



# SONI Annual Performance Report 2023- 24

## Appendix 6 SONI Engagement Evaluation Framework Dashboard

Northern Ireland  
December 2024



## Introduction

This dashboard presents an evaluation of SONI's Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan, developed in line with Engagement Evaluation Framework outlined in SONI's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. It provides a comprehensive overview of our engagement activities, supported by data and insights across various areas of the SONI business.

Within this appendix we have included:

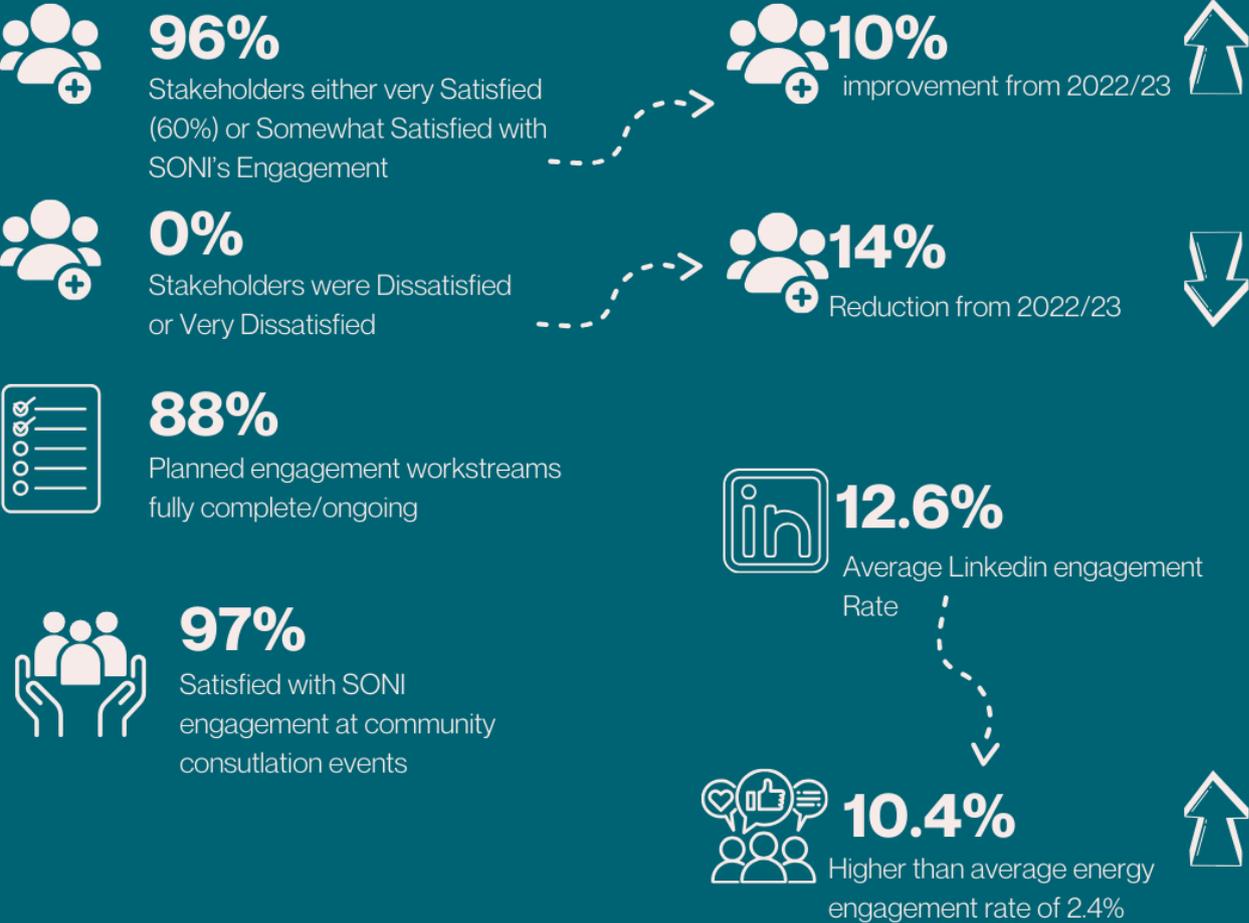
- ❑ Delivery Data for engagement workstreams across all business areas
- ❑ Findings from our Annual Stakeholder Engagement Pulse Survey 2023/24, including insights from post-engagement surveys
- ❑ Data on our engagement with local communities
- ❑ An overview of our digital and media presence, encompassing social media and media engagement
- ❑ Qualitative feedback received from stakeholders
- ❑ Case studies and testimonials from key stakeholders SONI have engaged with
- ❑ Insights into our engagement with Society, Industry and Statutory bodies

