Evaluative Performance Framework

Forward Work Plan 2025-2026

CEO Foreword

At SONI, we operate Northern Ireland’s electricity transmission system to ensure that power flows safely, securely, and reliably from where it is generated to where it is needed – in homes, farms, businesses, and public services across the country. We do not generate or sell electricity, nor do we own any of the assets associated with the grid. Our role is defined by our Transmission System Operator (TSO) licence and regulated by the Utility Regulator (UR).

As the TSO, we have a critical responsibility not only to manage the real-time operation of the power system, but also to plan for Northern Ireland’s future. We advise on the future direction of the system, identify the changes and investments required in both operational and physical terms, and deliver these plans through key initiatives.

Achieving this requires close partnership with statutory bodies, industry and communities. In particular, NIE Networks and the Gas TSO are key partners in our daily work to ensure an efficient, coordinated and secure energy system.

Our activities are shaped by the scope of our TSO licence and the funding available through our price controls. Any work outside the agreed price control must be approved by the Utility Regulator through the regulated funding mechanism, with SONI providing detailed business cases to secure additional funding for specific projects. We remain committed to delivering value for consumers, to ensure that every pound we spend brings the maximum possible benefit. We are working together with the Utility Regulator to refine the funding mechanism for the next price control period, due to be implemented from 2027.

The Evaluative Performance Framework (EPF) was introduced as part of the 2020-25 Price Control Final Determination. As part of the EPF process, the Utility Regulator established an independent panel comprised of individuals appointed to evaluate SONI’s performance. The panel reviews SONI’s progress against the activities in the Forward Work Plan (FWP) and shares its assessment with the Utility Regulator, who issue the final determination grade.

The FWP draws from our wider Business Plan, which sets out the full scope of our activities as Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator. From our Business Plan, we identify projects that go beyond business-as-usual and meet the criteria set out in the Utility Regulator's Evaluative Performance (EPF) Framework. These projects account for around 20% of our overall activity and focus on innovation, system changes, and initiatives to shape the future of the electricity system.

Alongside our Forward Work Plan projects, we continue to deliver our core role of operating the power system, keeping the lights on, and supporting the all-island electricity market. These are essential functions that sit outside the scope of our Forward Work Plan but underpin everything we do. The EPF is designed to provide stakeholders with greater transparency on how we deliver value and contribute to the four SONI Outcomes determined by the Utility Regulator in the EPF guidance. The four outcomes are: Decarbonisation, Grid Security, System-Wide Costs, and Service Quality.

Stakeholder engagement is central to the EPF process. We are actively leading this by creating clear opportunities for feedback on our Forward Work Plan, through stakeholder events and consultations, ensuring stakeholder views directly inform our projects.

Across the year our progress against the FWP and our various milestones is subject to monitoring and evaluation by the EPF's independent expert panel in line with the EPF guidelines.

In developing our 2025/26 FWP, we have engaged with stakeholders, listened carefully to their views, and balanced these with feedback from the independent panel. We have considered these perspectives in detail alongside our licence requirements, to determine the plan we are now putting forward. This process of triangulating different inputs has helped ensure the plan is clear, transparent and deliverable.

We have:

- Created our plan to ensure that the milestones for our deliverables are achievable and within our resources and remit.
- Determined milestones so that they focus on activities within our direct control.
- Sought to provide clearer explanation of our role in infrastructure delivery.
- Redeveloped the report and appendices to make them more concise and accessible.

These refinements reflect the views we've heard from stakeholders and are intended to show how we've taken their feedback on board, helping them better understand our priorities, progress and the challenges we face.

In February 2025, we published our new Strategy[1] for 2025-2031 which underpins everything we do as Northern Ireland's Transmission System Operator. Our strategy has been shaped by the ambitions set out in the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy and the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022, which require at least 80% of electricity consumption to come from renewable sources by 2030, and set a pathway to net zero by 2050.

Meeting these targets will require innovative solutions, careful navigation and management of the electricity system, and proactive planning for future electricity assets to support both renewable integration and continued security of supply. Our strategy sets out our long-term vision for the power system and the role we play in delivering the energy transition. At its centre are four strategic pillars – Advise, Plan, Deliver and Operate – which guide all of our activities. The projects in our Forward Work Plan are also aligned to these pillars, ensuring that our work is coherent, strategically focused and that we are capable of delivering on our commitments.

A testament to this commitment, is that we have recently established our Stakeholder Advisory Challenge Group, which brings together key stakeholders so that we can hear their views directly, test our proposals and plan.

