



Dispatch Down Action Plan

Northern Ireland
August 2026

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1. List of Acronyms

BMPS	Balancing Market Principles Statement	NRR	Negative Ramping Reserves
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis	OPRC	Operational Policy Review Committee
DLR	Dynamic Line Rating	PV	Photovoltaic (solar) generation
FASS	Future Arrangements for System Services	RES	Renewable Energy Systems
FNA	Flexibility Needs Assessment	SEM	Single Electricity Market
HVDC	High Voltage Direct Current	SEMO	Single Electricity Market Operator
JPMO	Joint Programme Management Office	SONI	System Operator for Northern Ireland
LCIS	Low Carbon Inertia Services	SNSP	System Non-Synchronous Penetration
MNOU	Minimum Number of Operational Units	TSO	Transmission System Operator
NI	Northern Ireland	UR	Utility Regulator

2. Introduction

The dispatch down of renewable energy is the difference between the available renewable energy and the renewable energy that can be accommodated by the Northern Ireland power system. This Action Plan sets out recommendations by the System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) and Northern Ireland's electricity Transmission System Operator (TSO), for policymakers, regulators, and industry to help reduce current levels of dispatch down of renewable generation in Northern Ireland.

At SONI, we are committed to enabling the low-carbon, efficient generation capacity and supporting technologies needed for Northern Ireland's energy transition.

The delivery of the appropriate type of new renewable generation, in the right location, is vital for a more sustainable power system that can support the Department for the Economy's Energy Strategy, and the overarching targets for emission reduction set by the Climate Change Act (2022).

As Northern Ireland's electricity TSO, we must continue to run the power system safely, securely, and reliably so electricity can flow from where it is generated to where it is needed.

At present, SONI has a dual legal duty to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated, and economical electricity transmission system that can meet long-term demand, while also supporting security of supply through sufficient transmission capacity and system reliability.

In fulfilling our obligations, SONI is required to balance a range of factors, which can often overlap and, at times, compete. These factors loosely fall into the following categories: security of supply and system stability; pace/scale of renewables integration; cost to the consumer; and timescales (as set by government policy).

As Northern Ireland's TSO, we remain committed to supporting the region's renewable energy ambitions, within the scope of our licence, the wider policy and regulatory framework, and the need to maintain a stable electricity system.

3. Recent levels of dispatch down of renewables:

Context

We acknowledge the renewables industry's significant concerns in relation to the high levels of dispatch down of renewables in recent years.

In response, SONI established an internal Dispatch Down Working Group in June 2024 to address the issue. We value the constructive engagement to date from the renewables industry, government and regulators through the workshops held so far.

This Action Plan is the second phase of this programme of work.

It reflects our commitment to working together with all stakeholders to better understand and, where possible, deliver additional short-term mitigation measures. While many of these wider issues are beyond SONI's exclusive control, we recognise our key role in putting in place what measures we can reasonably deliver within the remit of our Licence.

4. Existing policy and regulatory landscape

In considering this challenge and the potential mitigations directly available to SONI as the TSO, it is important to understand the existing policy and regulatory landscape which ultimately governs and dictates the Scheduling and Dispatch process.

The Single Electricity Market (SEM) is the wholesale electricity market for the island of Ireland. First going live on 1 November 2007, the market trades wholesale electricity in Ireland and Northern Ireland (NI) on an All-Island basis.

The market is jointly regulated by the Utility Regulator and the Commission for Regulation of Utilities. The decision-making body which governs the market is the SEM Committee (SEMC).

The principles of the design are regulated by the European Clean Energy Package¹ and covered under international law through the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The Market spans several horizons including: the long-term Capacity Market, Day-Ahead markets, Intra-Day markets, and the balancing market. SONI, as a TSO, plays a significant role in the balancing market time horizon which ensures the minute-by-minute balancing of supply and demand.

SONI and EirGrid jointly schedule and dispatch the Single Electricity Market (SEM) in line with the Balancing Market Principles Statement (BMPS). The Balancing Market Principles are kept under review on an annual basis, with the latest version 9.0 available on the SONI website².

¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2019.158.01.0054.01.ENG&toc=OJ.L:2019:158:TOC

² [https://cms.soni.ltd.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Balancing Market Principles Statement version 9.0_0.pdf](https://cms.soni.ltd.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Balancing%20Market%20Principles%20Statement%20version%209.0_0.pdf)

The prioritisation of the Scheduling and Dispatch process are in the following order:

1. Ensuring operational security;
2. Maximising priority dispatch generation; and
3. Efficient operation of the SEM.

SONI's obligations to provide priority dispatch to certain classes of generators are reflected in our Licences, Grid Codes, and both national and EU legislation. In Northern Ireland, the priority dispatch provisions of the European RES Directive were transposed into law in Northern Ireland through, among other things, a new condition in SONI's TSO Licence (Condition 9A).