Finally, we have provided a snapshot of our stakeholder engagement activities over the year, capturing the breadth and depth of our efforts to build meaningful and impactful relationships

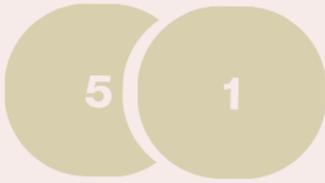
# ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

This Engagement Evaluation Framework summary provides highlights of the evaluation assessment of SONI's Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan 2023/24

## Summary

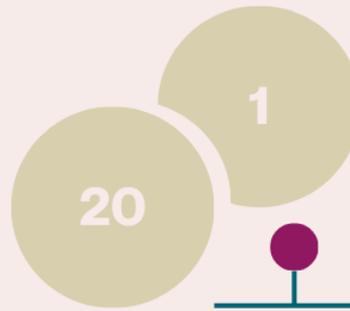


# DELIVERY SUMMARY



## Power System Insights & Research

Completed/ongoing engagement workstreams (5), and project delayed (1)



## Chief Executive Office-

Fully completed/ongoing engagement workstreams (20) and partially completed (1)



## Operations

Completed/ongoing engagement workstreams (13)



## Market Operation & SEMO Interface-

Completed/ongoing engagement workstreams (5)



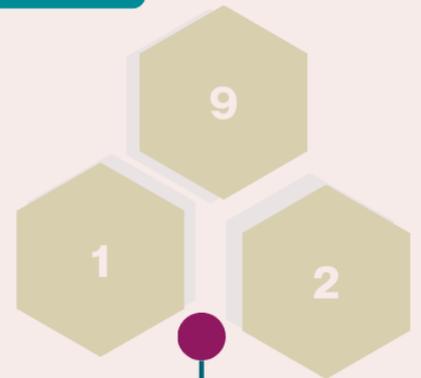
## Networks

Completed/ongoing engagement workstreams (25), partially completed (4) and projects delayed (2)



## Commercial & Regulation

Completed/ongoing engagement workstreams (6)



## Future Operations & Future Power Markets -

Completed/ongoing engagement workstreams (9), partially completed/underway (1) and project delayed (2)

# SONI ANNUAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PULSE SURVEY 2023/24 FINDINGS

**SONI ENGAGEMENT**

**96%**

Stakeholders were either **Very Satisfied (60%)** or **Somewhat Satisfied (36%)**

**0%**

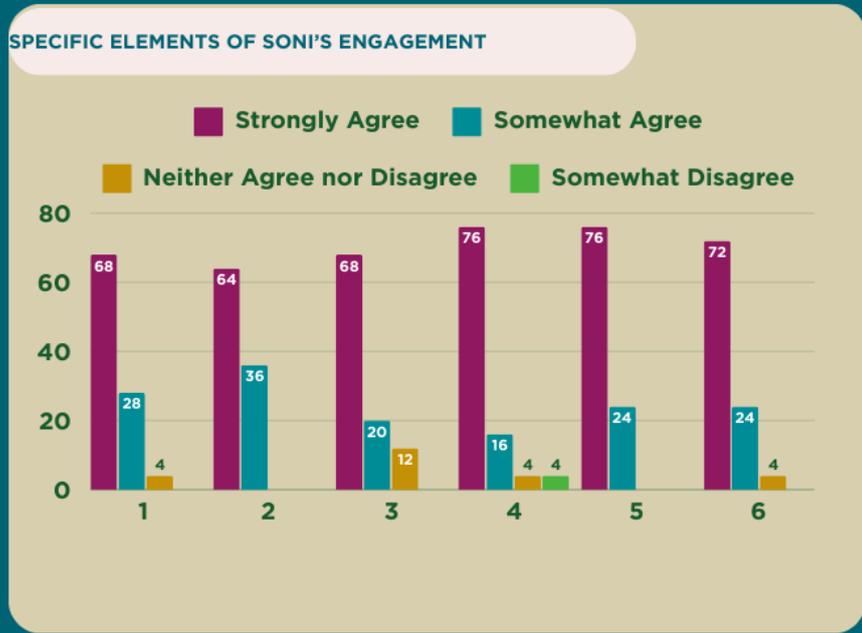
Stakeholders were either **Dissatisfied** or **Very Dissatisfied**