At our most recent meeting in early September, we shared the list of projects proposed for inclusion in this Forward Work Plan, discussed the lessons learned that shaped changes in our approach, reviewed updates to the format of this document, and sought views on our upcoming Price Control. This feedback has been invaluable in refining the detail of our plan and ensuring it reflects the priorities of those we serve.

I would like to thank all stakeholders for the constructive feedback provided ahead of this plan's publication. Your input has directly informed the content of this plan, will guide its implementation, and will shape the development of future Forward Work Plans. In publishing our plan, we aim to be transparent on our priorities, to show how we deliver value for consumers, and to demonstrate how our expertise supports Northern Ireland's transition to a secure, low-carbon energy future.

Alan Campbell
Chief Executive Officer, SONI Ltd

1. SONI Strategy 2025-2031

Contents

SONI Roles and Responsibilities

Planning and operating Northern Ireland's electricity grid for the future.

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.

We also work closely with EirGrid, our counterpart in Ireland, to support the all-island Single Electricity Market, overseen by the regulatory authorities through the Single Electricity Market Committee.

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

We advise on the future direction of the 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 TSO are key partners in these activities.

Figure 1: The structure of the electricity system in Northern Ireland

Key Responsibilities

01

Operating the Transmission System to manage electricity flows and balancing supply and demand in real time

02

Planning for Future Needs by identifying network developments and investments required to meet Northern Ireland's long-term electricity goals

03

Facilitating Transmission by processing connection applications to support renewable energy growth and economic development

04

Collaborating on Infrastructure Delivery by working closely with NIE Networks, the Department for Economy (DfE), the Utility Regulator, and local communities to deliver required grid updates

05

Cross-Border and Market Operations by Coordinating with EirGrid on all-island planning and jointly operating the Single Electricity Market (SEM) under the oversight of the SEMC

SONI Governance, Management and Resources

As highlighted in the 2024/25 FWP, we continue to progress the implementation of a new licence condition relating to our governance, management and resources.

This programme represents a significant body of work. It requires close agreement and coordination with our parent company, EirGrid, followed by the preparation of derogations in line with guidance from the Utility Regulator. To do so we need to secure the necessary funding to deliver these changes and progress the recruitment of additional staff to ensure we have the in-house capability to meet our obligations.

This programme is being delivered alongside the milestones set out in our FWP. Activities around the implementation of separate management and separate resources have increased over the summer period as implementation has gathered pace. We are committed to ensuring that this work is completed in a timely and effective manner.

Importantly, the changes that we are implementing are being advanced in tandem with our broader work remit, ensuring that progress continues across all areas of work. We remain firmly focused on meeting our licence obligations while maintaining delivery across the full breadth of commitments contained in our FWP.

As a result of our new governance and independence obligations, we appointed a new, independent board, in October 2023, to drive a fresh vision and direction. Our board has led on the development of a new organisational design to build further expertise and capability to deliver on that vision and direction.

Our board has introduced a new executive team and management structure over the summer of 2024. Our team is leading on the implementation of our strategy and will equip our organisation with the leadership, purpose and accountability to succeed in this next phase of our journey.

Figure 2:SONI Executive Leadership Team

Overview of Evaluative Performance Framework

As previously mentioned, The Evaluative Performance Framework was introduced by the Utility Regulator (UR) as part of the 2020-25 Price Control Final Determination. It provides a transparent and structured process for assessing our forward planning and annual performance on work that goes beyond business as usual. The framework is designed to ensure accountability, encourage continuous improvement, and strengthen stakeholder confidence in our delivery against licence obligations.

The process is underpinned by detailed guidelines which set out the requirements for our Forward Work Plan and Annual Performance report, including how these must be structured, tracked, and assessed. Importantly, the independent evaluation panel, appointed through a process overseen by the Utility Regulator, play a central role in ensuring impartiality in the assessment process.

The panel's assessment is informed by evidence drawn from our written submission, stakeholder events and feedback received during consultation periods.

The assessment cycle operates in two phases: Forward Work Plan assessment and Performance assessment.

1. **Forward Work Plan Assessment -** The panel review our published FWP, considering evidence of ambition, alignment with UR Service Priority, Stakeholder Engagement, and Service Accountability, alongside stakeholder submissions. An evaluation report with recommended grades across our key roles will then be issued..
2. **Performance Assessment -** At year end, the panel evaluates our delivery of commitments set out in the FWP, considering evidence of delivery, adaptability and stakeholder satisfaction

In both phases, the panel drafts a report with recommended grades which is submitted to the Utility Regulator. The Utility Regulator then engages with us before confirming the final grades and determining the incentive outcome, ensuring decisions are based on transparent, independent feedback.

