



Delivering a cleaner
energy future

Mid-Year 2024-25 Performance Report

April 2025



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About Us

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

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, 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.

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 power system, plan the changes and investments that are required, 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 in the future. Both NIE Networks and the Gas TSOs are key partners in these activities.





Evaluative Performance Framework

The Evaluative Performance Framework commenced in 2022. It facilitates the assessment of SONI's performance through two stages, the assessment of SONI's Forward Work Plan (FWP) which is published by the end of September each year, and the assessment of SONI's Annual Performance Report which is published by the end of December the following year.

The purpose of this mid-year performance update is to provide information on SONI's delivery and performance in the year to date (October 2024 to September 2025).

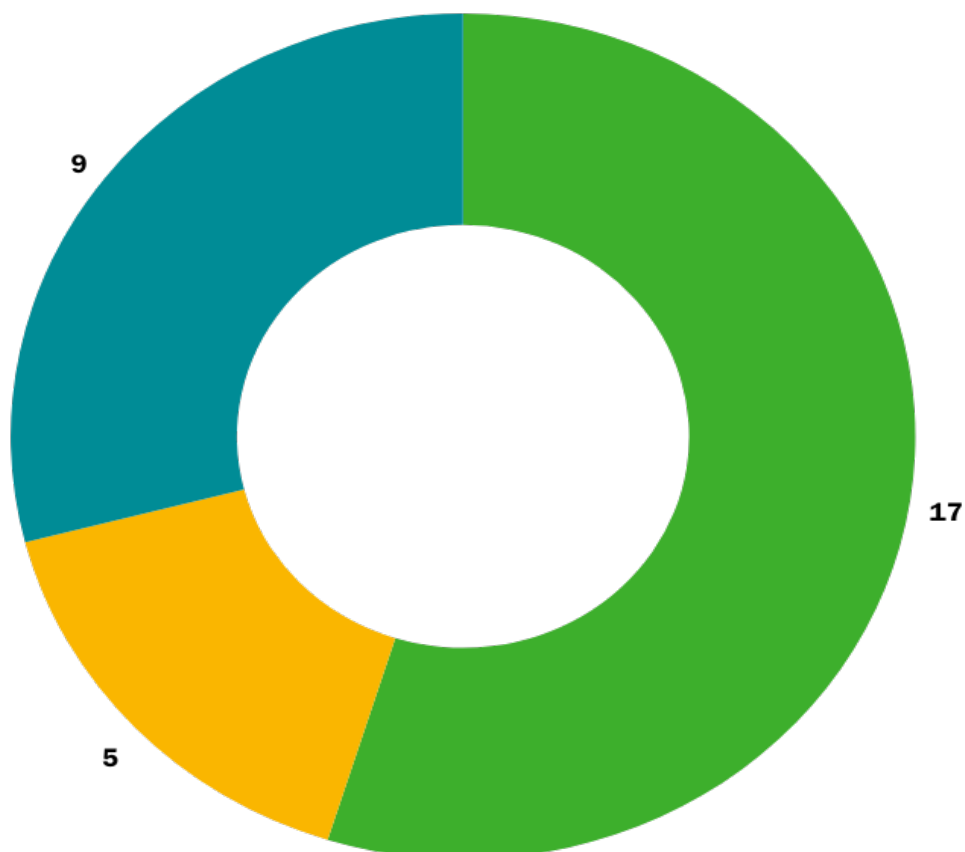


Forward Work Plan Progress Year to Date


33 milestones were detailed within the Forward Work Plan 2024/25 for this 6-month period between October 2024 and March 2025. **2** milestones have been descope by SONI. The first relates to the submission of our business plan for the new price control, which has been removed following the recent extension of our existing price control. The second relates to the Limavady TNPP submission, this has been descope as the customer has withdrawn and the submission has been placed on hold.