**10%**

**Improvement** from 2022/23 where **86%** were **Very Satisfied (36%)** or **Somewhat Satisfied (50%)**

**14%**

**Reduction** in stakeholders who were **Somewhat Dissatisfied** in



- SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF SONI'S ENGAGEMENT**
- The engagement(s) met expectations and added value to roles (**68% Strongly Agree**, 28% Somewhat Agree, 4% Neither Agree nor Disagree)
  - The information provided was accessible and proportionate to my needs (**64% Strongly Agree**, 36% Somewhat Agree)
  - Better understanding of SONI's role & relevant subject matter (**68% Strongly Agree**, 20% Somewhat Agree, 12% Neither Agree nor Disagree)
  - Sufficient opportunity to engage and ask questions (**76% Strongly Agree**, 16% Somewhat Agree, 4% Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4% Somewhat Disagree)
  - SONI team knowledgeable on the area of engagement (**76% Strongly Agree**, 24% Somewhat Agree)
  - Frequency of my engagement with SONI is about right for my needs (**72% Strongly Agree**, 24% Somewhat Agree, 4% Neither Agree nor Disagree)

**POST ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS 2023/24**

**95%**

Respondents **Strongly Agreed** or **Agreed** that the engagement met expectations & added value to their role

**88%**

Respondents **Strongly Agreed** or **Agreed** that they have a better understanding of SONI's role & the relevant subject matter

**88%**

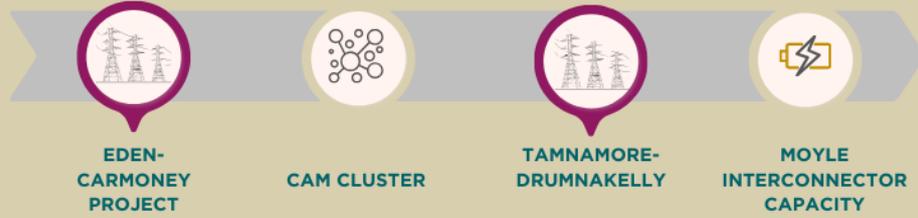
Respondents **Strongly Agreed** or **Agreed** that the information provided was accessible and proportionate to their needs

**88%**

Respondents **Strongly Agreed** or **Agreed** that their was sufficient opportunity to engage and ask questions

**SONI  
ENGAGEMENT  
WITH LOCAL  
COMMUNITIES**

Given the challenges of reaching the general public for feedback through traditional channels, SONI also seeks views when engaging about local infrastructure projects. In line with our Public Engagement Model, this included the following key projects in 2023/24:



Engagements across all public drop-in sessions



Elected representatives and other stakeholders

**97%**

Respondents **Strongly Agreed** or **Agree** that they were satisfied with their engagement with SONI

**94%**

Respondents **Strongly Agreed** or **Agree** they have a better understanding of SONI's role due to the public event they attended

**100%**

Respondents **Strongly Agreed** or **Agree** that the information was accessible and easy to understand

**97%**

Respondents **Strongly Agreed** or **Agree** that they understand why the project is needed

**48%**

Respondents found out about the events through family/friends and social media.

**97%**

Respondents **Strongly Agreed** or **Agree** that they understood what the project involves

**94%**

Respondents **Strongly Agreed** or **Agree** that the projects will benefit local communities



**DIGITAL AND MEDIA  
ENGAGEMENT**

**3,608**

engagements on infrastructure project social media posts



Average LinkedIn engagement rate of 12.6%, **10.2% higher** than energy industry averages

According to SONI's independent media monitoring, Prime Positive coverage media coverage increased from 17% to 45% and recorded 0% Prime Negative coverage for the second year in a row.