The BMPS is prepared by SONI and EirGrid in accordance with their respective TSO obligations (Condition 22B of SONI's TSO licence, Condition 10B of EirGrid's TSO licence) and SEM Committee decision SEM-16-058 ('Balancing Market Principles Statement Terms of Reference')³.

This BMPS refers to national and EU legislation, and statutory licences, in effect and applicable to EirGrid and SONI as of August 2025.

The TSOs review the BMPS on an ongoing basis to ensure that the BMPS continues to be accurate and up to date. The BMPS sets out in a clear and comprehensive manner how SONI and EirGrid fulfil the statutory obligations that govern the scheduling and dispatch process in the Single Electricity Market.

The requirement to provide transparency is an overarching obligation. We support transparency throughout the design of our processes and tools which are used to integrate the maximum amount of renewable energy to the NI grid that is technically feasible.

³ <https://www.semcommittee.com/files/semcommittee/media-files/SEM-16-058%20BMPS%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20Decision%20Paper.pdf>

5. Our current work to transform the power system

SONI is committed to working with government and all stakeholders across the energy sector to enable Northern Ireland's renewable energy ambitions. It is important to acknowledge the relatively new, but very significant shift, in policy ambition in this respect. It is also important to acknowledge the transformation of the power system required to support these ambitions is unprecedented in its scale, pace and level of complexity.

In 2022, SONI and EirGrid published an Operational Policy Roadmap to 2030, setting targets for the key operational policy changes needed to support higher levels of renewable generation on the power system. These targets included raising the System Non-Synchronous Penetration (SNSP) limit and reducing Minimum Number of Units (MNOU) requirements. The 2025 update⁴ reflects progress to date, new initiatives, emerging challenges, and revised policies and targets through to 2035. It sets out the context, drivers, timelines, milestones, actions, and stakeholder impacts needed to deliver electricity sector decarbonisation goals.

SONI and EirGrid's operational roadmap sets out a clear path for transforming operational practices to support greater renewable integration, help achieve the government's 80% target, and enable the power system to operate with progressively higher levels of renewable penetration.

Our Operational Policy Roadmap provides a clear pathway to ensuring that the two TSOs within the SEM can continue to operate the power systems safely, securely, and economically, at higher levels of renewable penetration. It also ensures this can be achieved whilst ensuring operational security and dynamic stability, within the appropriate margins, to ensure sufficient operational reserves and ramping capability are available to manage operational uncertainty from minutes to hours.

⁴ <https://cms.soni.ltd.uk/sites/default/files/publications/SONI-Eirgrid-Operational-Policy-Roadmap-2025-2035.pdf>

6. Our assessment of the contributing factors to existing dispatch down levels

As part of this programme of work, SONI's internal dispatch down working group sought to undertake further detailed assessments as to the root causes of the existing levels of dispatch down.

As Northern Ireland's TSO, we are required to balance a wide range of considerations when delivering on our obligations. Our statutory and licence obligations require us to develop the grid in an efficient, coordinated and economic manner while maintaining security of supply at the least possible cost to consumers.

Dispatch down of renewable electricity is a complex issue, that is influenced by a range of factors including prevailing market forces and operational challenges. Some of these factors are local to Northern Ireland and the SEM, while others exist on a European or global scale.

6.1 Global and European factors

Electricity markets in recent years have experienced relatively high volatility. During the Covid pandemic, demand was suppressed leading to low prices across Europe. This was followed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, driving high prices for Natural Gas which had a knock-on impact on electricity prices due to the dependence on gas-fired generation. Prices gradually eased as new suppliers were found to replace Russian gas, but increased again with conflict in the Middle East, where the output of many of these alternative suppliers was reduced.

However, within Europe we are also now starting to observe the effects of negative pricing, which is a consequence of low flexibility across Europe. This is largely driven by very high levels of solar PV in continental Europe, coupled with the low cost (and flexibility) of French Nuclear generation. This has resulted in prices across Europe being significantly lower than Great Britain and SEM, leading to high levels of import first into Great Britain and then into SEM. This has led to lower power prices for imported electricity in SEM than that produced domestically, which has in turn led to TSO balancing actions (applied in accordance with the BMPS) that result in dispatch down of local renewables in the real-time physical dispatch periods.

6.2 Local factors

Operational policies impact dispatch down of generation and are published weekly on the SEMO website⁵. TSOs require operational policies to ensure power system dynamic stability, to meet reserve and ramping requirements, and to maintain operational security.