SONI will be reporting on the remaining **31** milestones in this period. SONI has completed **17** out of the **31** Milestones. Of the **14** remaining milestones which are not complete, **5** are SONI related delays, and **9** were delayed due to circumstances Outside of SONI's Control.


Overall Progress Year to Date



Legend

 Completed

 SONI Related Delay

 Outside of SONI's Control

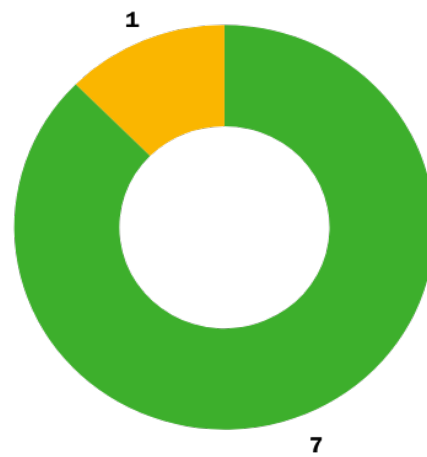
Performance Year to Date by Role

The below charts display the performance of each role year to date. A breakdown of each milestone is provided later in this report.

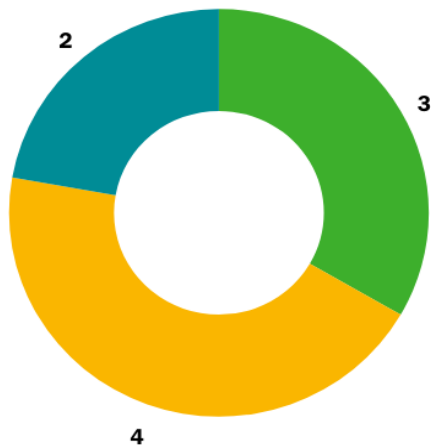
Role 1 System Operations & Adequacy



Role 2 Independent Expert



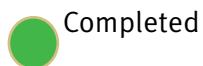
Role 3 System Planning



Role 4 Commercial Interface



Legend



Completed



SONI Related
Delay



Outside of
SONI's Control

Additional Deliverables

In addition to the deliverables outlined in the 2024-2025 Forward Work Plan, SONI has undertaken substantial work across the business in the period in areas such as Stakeholder engagement, System Operations, Network Planning and Future power initiatives.

We have accomplished a significant amount of work beyond the commitments outlined in the 2024/25 Forward Work Plan. This demonstrates the speed of change in the industry.

Many of the examples below were not known when the forward work plan was being developed. SONI has demonstrated significant adaptability and prioritised areas. We discuss some of these initiatives below.

Renewable Electricity Support Scheme

SONI has been undertaking significant additional work in support of the Department for Economy's development of the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS), which aims to incentivise the growth of renewable electricity in Northern Ireland.

Working closely with the Utility Regulator, we have been providing expert input to help shape the schemes design and delivery. As part of this, DfE has formally requested SONI's involvement in several key areas, including the development and implementation of the auction platform that will be used to competitively allocate support to renewable electricity projects. This work is essential to enable a secure, sustainable and decarbonised energy future, and represents an important expansion of our role in supporting government policy.



Winter Outlook Update

In December 2024, Storm Darragh caused significant and unforeseen damage at one of the major power stations in Northern Ireland, Ballylumford.

This resulted in the loss of a substantial amount of available conventional generation, electricity produced by traditional means such as gas power stations. Specifically, three of the six largest conventional generators in Northern Ireland were forced into extended outages to allow for thorough assessment and repair of the storm-related damage. This type of extreme weather event is not something that can be reasonably forecast, and its impact significantly altered the security of supply outlook for the remainder of the winter period. In response, SONI developed and published an updated Winter Outlook in January 2025 to reflect the revised generation picture and associated risks. Producing this additional report required extensive communication and engagement efforts, placing a considerable and unplanned resource burden on the team during an already challenging period.