We have taken on board lessons learned from previous assessment cycles and refined our internal processes accordingly. This continued improved approach aims to strengthen the quality of submissions, enhance the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement, and ensure that we are well positioned to demonstrate evidence-based performance against the EPF criteria.

Evaluative Performance Framework Cycle

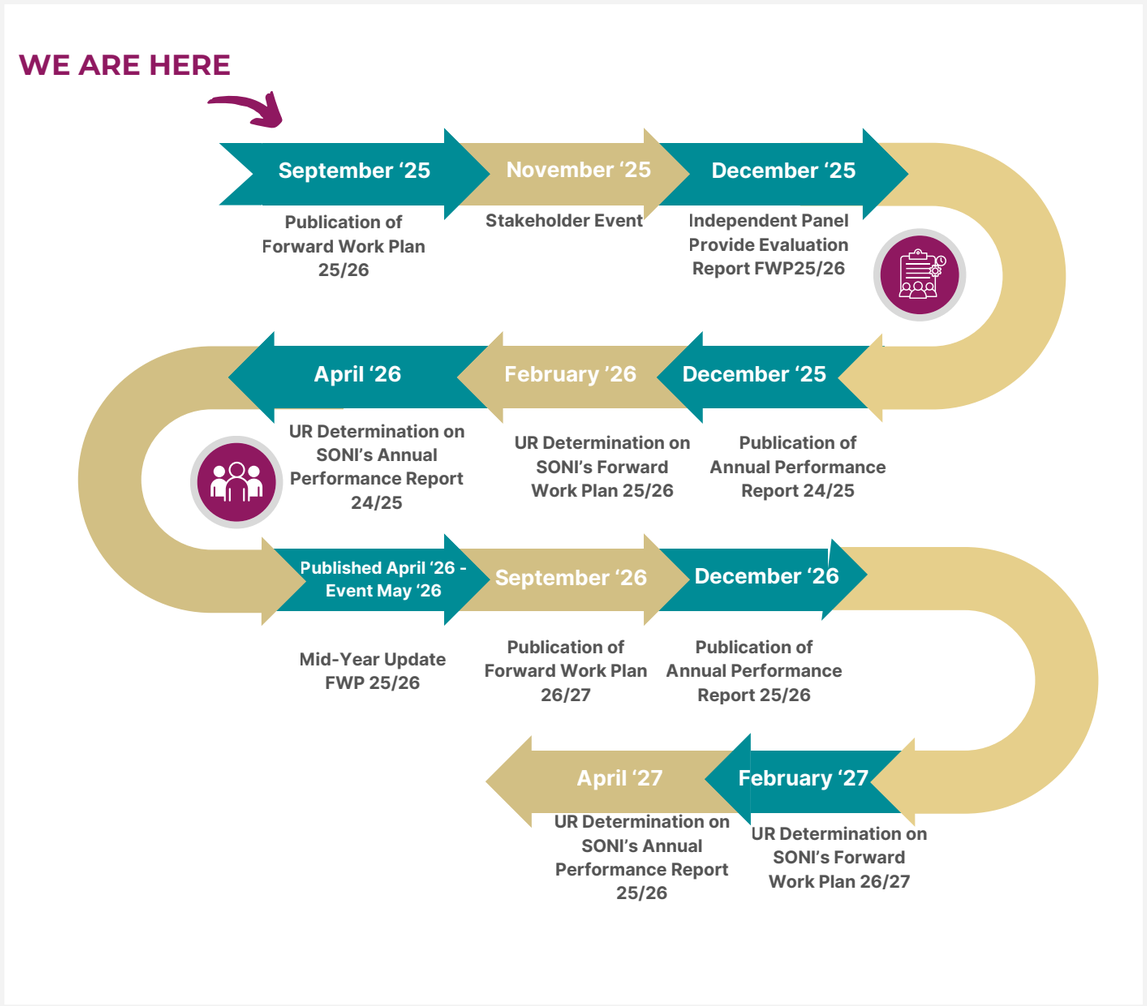


Figure 3: Overview of a full cycle of the Evaluative Performance Framework

Meeting Northern Ireland's energy needs, today and in the future

SONI Strategy

We published the our new strategy for 2025-31 in February this year having been developed with input from key stakeholders and partners, and after an extensive programme of engagement. It sets out our mission, values and strategic delivery objectives and serves as a strategic framework to drive the development and delivery of our objectives with purpose, ambition and integrity

At SONI we are uniquely placed in the Northern Ireland energy sector to work closely with several key partners. With them, we aim to progress the considerations of what is needed to deliver the Government's ambitious net zero targets and drive towards a tailored approach to the planning and operation of the electricity system.