⁵ <https://www.sem-o.com/publications/general-publications>

Operational policies are defined and modified through various licence obligations on the TSOs.

Ensuring operational security is the first priority of Scheduling and Dispatch. To maintain dynamic stability the TSOs take action to reduce the flows on the North-South tie-line; this limits the amount of power that can flow from Northern Ireland to Ireland. This is necessary to mitigate the risk of a fault on the North-South tie-line and consequent system separation that would ensue.

The balancing action that SONI's control engineers can take are based on the ruleset specified within the BMPS. This means that under a high wind condition, the engineer must first accept Moyle interconnector physical flows (under current market condition typically importing at 450 MW from Great Britain). They must ensure there is a minimum number of large conventional units dispatched to at least their minimum stable level to secure the system frequency and then dispatch down controllable renewables to a level that ensures there is a secure flow of power between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

6.3 Local system events influencing dispatch down in recent years

Error! Reference source not found. below shows the key factors driving Dispatch Down in Northern Ireland in recent years. Grey items are factors driving increased dispatch down, while green labels denote actions which have helped reduce it.

Alongside increased interconnector imports, several local system events have contributed to elevated Dispatch Down levels, including:

1. Outages associated with network reinforcement works in the Omagh-Dromore area.
2. The retirement of Kilroot coal units K1 and K2.
3. Testing and commissioning of the new Kilroot GT6 and GT7 open-cycle gas turbine units during periods of low Northern Ireland demand.
4. Storm damage at Ballylumford Power Station, which resulted in forced outages across several conventional units.
5. Recent restrictions on Moyle Interconnector exports due to fault ride-through issues related to large energy users.