System Operation

As part of our Operational Policy Roadmap, we are progressing towards operating the power system with reduced reliance on conventional units.

However, following recent damage at Ballylumford Power Station, the System Operations and Future Power Systems teams had to act swiftly to maintain security of supply by operating the system with only two conventional units. A team was mobilised to perform system studies to determine how the power system could operate securely with only two units online. Once confident that system stability could be maintained, two-unit operation was then implemented. This marked the first time the Northern Ireland system was able to be operate securely using just two conventional units. While two set operation was implemented as a temporary security of supply measure and outside of the Operational Policy Roadmap, SONI is continuing detailed analysis to determine the minimum stability requirements for the NI system ahead of summer 2025.



Dispute Resolution

During the first quarter of the Forward Work plan period, SONI received a number of judicial reviews which had not been anticipated at the time the Forward Work Plan was developed.

Due to significant legal and operational implications of these cases, they were treated as a top priority and required urgent attention. As a result, resources across the business had to be redirected, and other planned activities were reprioritised to ensure appropriate and timely responses to the judicial reviews. This necessary shift in focus impacted the delivery of some elements of the original Forward Work Plan.



Stakeholder Awareness Events

Building on the success of our first stakeholder awareness event in June 2024, we hosted a second event in December 2024 to further strengthen engagement and promote a deeper understanding of our work.

The December event brought together over 60 representatives from our statutory partners, the Utility Regulator, the DfE and Consumer Council. During the session, six teams from across the business delivered detailed presentations on their respective areas, highlighting current activities upcoming programmes of work, and the key opportunities and challenges ahead. These events are a valuable platform for collaboration, transparency and shared understanding as we work together to deliver our strategic objectives.



Engineers Week

In early March, SONI were proud to play a key role in supporting Engineers Week across Northern Ireland, in partnership with Engineers Ireland.

This coincided with International Women's Day, this initiative aimed to promote engineering as an exciting and rewarding career, particularly among young people and girls. Our partnership received widespread media coverage, including features on BBC news and online platforms. Throughout the week, over 2,000 school pupils were engaged in a range of interactive activities designed to spark interest in engineering and highlight the vital role it plays in society. As a sponsor, we were especially proud to help inspire the next generation of engineers for the energy sector.

Eighteen of our team members volunteered in local schools, supporting the "Big Bridge" event where students worked together to test their engineering and teamwork skills. Our sponsorship also supported 'The Science Room' sessions, where primary school children learned about electricity basics – such as types of charges and how circuits work. We also welcomed 23 pupils from Lagan College to the SONI offices, where they explored how we plan the electricity grid and got a behind-the-scenes tour of our control room.



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

SONI Strategy

SONI published our new Strategy¹ for 2025-2031 in February 2025. Our strategy signposts the transformative change required across energy policy and how the power system is managed in order to support 2030 and 2050 targets. Our strategy also recognises that while hugely challenging in its scale, pace and complexity there must be a just transition for consumers.

We have identified 4 key pillars that underpin our Strategy: Advise, Plan, Deliver and Operate.



Advise - our advisory role will be pivotal in shaping the future energy landscape of Northern Ireland.

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

Deliver - to enable the collective renewable energy ambitions, the transmission system must be transformed - physically and operationally - at a scale, pace and level of complexity that is unprecedented.

Operate - as the Transmission System Operator for Northern Ireland, our priority is 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.

¹ SONI Strategy

SONI Governance

As highlighted in the 2024/25 FWP, SONI continues to implement the new obligations relating to SONI Governance.

There is a significant workload associated with this programme in terms of agreeing and implementing new working arrangements with EirGrid, preparing the necessary derogations based on the guidance documentation recently provided by the Utility Regulator, securing the necessary funding to implement the changes and progressing the necessary recruitment of new staff.

This work is being progressed in parallel with the milestones set out in the FWP. SONI expects this work to ramp up over the summer period and will continue to assess the resource demands and prioritise accordingly thus ensuring that SONI remains compliant with our licence obligations.