**Media Score**

a holistic score which combines coverage sentiment, key message penetration, volume etc

**2023/24**

**89/100**

**2022/23**

**80/100**



# QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK



## What stakeholders said SONI does well...

“ [redacted] has had a positive experience engaging with SONI and welcomes the increased levels of interaction and collaboration throughout 2023 and in the first quarter of 2024. [redacted] has noted a strong willingness on behalf of SONI to increase the frequency of engagement work it conducts with the renewable electricity industry, both at a Committee and Board level, but also at a wider membership level. SONI has hosted in-person briefings on specific strategic issues, including the Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland (TDPNI) and, going forward, we know is willing to host further in-person sessions which allow for general updates on a range of workstreams across SONI and afford [redacted] members the chance to engage directly with the senior leadership team.”

**Industry Representative Body**

“ Ample opportunity to engage and appreciate the scope and scale of SONI's role. Would be interested in further engagement in a more technical manner to see what can be achieved to resolve some of the key issues facing the industry in conjunction with SONI and other parties in a collaborative manner. Useful to see that we are all working in the same general direction. Really valuable to have been able to make contact with key personnel in SONI. Would like to be able to assist in any way to support SONI obtaining additional resources as necessary to urgently address relevant blockages.”

**SONI event participant**

The [redacted] have seen signs recently that SONI are making positive steps at engaging with stakeholders

**Organisation working with consumers**



“ We are delighted with our engagement with SONI. [redacted] view the partnership with SONI as vital for our engagement with our membership on matters relating to energy transition, energy strategy and decarbonisation targets”

**Business representative organisation**



“ The team's willingness to work together to tackle research challenges, along with their collaborative spirit in addressing complex issues is invaluable”

**Academia**

“ [redacted] is pleased to have a good working relationship with SONI. As the representative association for the local councils, we have been able to have a number of productive discussions on key issues”

**Statutory partner working with local government**

“ Really worthwhile event, great to get an opportunity to learn more about the inner workings of SONI and some of the challenges / opportunities that are being worked on. More events like this would be fantastic.”

**SONI event participant**



## Areas where stakeholders said SONI can improve...

“ Where wider groups are consulted or engaged with, it is sometimes not clear how feedback is taken account of (or not), which gives the impression of engagement for engagements sake. Would suggest providing feedback to stakeholders and/or more targeted engagement”

**Industry Partner**



“ More transparency on the projects to ensure that efficient outcomes are delivered to consumers”

**Organisation representing consumers**



# case

## studies & testimonials

“Having customer engagements clinics to discuss early stages of potential connection methods have been very beneficial and helpful.”  
**Customer**

“Before commenting further we want to focus on SONI’s significant effort and work in their Engagement Model and specifically their commitment to work with those who may be affected by any future grid development plans, ensuring affected local communities, including land owners, are at the heart of the energy transition. SONI have engaged with the UFU on their 3-Part Process for Grid Development process. What this means is a commitment to engage with local communities years before the submission of a planning application and thereby provide opportunities for their input.”  
**Organisation representing rural communities**

“Regular engagement at working level on security of supply and system operations. Short notice requests to meet and provide system updates are met by SONI colleagues.”  
**Statutory partner**

“SONI do a fantastic job in engaging with the wider business community and ensuring we can send relevant messaging to our members. They are also key partners who actively encourage sustainable growth in Northern Ireland.”  
**Business representative body**

“The team’s willingness to work together to tackle research challenges, along with their collaborative spirit in addressing complex issues is invaluable.”  
**Academia**

“We believe that SONI has gone above and beyond their remit to support the development of offshore wind. They have provided information in a timely manner and have been extremely professional and courteous in all of our engagements.”  
**Developer**



## NI Energy Forum – a partnership with the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce

In 2023/24, SONI continued its partnership and collaboration with the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce to support the Energy Forum. Through a series of thought leadership events, the partnership brings together the energy industry, business, government, academia and civic society to discuss the key opportunities and challenges of Northern Ireland’s energy transition

For example, in March 2024, SONI and the NI Chamber welcomed Electricity Networks Commissioner, Nick Winsor CBE, to deliver a keynote address on his report to accelerate the development of grid infrastructure and participate in a panel of local experts. The below graphic outlines stakeholder feedback in relation to the partnership.