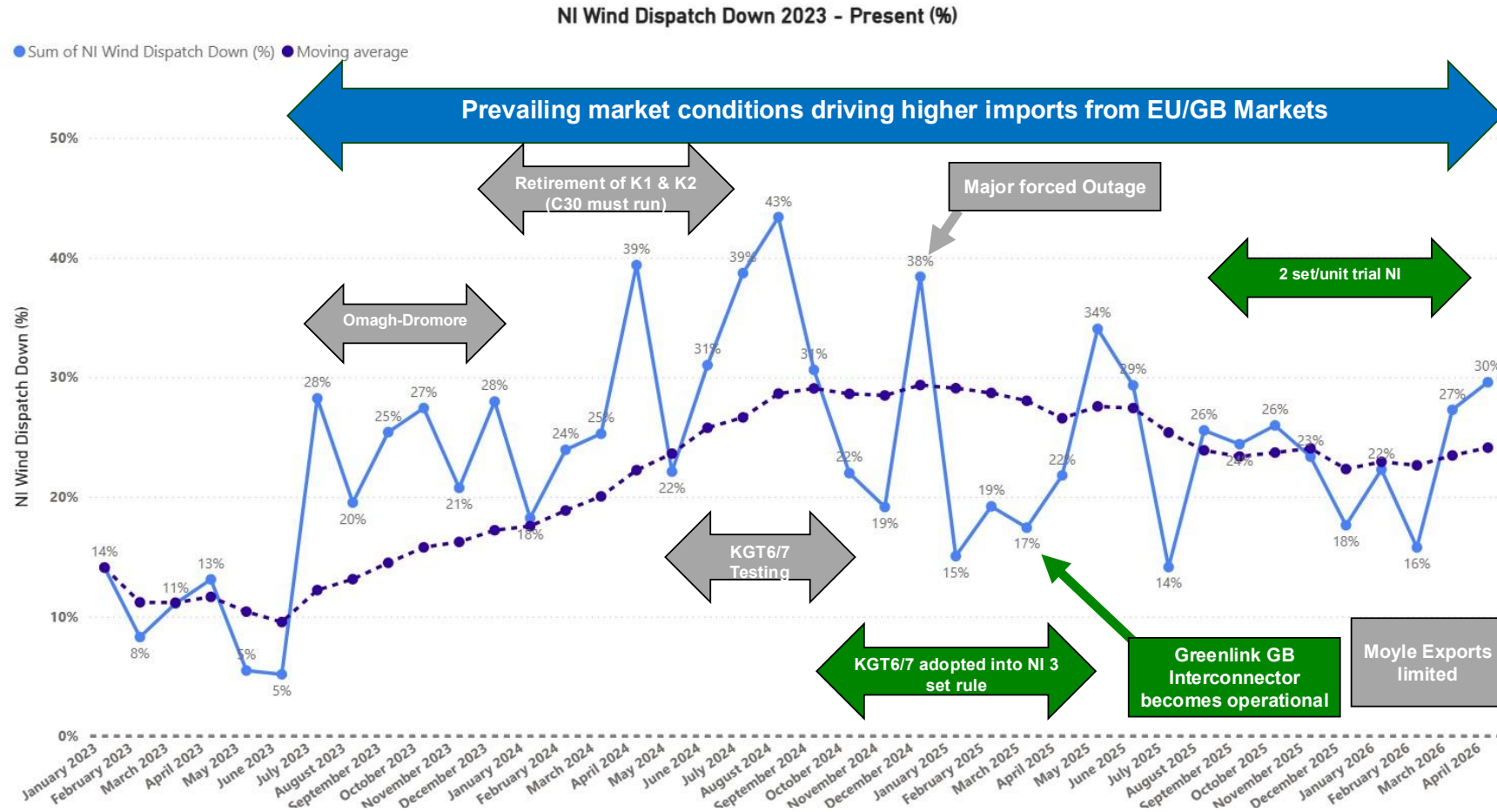


Figure 1 - Dispatch down and local factors

7. Progress to date

Following publication of the Draft Dispatch Down Action Plan in December 2024, SONI and industry stakeholders have made significant progress in advancing a number of priority short-term actions aimed at reducing renewable dispatch down in Northern Ireland. These actions have shown real progress – in 2026 so far, despite relatively high dispatch down levels in percentage terms, higher absolute volumes of wind generation (in MWh) have been accommodated on the Northern Ireland power system every month compared to the same months in 2024 and 2025. While progress remains to be made this means that the amount of renewable generation on the power system is increasing in real terms.

Key achievements to date include:

1. Negative Ramping Reserve Workstream

Negative Ramping Reserve is a service wherein generators reduce their output during an event which sees an excess of generation. Requirements are defined week ahead through the SEMO Weekly Constraints Update⁶. Through close collaboration with renewable generator developers/operators and industry stakeholders, the technical enhancements required to support Negative Ramping Reserve (NRR) provision from the Northern Ireland wind fleet have been successfully implemented. This has included modifications to SONI's Energy Management Systems and wind farm control systems, enabling the routine delivery of 30 MW of negative reserve from wind generation. Plans are now in place to transfer the remaining 30 MW of reserve capability to the NI wind fleet by Autumn 2026, subject to the completion of final testing and validation activities by participating wind generators. In the long term, provision of this service is likely to become a requirement through the Future Arrangements for System Services process.

Impact: This reduces the need to run large conventional sets for negative ramping reserve provision, 30 MW of headroom for local renewable generation.

2. Review of the Minimum Number of Conventional Units ON (MUON) Northern Ireland Generators Constraint

A comprehensive programme of technical studies has been completed to assess the feasibility of reducing the minimum number of conventional generators required to operate in Northern Ireland under specific system conditions. This work has included dynamic stability, operational security and system performance assessments to determine whether the existing requirements can be safely relaxed while maintaining secure and reliable operation of the power system. The findings from these studies have allowed for the relaxation of this constraint from 3 NI units to 2 NI units. The proposal to relax this constraint was approved by Operational Policy Review Committee (OPRC) as

⁶ Published here: <https://www.sem-o.com/publications/general-publications>

enduring operational policy in April 2026. The diagram below shows cyclic nature of the development and implementation of Operational Policy changes.



Figure 2 - Operational policy cycle

This has been a major change to this NI constraint, a constraint that has been in place for decades. Phase two of the Dispatch Down Action Plan will investigate a further relaxation of this constraint which will increase competition for low Min Gen units within the conventional NI generation fleet.

Impact: Reduction of minimum economic conventional generation level from 389 MW to 323 MW, increasing headroom for renewable generation by 66 MW.

3. Operational Security Standards review and update

The SONI Operational Security Standards were updated and published in March 2026. The update now allows additional flexibility when it comes to the management of contingences on the Northern Ireland System and is the first step towards full risk-based operations and dispatch. Currently the 275 kV 'ring' double circuits on the NI Transmission system are managed in a more flexible manner to help reduce constraints. Under phase 2 of the Dispatch Down Action Plan we plan to roll out this approach further on circuits that will have a greater impact on dispatch down and constraints in general (subject to the normal internal governance processes).

Impact: This is a big step towards reducing the need for pre-fault constraint and more flexible network operation. The more flexible approach to managing contingencies on the 275 kV 'ring' double circuits has supported more effective outage planning. It also

represents an initial step towards operating the network through a more probabilistic, risk-based framework, consistent with the EU Network Code on System Operation Guidelines (SOGI). SONI will continue to review and develop this work through its Innovation Roadmap. Extending this approach out to key ‘bottleneck’ circuits is likely to have a significant and measurable reduction on dispatch down.