Role 1 System Operations and Adequacy

Summary of Deliverables



Role 1 Progress

The table below provides an overview of the projects and milestones scheduled for delivery in the first six months of the Forward Work Plan 2024/25 for Role 1, System Operations and Adequacy. This includes revised dates where available and the current percentage progress for each project.

Project	Milestone	Due Date	Revised Date	Project Status
FWP23-01: Future Arrangements System Services (FASS)	1. Publish System Service Charge Recommendations Paper	November 2024	-	100%
	2. Publish draft Plain English Version of System Services Code	December 2024	-	100%
	3. Submit FASS Volumes Methodology recommendations paper to SEMC	December 2024	-	100%
FWP23-02: Scheduling and Dispatch	1. Vendor System Build and Test Complete for Scheduling and Dispatch Programme Tranche 1 Initiatives	December 2024	-	100%
	2. TSO/MO System Test and Validation complete for Scheduling and Dispatch Programme Test 1 Initiatives	March 2025	August 2025	50%
	3. Participant Interface Test (PIT) Complete for Scheduling and Dispatch Programme Tranche 1 Initiatives	March 2025	August 2025	50%
FWP25-09 Recommendations to start 80% SNSP Operational Trial	1. Detailed technical studies to be completed	December 2024	-	100%
	2. Studies outcome and results approved by OPRC	December 2024	-	100%
	3. Decision taken on whether to proceed with 80% SNSP operational trial	December 2024	July 2025	50%
FWP005: Control Centre Tools	1. VTT Multi-Timepoint Solution Live and Operational	December 2024	-	100%
	2. VTT Automated Modelling Environment	November 2024	August 2025	10%
	3. RMT Enhancements	December 2024	August 2025	10%
	4. LSAT Environments	December 2024	June 2025	25%

Project Updates

FWP23-02 Scheduling and Dispatch

There have been delays to the milestones set out in the Forward Work Plan for the Scheduling and Dispatch Project (SDP), primarily due to factors **Outside of SONI's Control**. In particular, the Vendor system build and associated testing milestones experienced setbacks due to delays in testing of EMS changes. These issues have now been resolved, and testing is **complete**.

Consequently, a re-baselined Tranche 1 delivery plan was developed and approved by the SDP Programme board, Eirgrid and SONI. This revised plan was communicated to the Regulatory Authorities on 20th January 2025 and presented to industry stakeholders on 21st January 2025. Due to the earlier delays in the Vendor system build and test Initiatives activities, the TSO/MO system test and validation activities also experienced knock-on delays but have since commenced.

The revised Tranche 1 approach introduced a further split in key milestones, resulting in a revised delivery date for all Tranche 1 milestones. The Participant Interface Testing (PIT) milestone for Tranche 1 has now been split in to two: one for Energy Storage Power Station (ESPS), for which planning is ongoing and expected to complete in May 2025, and another for non-priority dispatch renewables, now scheduled for completion in August 2025.



The milestone for the commencement of cutover activities has also been split. The first relates to cutover activities for ESPS, and workshops have already commenced to support preparation for the transition to live operations. The second milestone concerns cutover activities for non-priority dispatch renewables and wind dispatch improvements, which under the revised Tranche 1 approach, are now due in September 2025. The original implementation and go live milestone for Tranche 2 initiatives, initially scheduled for April 2025, has now been revised to November 2025. Detailed system design activities for Tranche 2 are currently underway with vendors.

FWP25-09: Recommendation to start 80% SNSP operational trial (FO)

We have successfully **completed** the necessary technical studies to support the 80% SNSP operational trial. The outcomes and results of these studies have been reviewed and approved by the Operational Policy Review Committee (OPRC). However, the decision on whether to proceed with the trial has been postponed, to enable the OPRC to further consider appropriate mitigations for the existing fault ride-through issues associated with certain data centres. The delay with the completion of this milestone is **Outside of SONI's Control**.

