, we actively engaged with NIE Networks to develop the programme of activities across the substations, ensuring alignment with operation priorities. As part of this process, we extended our engagement to include Castlereagh and Tandragee substations, broadening the scope of the initial work required to address emerging needs and opportunities. In parallel, we maintained regular communication with the UR, providing monthly updates.</p>
<p>Adaptability</p>	<p>In addition to the initial Magherafelt and Coolkeeragh scopes for appraisals of options, we also agreed to include appraisals of options for the Castlereagh and Tandragee substation. This decision ensured a comprehensive evaluation across multiple sites, aligning with our commitment to thoroughly assess all relevant options and address the broader needs identified during the planning process.</p>

Cost Scale



<p>Description of Activities</p>	<p>Development of a delivery programme for all Transmission Reinforcement Projects and communicate externally.</p> <p>In light of recent developments such as the NI Energy Strategy publication, Path to Net Zero Action Plan and the revised target of 80% renewables by 2030, SONI considers a prudent activity is to use the Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland Joint Working Group as a forum to (as far as possible) optimise the delivery programme in a holistic approach with NIE Networks.</p> <p>Key Actions & Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland Joint Working Group to continue to be used as a conduit for discussion and agreement of project plan with NIE Networks <input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced project programme to be developed and implemented. <input type="checkbox"/> Communicated Externally
<p>Delivery</p>	<p>Position as of 30th September 2024: Complete</p>
<p>Date Revision</p>	<p>The completion date for the Joint SONI-NIE Networks Delivery Programme for Northern Ireland Infrastructure projects has been revised due to several critical factors. SONI and NIE Networks undertook a comprehensive review of governance structures, which was essential for ensuring effective project delivery. This review led to the implementation of an acceleration programme and the establishment of clear terms of reference for the JPMO. Additionally, we engaged stakeholders from the inception of the project through to construction completion, facilitating valuable input and alignment. A thorough rationalization of procurement timelines and outage planning was also conducted to create a cohesive program that addresses the complexities of infrastructure transmission reinforcement projects. These necessary adjustments have resulted in a revised completion date, reflecting our commitment to delivering a well-governed and successful programme.</p>

<p>Stakeholder Satisfaction/Engagement</p>	<p>Through the TDPNI Working Group, SONI have been engaging on the Transmission Investment Programme with NIE Networks. This was key to the development of TDPNI 2023-2032, which details the work undertaken with NIEN and the impact on the programme. SONI engaged with key external stakeholders including Renewables NI, the Ulster Farmers Union, the heads of Planning in local councils and representatives of NI business before publishing the TDPNI for public consultation in September 2023.</p> <p>In addition to consultations and engagement with external stakeholders, we have established a new internal collaboration framework involving all stakeholders within SONI and NIE Networks. Monthly workshops have been initiated across all aspects of the delivery stages, providing an open platform for discussion and greater insight to inform our plan. We are working closely with NIE Networks at every stage of project delivery, emphasizing the importance of both companies being focused on and accountable for successful outcomes. It is important to note that the overall delivery of the Plan is also influenced by various external factors, such as the planning process. To mitigate risks to delivery, SONI will continue to engage with external stakeholders early in the process.</p>
<p>Adaptability</p>	<p>The Plan is reviewed on an annual basis, with all programs that inform the plan being continuously updated and re-baselined to include agreed critical stages of the project timeline. This year, we have considered global supply chain difficulties, internal resourcing challenges within both SONI and NIE Networks, and external factors affecting delivery, such as the planning process. Efficiencies have been identified and expedited where possible; for instance, the TDPNI Working Group identified a need for more than 20 110/33 kV transformers as part of the Plan. The JPMO has also identified several measures that will be investigated and implemented where feasible to reduce risk to the overall programme. Furthermore, SONI and NIE Networks are committed to fostering deeper collaboration with partners to gain greater insights into the programmes, with the aim of continuously improving our plan and promoting acceleration initiatives through the initiation of new action procedures.</p>
<p>Cost Scale</p>	