8. Further actions

Following an additional period of analysis and studies under the second phase of the Dispatch Down Action Plan, SONI’s internal Dispatch Down Working Group identified a number of areas that are currently under exploration with a particular focus on interim solutions for local area constraints and longer-term solutions that are aligned with our long-term Operational Roadmap.

The Action Plan is detailed below in Section 10. This describes the actions, summarises the expected impact, and gives an indication of the complexity, timelines and deliverability of each.

The Dispatch Down now workstream falls under the remit of the recently established Technology Enablement function in SONI, which is responsible for delivery of SONI’s Innovation and Research Strategy⁷. As innovation projects, the actions described in section 10⁸ will be progressed and managed through this function. Going forward these be reported on in Annual Innovation Reports, the first of which we plan to publish in 2027.

⁷ <https://cms.soni.ltd.uk/sites/default/files/2026-06/Innovation-Strategy.pdf>

⁸ Except the actions relating to construction of new network infrastructure, which are reported on through the TDPNI and JPMO: <https://www.soni.ltd.uk/community/projects-in-your-area/tdpni>

9. Summary

The recommendations outlined in this paper are the considered views of SONI and we appreciate that responsibility for the design of the market is the legal responsibility of the SEMC and Utility Regulator. It is also important to note that operational policy and procedure changes may require consultation, licence, grid code or BMPS modifications, or Utility Regulator approval before action can be taken.

However, in line with our commitment to industry, we have sought to explore all mitigation options directly within our control and provide clarity on additional measures that would require action from others or policy/regulatory change.

In developing the measures outlined in this paper, SONI has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including the Department for the Economy, Utility Regulator, RenewableNI, Mutual Energy and a range of industry organisations.

Since the commencement of this project, the team in SONI has been at all times cognisant of the challenges presented by the high levels of dispatch down to the renewable industry, to the power system and to the wider energy landscape in Northern Ireland.

We have specifically reviewed each measure based on several criteria, including merits of deliverability, delivery timelines and impact to address the current levels of dispatch down.

The Action Plan below also sets out areas where policy changes or future investment could be made to address the dispatch down challenges. SONI is cognisant that there are options that need to be considered in the short-term and longer-term.

In summary, there are several strands to the plan of activities:

- Strand 1: Assess short-term measures to bring clarity on Go / No-Go decisions; this will help determine how long it will be before levels of dispatch down can be minimised should current levels of market import persist.
- Strand 2: Market Mechanisms which support investment into power system flexibilities or network services that can manage curtailment and constraint levels.
- Strand 3: Enhancing and ensuring delivery of network assets including dynamic line rating, overhead lines and new technologies such as Low Carbon Inertia Services (LCIS).
- Strand 4: Further measures that generators can do such as minimising their minimum generation levels or removal of grid code derogations that reduce system flexibility.

As it stands, until interim measures or long-term solutions are delivered, it is important to highlight:

- Our control engineers continue to schedule and dispatch generation according to Balancing Market Principles Statement;
- Imports into the SEM are beneficial in the suppression of wholesale electricity prices;
- SONI jointly with EirGrid have an Operational Policy Roadmap (kept under review biannually) to support a power system capable of 80% Renewable Electricity on an annual basis; and
- SONI is committed to actively doing our part in accelerating delivery of infrastructure to support the delivery of renewable energy complementary to DfE's Energy Strategy and the renewable electricity targets as laid out in the Climate Change Act NI (2022). Details of this can be seen in the quarterly updates published by the SONI and NIE Networks Joint Programme Management Office (JPMO)⁹.

SONI will seek to ensure effective stakeholder engagement, clear communication of deliverables and further engagement on actions relevant to other partners.

Furthermore, it is important to understand the impact of demand in the context of dispatch down, in particular the drivers to increase NI demand that fall outside of SONI's direct control. For example, the delivery of electrification of heat and transport and the opportunities for large demand in the west of Northern Ireland should be considered as policy opportunities. The planned rollout of smart metering is key to ensuring new demand can provide the flexibility needed to efficiently run a power system with high levels of variable renewable generation. The Utility Regulator's recent publication of the Flexibility Needs Assessment¹⁰ will help identify opportunities and drivers for flexibility in demand and generation.