FWP005: Control Centre Tools

Good progress has been made on the Control Centre Tools project. The milestone for the VTT Multi-Time Point Solution has been successfully **completed**, with the application now live and operational.

The VTT Automated Modelling Environment milestone experienced delays due to commercial documentation not being finalised in 2024, which impacted the overall delivery schedule. This issue has now been resolved, and a revised draft schedule has been received from the vendor. The project is due to restart in May, following a rebaselining exercise at the end of April, with a revised delivery date of August 2025.

The RMT Enhancements project has been put on hold due to a risk that was identified by the security team, which has now been addressed.

The LSAT Environments project remains in progress but has encountered challenges during the design phase sign-off. An internal workshop with IT infrastructure has been scheduled to resolve outstanding design discussions. This project now has a revised delivery date of June 2025.

All changes to milestone dates have been due to delays **Outside of SONI's Control**.



Role 2 Independent Expert

Summary of Deliverables



Role 2 Progress

The table below provides an overview of the projects and milestones scheduled for delivery in the first six months of the Forward Work Plan 2024/25 for Role 2 Independent Expert. This includes revised dates where available and the current percentage progress for each project.

Project	Milestone	Due Date	Revised Date	Project Status
FWP25-02: SONI Public Engagement Model and Landowner Charter rollout	1. Development of evidence-based Community Benefit proposal for Utility Regulator ¹	October 2024	-	100%
	2. Partnership with Rural Support to develop Landowner Engagement Pck and outreach project. (Partnership revised and is now Young Farmers Club of Ulster) ²	March 2025	-	100%
FWP23-08: TSO-DSO Future Operating Model	1. Update model proposals following lessons learned from the Flex trial and Control Centre of the Future (CCOTF) Implementation Plan	December 2024	-	100%
	2. Update documents for operating model following Flex trial lessons learned	December 2024	-	100%
FWP25-11: Future Energy System Shared Paper (FPS)	1. Agree modelling approach and carry out Power System Studies	December 2024	-	100%
FWP25-12: Dispatch Down Action Plan	1. Publication of Dispatch Down Action Plan	December 2024	-	100%
FWP23-14: Support the NI Energy Strategy	1. Review DfE Action Plan for 2025 and identify areas where SONI can support	Early 2025	-	100%
FWP24-06: Tomorrows Energy Scenarios Northern Ireland (TESNI)	1. Publication of final TES System Needs ASsessment 2023	November 2024	TBC	95%

¹ Proposal has been developed, SONI finalising engagement with UR ahead of submission to UR.

² The scope of project has changed slightly to reflect the requirement for a different delivery partner, however, it continues to maintain a strong focus on engagement with rural communities.

Project Updates

FWP24-06: Tomorrows Energy Scenarios Northern Ireland (TESNI)

Work on the System Needs Assessment has been completed. This is an all island assessment and SONI is working in conjunction with EirGrid to further assess the results ahead of publication. As a result the milestone for publishing the System Needs Assessment has been delayed due to a **SONI Related Delay**.



Role 3 System Planning

Summary of Deliverables



Role 3 Progress

The table below provides an overview of the projects and milestones scheduled for delivery in the first six months of the Forward Work Plan 2024/25 for Role 3, System Planning. This includes revised dates where available and the current percentage progress for each project.