Our 2025-2031 Strategy sets out how we will play our part in transforming Northern Ireland's electricity system to support society's efforts to meet renewable energy and net zero targets.

Our goal is a cleaner, more affordable, and more secure energy future for everyone. We know we cannot deliver this change alone. With only five years left to reach the 2030 targets, our new multi-year strategy gives us the chance to work closely with partners to agree a clear vision for the future. It sets out the key investments that will be needed and how we, together with others, must act to make sure Northern Ireland can meet its renewable energy ambitions.

At the core of our strategy are four key pillars which guide everything we do. These pillars set out the different elements of our role as the Transmission System Operator for Northern Ireland – from providing expert advice and planning future development, to delivering essential projects and operating the system day-to-day. Together, our four pillars ensure our work is strategically focused and aligned with Northern Ireland's energy transition.

Advise - Our advisory role will be pivotal in shaping the future energy landscape of Northern Ireland. We will provide clear, evidence-based insights to ensure that we can work closely with key government departments and the Utility Regulator on delivering the 2030 renewable and net zero ambitions, and on planning for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

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

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

Operate - As the TSO 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.

Forward Work Plan Overview

Our Forward Work Plan (FWP) sets out the key activities and initiatives we will deliver to operate, plan, and develop Northern Ireland's electricity transmission system in line with regulatory requirements and stakeholder needs. In line with the EPF guidance we structure our initiatives around four core roles, each reflecting a distinct area that we are responsible for and designed to achieve four strategic outcomes that focus on Decarbonisation, Grid Security, System-Wide Costs and Service Quality. Each project in our FWP is also aligned to our four strategic pillars, which are outlined above. We use this approach to ensure a clear connection between our day-to-day activities, long-term strategy, and wider energy system goals.

Our FWP is independently assessed through the Evaluative Performance Framework (EPF), which uses clear criteria set out by the UR to evaluate our ambition, accountability, alignment with UR priorities and stakeholder engagement. Together, this structure provides transparency, demonstrates our value to consumers, and ensures a clear link between our activities, regulatory expectations, and the delivery of a secure, low-carbon energy system

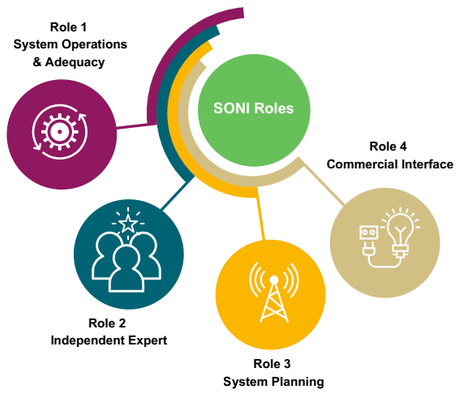
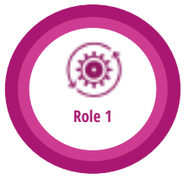


Figure 4: SONI Roles



Role 1: System Operations and Adequacy

Covers our core responsibility for real-time operation of the transmission system, security of supply and keeping the lights on. It includes scheduling and dispatch, developing future system services, and ensuring we are prepared for emergencies, with a strong focus on renewable integration and compliance.

Role 2: Independent Expert

We act as a trusted, impartial voice for stakeholders by leading structured engagement, communicating transparently, and providing evidence-based advice. Initiatives such as the Dispatch Down Action programme, Plan-Led Proposal and SRP27 ensure stakeholder views are embedded in system and market development.

Role 3: System Planning

We are responsible for long-term transmission planning and securing consents through the three-part Grid Development Process. We work independently of generation companies, coordinating closely with NIE Networks and engaging stakeholders to ensure efficient network development.

Role 4: Commercial Interface

We manage customer connections, contracts, Tranmission Use of System(TUoS) arrangements, and overseeing the Moyle Interconnector, supporting a fair and efficient transmission system.

Alongside our four roles, we take a structured approach to how we prioritise and deliver our work. This takes account of the outcomes that we are seeking to achieve, as outlined below, and the criteria that we use to assess the priority of our work. This helps us shape our work programme and schedule of projects.

Symbols for the outcomes are shown and will be used throughout this document for consistency. Each project in the Forward Work Plan has been assessed against these outcomes and criteria, with detailed information on these in the table below.