While we understand the recommendations outlined within this Action Plan that SONI can deliver directly will not fully resolve the existing challenges, we believe it demonstrates that we have listened and responded to industry concerns and explored all measures available to us within the scope of our licence and the current policy and regulatory landscape. We have carried out modelling to quantify the impact of each of the actions proposed, as can be seen in section 10 below. These impacts are not necessarily cumulative; there is an inherent element of diminishing returns. It is important to stress that dispatch down is a

⁹ See Q2 2026 update here: https://cms.soni.ltd.uk/sites/default/files/2026-04/JPMO%20-%20Network%20Delivery%20Portfolio%20Q2%202026_0.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.uregni.gov.uk/files/uregni/documents/2026-09/Northern%20Ireland-%20Flexibility%20Needs%20Assessment%202026.pdf>

complex problem that requires a portfolio of solutions, some of which are technical, but also policy-related and political.

Decarbonising the power system requires innovation at every level. SONI recognises the importance of innovation in all aspects of planning and operating the power system, and the Dispatch Down Action Plan is at the core of SONI's Innovation and Research Strategy. Going forward it will form part of a larger programme of innovation projects which we will report on in Annual Innovation Reports, starting in 2027.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those stakeholders who have taken the time to engage with us on this important issue, and we look forward to further dialogue as we continue implementation.

Rónán Davison-Kernan | Technology Enablement Manager

David McGowan | Interim Director of Networks and Innovation

10. Dispatch Down Action Plan

10.1 Shorter term network and operational measures

Table 1 Shorter term network and operational measures actions

Less favourable More favourable									
No.	Action	Description	Cost and Complexity	Dependencies	Delivery Timeline	Impact on Dispatch Down (estimates) ¹¹			Progress
						RES Capacity	% change	Cost saving (/yr)	
1	Negative Ramping Reserve trial	Move 50 MW of negative ramping reserve from conventional plant to wind generation, reducing need to run large generators.	Medium cost. Transient security studies required to assess the impact of carrying additional negative ramping reserves during periods of high renewables to help with constraints management.	Technical changes required by both generators and SONI (Wind Dispatch Tool). Regular engagement with industry to agree technical solutions. Regular status updates to Operational Policy Review Committee (OPRC) and approvals as required.	Q3 2026	+ 50 MW	-3%	-£4m	The initial 30 MW of negative reserve has been transferred onto the NI wind fleet, with a plan in place to transfer the remaining 20 MW Q3 2026 dependant on the availability of wind for testing.
	Review of Operational Security Standards	Technical feasibility of relaxing the N-Double Circuit criterion for the 275 kV network, reducing need for pre-fault constraint.	Low cost. Detailed technical studies, operational trial and formal approval process required. Additional granularity required within weather forecasting tools.	Consultation on new standard and regulatory approval. OPRC Approval of operational trial.	Q1 2027	Variable by area	-4%	-£4m	Updated OSS published March 2026. Trial has commenced on 275kV ‘ring’ double circuits with a plan to extend to the Coolkeeragh-Magherafelt circuits early 2027.
3	Reduction of must-run units from 3 to 2	Technical feasibility of relaxing the NI must-run conventional unit constraints under certain conditions. The study outcomes determine if there are scenarios whereby reducing the must-run requirements are feasible, subject to voltage and stability security standards, allowing more headroom for non-synchronous renewable generation.	Low cost. The decision point on Go/No-Go will require a suite of technical studies, an operational trial, and a formal OPRC approval to adopt the policy. If studies highlight an opportunity for a revised NI must-run constraint, under specific conditions, consideration must be given to minimum inertia levels and run hour limitations on open cycle gas turbines.	Internal resources and technical expertise. Multiple stability and operational security study outcomes OPRC Approval of operational trial. Overarching dynamic stability under all operating conditions requires the timely delivery and commissioning of Low Carbon Inertia Services (LCIS) phase 1.	Partially complete, full implementation Q4 2027	+ 60 MW	-8%	-£15-20m	Plan for techno-economic dispatch schedules, dynamic, fault level and voltage studies planned Q4 2026. Operational trial Q4 2027, dependant on the delivery of LCIS phase 1. Policy updates and Governance approvals to change Q2 2027. Dependent on outcome of studies and connection of LCIS units in 2027. Monthly engagement ongoing between SONI, NIEN, UR and Statkraft on delivery of LCIS phase I – First unit to be operational in 2027.

¹¹ Note that estimated figures shown in these tables are not cumulative.