Project	Milestone	Due Date	Revised Date	Project Status
FWP25-04: Transmission Clusters Policy	1. Develop approach with NIEN and industry and issue for consultation	December 2024	May 2025	95%
FWP2506: Transmission nodes at reaching/ capacity	1. Complete review of obligations and identify solutions	November 2024	June 2025	75%
	2.Stakeholder engagement with NIEN/UR and industry on way forward	February 2025	July 2025	0%
FWP25-07: Firm Access Quantity (FAQ) methodology	1. Publication of Consultation paper on changes to Firm Access Quantity (FAQ) methodology	March 2025	Sept 2025	40%
FWP027: Energising Belfast: Castlreagh - Hannahstown	Currently in Part 3¹ 1. Secure options to purchase two sites for substation developments	December 2024	July 2025	100%
FWP028: Airport Road Main 110/33kV Substation	Currently in Part 3 1. Secure legal agreements for substation site acquisition	October 2024	-	100%
	2. SONI issues Transmission Project Instruction to NIE	November 2024	May 2025	95%
FWP026: North South 400kV Interconnector	1. Issue Transmission Project Instruction (TPI)	October 2024	-	100%
	2. SONI to enter into a Transmission Project Agreement	November 2024	-	100%

¹ Part 3 is the part of the process where SONI submits and supports a planning application leading to project handover to NIE Networks.

Project Updates

FWP25-04: Transmission Clusters policy

The milestone to develop an approach to transmission clusters in collaboration with NIE Networks and industry and issue it for consultation has experienced revised delivery dates due to a **SONI Related Delay**. This policy is both new and innovative, with the potential for far-reaching impacts across the electricity industry. As such, significant care has been taken to ensure the approach is robust, future proofed, and aligned with broader strategic and regulatory objectives.

The complexity of developing this policy proved greater than originally anticipated, requiring more extensive engagement and analysis to shape an approach that balances the needs of stakeholders while delivering efficient and effective outcomes. This has in turn impacted the timeline for compiling the consultation material.

The consultation document has been drafted, and we are currently progressing through our internal governance for approval. We are seeking to expedite the publication of the document, with a view to publication in **May 2025**. SONI remain committed to ensuring the final policy is both deliverable and well-supported by industry.



FWP25-06: Transmission nodes at reaching/capacity

The milestone to complete a review of obligations and identify solutions for transmission nodes that are at or reaching capacity is well progressed. The highest priority node, Enniskillen has now reached the recommendation stage and is currently awaiting final approval. Work is ongoing to assess the remaining nodes, with a target of completion by **June 2025**. Assessing the nodes involves a significant level of technical and analytical work, and while progress has been made, delivery of this milestone has been revised due to a **SONI Related Delay**, this is due to competing

priorities within the team and a marked increase in connection applications and legal proceedings. SONI remain focused on progressing this work as efficiently as possible.

The subsequent milestone – engaging with NIE Networks, UR and industry on the proposed way forward – will commence once the assessments are complete, with engagement currently planned to begin in July 2025.

FWP25-07: Firm Access Quantity (FAQ) methodology reaching/capacity

The milestone for publishing the Firm Access Quantity (FAQ) methodology consultation has been subject to revised timelines due to a **SONI Related Delay**. Work to update the FAQ programme – which calculates firm access quantities for all generation connected to the power system through a series of detailed system studies - is ongoing. While the scale and complexity of this project has proven to be more complex than originally anticipated good progress has been made underway. Completion of this milestone also requires engagement with the UR. While the FAQ review is included in the URs 2025 Forward Work Plan, the associated timelines do not currently align with those in SONI's 2024/25 Forward Work Plan. We are actively engaging with the UR to progress this important work and seek alignment where possible.

FWP028: Airport Road Main 110/33 kV Substation

SONI successfully secured the necessary legal agreements for the substation site acquisition marking a key milestone for this project. However, progress towards the second milestone – issuing the transmission project instructions to Network – has been delayed. This is due to protracted engagement required to resolve a number of outstanding issues, which are **Outside of SONI's Control**. We continue to work closely with relevant stakeholders to progress matters as efficiently as possible.