<h3>Energy Forum with SONI</h3> <p>Oct 2023 – Sep 2024 Impact</p>	<p><b>190</b> Attendees</p>	<p><b>100%</b> Furthered their knowledge of the energy landscape in Northern Ireland</p>
	<p><b>12</b> speakers</p>	<p><b>96%</b> Were satisfied that the Energy forum met their business priorities</p>
<p><b>68%</b> Made connections to widen their business network</p>		

## Eden-Carrmoney Project public engagement

The Eden – Carrmoney project is an upgrade to the electricity transmission system between Eden 110 kV Substation, near Carrickfergus, and Carrmoney 110 kV Substation in Newtownabbey.

To meet the growing needs of residents and businesses in the local area, a significant upgrade of electricity infrastructure is necessary which will involve the refurbishment of parts of the existing overhead line and the placement of new high-capacity underground cable.

As part of SONI's Public Engagement Model, SONI Engagement Team delivered a package of external engagement and communications to ensure local communities had an opportunity to feed into our plans.

The outcomes of the engagement are outlined in the graphics below.



Consultation period between 16 February 2024 & 10 May 2024



2 drop-in public consultation events in Mossley Mill and Carrickfergus Town Hall



Online consultation hosted on the SONI Consultation Portal



A campaign of social media activity took place on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn



Direct Invitations were issued to local elected representatives and key stakeholders

**17** engagements across public drop-in sessions\*  
some engagements may have included several participants

**2,372** engagements on project specific social media posts

**15** responses received from participants

**100** % attendees at the public drop-in events live in the local area

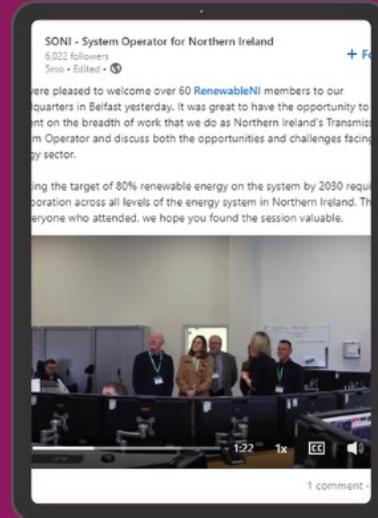
**40** elected representatives engaged with during Part 2a engagement

**73** % of respondents found out about the events through family/friends and social media



## SONI and RenewableNI Industry Breakfast event

In June 2024, SONI delivered an engagement event in partnership with RenewableNI. SONI welcomed over 60 members from RenewableNI to its headquarters in Belfast. Over the course of the event, industry stakeholders met with six different teams across SONI to further build working relationships and develop an improved knowledge, understanding and awareness of the full range of our work as Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator.



### Post survey feedback

- **100%** of respondents Strongly Agreed (80%) or Somewhat Agreed (20%) with “The engagement met my expectations and added value to my role”
- **80%** of respondents Strongly Agreed (80%) or Somewhat Agreed with “I have a better understanding of SONI’s role and the relevant subject matter”
- **80%** of respondents Strongly Agreed (60%) or Somewhat Agreed (20%) with “The information provided was accessible and proportionate to my needs”
- **80%** of respondents Strongly Agreed (40%) or Somewhat Agreed (40%) with “There was sufficient opportunity for me to engage and ask questions.”



## Minister for the Economy Conor Murphy visit to SONI

In April 2024, SONI welcomed Minister for the Economy, Conor Murphy, for a visit to SONI's Control Centre. During the Control Centre visit, the Minister was able to hear first-hand from our experienced grid control engineers about the challenges of managing a power system in transition.

The Minister also received a briefing and participated in a roundtable discussion with SONI's Chair and Senior Leadership Team to discuss further opportunities for collaboration to accelerate the delivery of the Energy Strategy. As a trusted adviser, SONI remains committed to working closely with the Department for the Economy to support Northern Ireland's renewable energy ambitions.



Speaking at the event, Minister Conor Murphy said:

*“A just transition towards net-zero is a critical objective of my Economic Vision. As decarbonisation will play a key role in the transition to a greener and more sustainable economy, I was pleased to visit SONI to hear further about the progress in decarbonising the electricity grid.”*

*“As the grid operator, SONI is central to supporting my renewable energy ambitions. Transforming the grid's infrastructure and how it's used is vital for ensuring we deliver an affordable and secure energy future for all.”*

*“We face the same short-term challenges in transitioning to a renewables-based power system as our counterparts across the world, but the energy transition also provides huge economic opportunities that can generate good jobs, improve productivity and address regional imbalance.”*



# 2023/2024 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