4	Independent review of technical feasibility to reduce minimum stable level across NI conventional generation	SONI to commission an independent study to evaluate technical solutions to reducing the minimum stable level across transmission-connected conventional units in NI. This will enable SONI to discuss relevant technical options with power station owners and the Utility Regulator, including mechanisms to evaluate relevant grid code derogations as well as existing / new mechanisms to incentivise the delivery of technologies to reduce min gen of large units.	Review: low cost Implementation: medium/high cost Engagement with UR and power station owners. Changes to grid code derogations as well as changes to or development of incentive mechanisms. Subject to 3 rd party developers	Consideration will be required in relation to scheduling of outages to facilitate turbine upgrades one to two years. The Capacity T-4 / T-1 auctions provide an opportunity to recover the costs of prospective investments.	Review complete Q3 2026 Implementation TBC	+50 to 100 MW	TBC	TBC	Review of minimum generating levels of NI CCGT and large OCGT fleet now completed. August 2026 - Report delivered to UR on feasibility of lower minimum generation levels of Northern Ireland's major generating units. Grid Code derogations for generators with high minimum generation levels will be reviewed by UR.
5	Review of line rating policy to enable overload capability	Study to understand the value of doing N-1 contingency analysis considering temporary overload capability on 110 kV circuits.	Low cost. Requires conductor assessment to understand capability for temporary overload.	NIE Networks adoption of alternative line rating policy. OPRC approval of new policy. EMS update to enable overload ratings.	Q1 2028	TBC	TBC	TBC	Initial engagement has commenced with NIE Networks, learning from TO approach in GB. NIEN commencing initial conductor sampling 2026. SONI developing business case Q4 2026.

10.2 Longer term network and operational measures

Table 2 Longer term network and operational measures actions

No.	Action	Description	Cost and Complexity	Dependencies	Delivery Timeline	Impact on Dispatch Down (estimates) ¹²			Progress
						RES Capacity	% change	Cost saving (/yr)	
6	LCIS Phase 1	Adoption of LCIS phase 1 into operational policy.	High cost. Requires successful connection, commissioning and testing of new high inertia synchronous condensers and Coleraine and Coolkeeragh. Detailed technical studies, operational trial and formal approval process required.	Construction programme by 3 rd party provider Satisfactory outcome of commissioning and testing.	See Action #3	-	-	-	Workstream now amalgamated with Action #3: Reduction of must-run units from 3 to 2.
	LCIS Phase 2 – Commence Procurement	Identify need for further low-carbon inertia in NI (beyond Phase 1) and commence procurement of required volume.	High cost (full procurement). Technical assessment of volume and location required, as well as cost/benefit analysis. Full tender process needed, with providers able to deliver viable	All-island project funded through Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS). Dependent on successful outcome of tender process.	Expected go-live 2031	~60 – 100 MW	TBC, likely high	TBC, likely high	The studies relating to locational needs for LCIS Phase 2 are now complete. The studies determined Northern Ireland requires a further 1-2 LCIS units to deliver a total of 4000 MVA.s of inertia to the Northern Ireland System. Tender process has started, with tender award planned early Q2 2027.

¹² Note that estimated figures shown in these tables are not cumulative.

8			projects and connections by 2031.						Targeting 4000 MVA.s additional by 2031, from 1 or 2 units.
	Construction of the second North-South Interconnector	Construction of a new 400 kV tie-line between Turleenan, Co. Tyrone, and Woodland, Co. Meath, enabling cross-border transfer capacity of 1200 MW.	High cost. The second North-South interconnector remains a critical piece of infrastructure that supports the Department's Energy Strategy. This is a very large infrastructure project and the largest NI electricity project since the 1970s.	Further timely delivery of the outstanding landowner consents. Timely construction. Timely project progress in the Republic of Ireland.	2031	At least 200 MW	TBC	€100m/yr (all-island)	SONI has formally handed the project over to NIEN for construction, which has commenced in Northern Ireland. ¹³ Scheduled for completion Q4 2031. Due to its cross-jurisdictional nature, the North South Interconnector project is governed under a standalone North South Interconnector Joint Project Board of which SONI and NIEN are members, along with EirGrid and ESB Networks.
	Review use of Battery Energy Storage to manage network contingencies ("Virtual line")	This is a concept whereby batteries at both ends of a constrained section of network could be dispatched following a fault to provide a virtual line, so that pre-fault constraints can be released while reducing the need for construction of new circuits.	High cost (full implementation) New technology requiring full assessment of operational implications and integration. Will require thorough technical and Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) and testing.	Requires extensive technical modelling and operational model development. Full CBA needed. Tender process likely necessary.	TBC	TBC; likely high	TBC; likely high	TBC	Initial discovery internal report concluded Q4 2025. SONI to develop a project proposal in 2027.
10	Dynamic Line Rating (DLR)	Introduction of capability to monitor circuit ratings in real time based on weather conditions, and adjust capacity in the EMS dynamically.	Medium cost. Requires joint work between TSO (SONI) and TO (NIE Networks) to scope and procure necessary capability.	SONI IT project to integrate the DLR technologies.	First circuit equipped Q2 2026; next circuit expected 2027	~20 MW	-0.6%	£750k ¹⁴	NIE Networks' DLR installation on the first trial circuit commenced in late March 2026. The Kells-Rasharkin 110 KV circuit has been identified as the next circuit for the sensor-based DLR roll out. NIEN have carried out line sampling Q3 2026 on the Kells-Rasharkin circuit and are awaiting lab results of condition assessments Q4 2026 SONI is preparing internally the business conceptual overview for approval to establish the DLR module within EMS. This is expected to be available by Q4 2026. Sensor data from the first DLR circuit is currently being analysed by SONI. Initial findings indicate that this technology has the potential to support the increased accommodation of renewable energy sources on the Northern Ireland system.