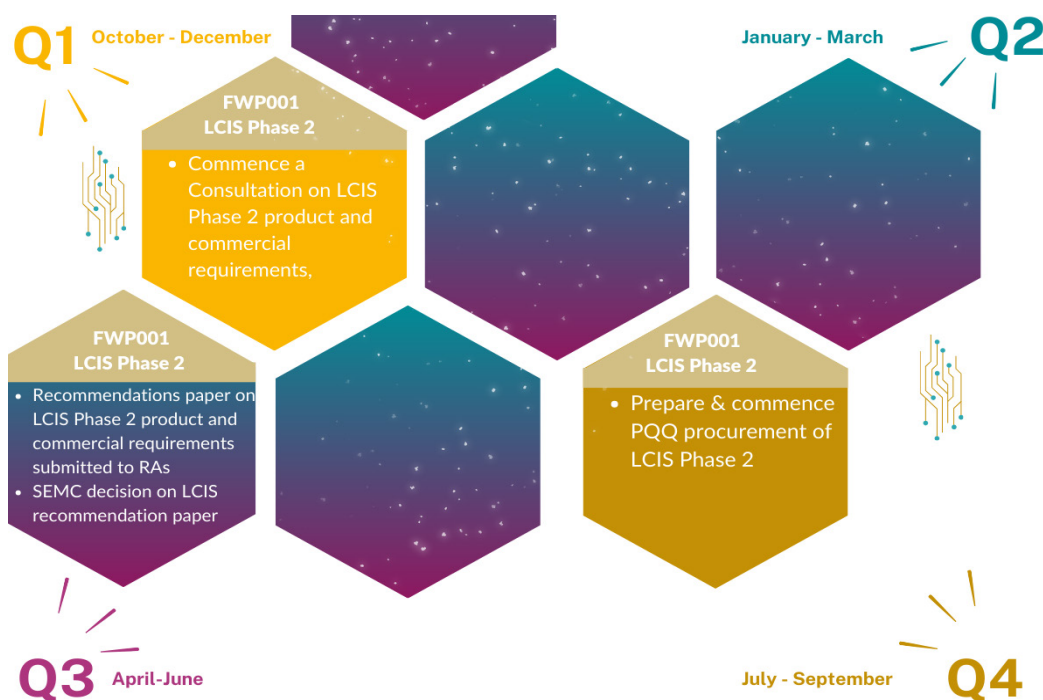
FWP027: Energising Belfast: Castlereagh—Hannahstown

The milestone for securing options for substation sites for the Energising Belfast project has been delayed due to factors **Outside of SONI's Control**. Across our grid projects, negotiation for land options is increasingly trending towards longer timelines. We are continuing to actively engage with the relevant landowner and stakeholders to secure the necessary options for the two substation sites in question. In parallel, we intend to engage with the UR to seek guidance and establish a clear structure for securing land rights.



Role 4 Commercial Interface

Summary of Deliverables



Role 4 Progress

The table below provides an overview of the projects and milestones scheduled for delivery in the first six months of the Forward Work Plan 2024/25 for Role 4, Commercial Interface. This includes revised dates where available and the current percentage progress for each project.

Project	Milestone	Due Date	Revised Due Date	Project Status
FWP001: LCIS Phase 2	1. Commence a consultation on LCIS Phase Two product and commercial requirements	December 2024	May 2025	75%

Project Updates

FWP001 LCIS Phase 2

The milestone for commencing a consultation on LCIS Phase Two product and commercial requirements has been revised due to a **SONI-Related Delay**. The system studies required to determine the procurement volume, along with the development of the associated procurement arrangements, have taken longer than initially anticipated. While most of these arrangements are now finalised, a legal review of both the procurement approach and the legal agreement is currently underway. Subject to the outcome of this review, we expect to commence consultation in early May 2025, with the aim of submitting a recommendations paper to the Regulatory Authorities by the end of July 2025. In parallel, we are conducting a planning search to identify the number of projects currently in the planning system that are likely to participate in the LCIS Phase Two procurement. The outcome of this search may necessitate adjustments to the procurement approach to ensure a sufficient level of competition to the benefit of consumers.





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