In addition to these measures and in line with the obligations of our license, SONI continues to bring forward a programme of network development to support further renewable integration, reduce constraints, facilitate demand growth and bolster security of supply. This programme is set out in the Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland. Working with NIEN, SONI has established a Joint Programme Management Office (JPMO). The purpose of the JPMO is to facilitate closer working between SONI and NIEN and provide more consistent, reliable and transparent project delivery timelines and identify and address issues at an early stage. Further information can be seen here¹⁵. We continue to engage with the Department for the Economy and the Utility Regulator on wider options for more transformation change.

¹³ For updates on the Construction of second North-South Interconnector and other transmission system projects:
https://cms.soni.ltd.uk/sites/default/files/2026-04/JPMO%20-%20Network%20Delivery%20Portfolio%20Q2%202026_0.pdf

¹⁴ Figures above based on applying DLR sensors on Kells – Rasharkin 110 kV circuit only. DLR sensors will have a greater impact on Dispatch Down and wholesale electricity costs once rolled out to other constrained circuits across the system.

¹⁵ <https://www.soni.ltd.uk/community/projects-in-your-area/tdpni>

10.3 Wider Market measures

Table 3 Wider Market measures actions

No.	Action	Description	Complexity	Dependencies	Delivery Timeline	Impact on Dispatch Down (estimates) ¹⁶			Progress
						RES Capacity	% change	Cost saving (/yr)	
11	Perform a review of ability of the TSO to reduce the net transfer capacity of the Moyle HVDC interconnector	As it stands there is a mechanism between SONI and NESO to manage the physical flow of power between SEM and GB. The approach of how this counter trade is managed is via the "OPI" and under legislation the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement.	High cost. Governed by statutory and legal arrangements – both EU and UK	UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. SONI engaged trilaterally with NESO and Mutual Energy on whether there are operational or market arrangements.	N/A – not taken forward	-	-	-	Legal review found that such an action would be subject to compensation. No further work in this area planned.
	Long Duration Energy Storage Procurement Mechanism	Procurement plan for storage to be developed based on the outcome of the Flexibility Needs Assessment (FNA) to be delivered Q3 2026.	High cost (full implementation). Engagement with stakeholders required, including industry, regulators, and statutory partners. Relatively low Technology Readiness Levels of much of the relevant technology.	Flexibility Needs Assessment Methodology. Engagement with the UR and EirGrid to ensure alignment of assumptions and modelling of flexibility needs.	January 2027: Deadline for NI to publish an indicative national objective for non-fossil flexibility. Wider LDES procurement TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	SONI have complete the analysis for the first Flexibility Needs Assessment. The first FNA studies were carried out on an all-island basis, with close cooperation with UR, the CRU, EirGrid, NIEN and ESBN. The FNA was published in September 2026 ¹⁷ Procurement design being explored to create a Capacity and Flexibility Market which will be used to incentivise new storage. SONI's role in this will be confirmed in 2027.
13	Hybrid Connections	Currently, it is not possible for multiple technologies to share capacity behind a connection point, or for SEM-registered storage or large scale demand to draw directly from co-located generation. Enabling these will allow generators to install their own demand or storage to mitigate any dispatch down, while making more efficient use of the network.	Medium cost for implementation. High complexity – requires changes to system and market operations, Connections policy, Firm Access, market registration and grid code. Engagement with stakeholders critical, including DSO (NIEN), regulators, SEMC, and industry.	Dependent on funding submission to UR. Engagement with EirGrid on all-island aspects. Engagement with NIEN on TSO-DSO aspects.	2028: MEC sharing 2030: full hybrid implementation (estimate)	TBC	TBC	TBC, likely high	SONI are currently building a business case for this project. A funding request from SONI to the UR for this workstream is currently in preparation. An internal Flexibility Board has been set up to support delivery of this and other innovation projects.

¹⁶ Note that estimated figures shown in these tables are not cumulative.

¹⁷ <https://www.uregni.gov.uk/news-centre/northern-irelands-flexibility-needs-assessment-report-2026-published>