EPF SONI Outcomes

SONI Outcome	Explanation of Outcome	Symbol
Decarbonisation	The Northern Ireland electricity system supports government decarbonisation policy and targets.	
Grid Security	Northern Ireland electricity customers receive secure and reliable electricity supplies.	
System-Wide Costs	Northern Ireland electricity consumers get good value for money which reflects efficiency within, and across, different parts of the Northern Ireland electricity system, over the short term and the longer term.	
SONI Service Quality	SONI provides an appropriate range and quality of services to participants in the Northern Ireland electricity system and other stakeholders.	

EPF Criteria

Criteria	Explanation of Criteria
Service Ambition	The degree of ambition for improvements over time included in the plan, in relation to the four SONI outcomes, relative to past performance and existing working practices and processes.
UR Service Priority Alignment	The extent to which the new initiatives and areas of focus presented in the plan are aligned with the Service Priorities set by the Utility Regulator (which in turn would be informed by stakeholders) or otherwise supported by strong evidence).
Stakeholder Engagement	The quality of stakeholder engagement and participation in developing the plan and the responsiveness that the plan shows to the views and concerns of stakeholders (to the extent not captured under alignment).
Service Accountability	The degree of clarity on SONI's planned activities and initiatives and how the success or performance in relation to these would be assessed (e.g. detailed specification of deliverables and measures of success).

Cost Scale

We 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 the project.

Cost Scale Table

Cost	Cost Range
Low	£0 - 500K
Medium	£500K - £1M
High	£1M - £5M
Very High	£5M +

Cost Scale Gauge

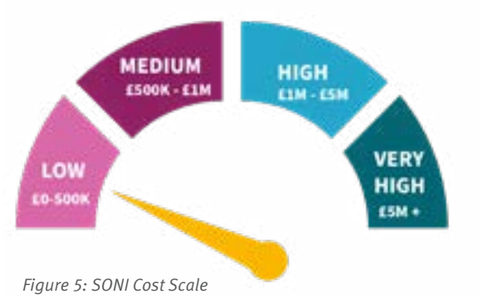


Figure 5: SONI Cost Scale

Quarterly Project Overview

Our infographic provides a high-level overview of all our projects across the year, mapped by quarter. It offers a simple snapshot of our delivery timelines, showing when projects are scheduled to progress through their key milestones.

QUARTER 1 2025-26

OCT

- FWP23-02 Scheduling & Dispatch
- FWP26-06 Grid Forming Strategy
- FWP26-11 Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS) Review

DEC

- FWP25-08 Joint Project Management Office

QUARTER 2025-26

JAN

- FWP23-01 Future Arrangements System Services
- FWP26-02 NI Minimum stability trial
- FWP26-04 System Strength
- FWP26-05 Innovation Strategy
- FWP25-04 Transmission Cluster Policy
- FWP26-12 Transmission Development Plan 2025

MAR

- FWP001 LCIS Phase 2 Procurement
- FWP26-13 North Sperrin Generation Cluster
- FWP26-15 Connect West

QUARTER 3 2025-26

APR

- FWP26-01 NI Negative Reserve Trial
- FWP26-07 Plan-Led Proposal
- FWP25-03 SONI Price Control Stakeholder Engagement Programme
- FWP25-07 FAQ Methodology

JUN

- FWP034: Mid Antrim Upgrade

QUARTER 4 2025-26

JUL

- FWP26-03 Multi-Year Plan for market development
- FWP25-12 Dispatch Down Action Programme
- FWP26-08 Data & Digitalisation Strategy with NIE Networks
- FWP24-05 SONI Price Control 2027
- FWP26-09 Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG)

SEP

- FWP26-10 Ten Year Transmission Forecast Statement
- FWP26-16 LDES Flexibility Needs Assessment
- FWP26-15 LCIS Phase 1 - Voltage & Frequency Dynamic Studies

Deliverables

This section provides an overview of our projects, with a brief scope outlining what each project is about. Symbols are used to show whether a project is multi-year, carried forward from last year, or newly introduced along with the relevant SONI outcome. For ease of reference, we have also included the page number where the full project information can be found.

Multi-Year Projects

Projects carried Forward

New Projects

Role 1 - System Operations & Adequacy

Covers our responsibility for operating the power system and maintaining security of supply, including scheduling, dispatch and system services.

Deliverable	Scope	Page Reference	Project Symbol	SONI Outcome
FWP23-01 Future Arrangements System Services	**Developing and implementing a competitive procurement framework -** Ensuring the secure operation of the electricity system with increasing levels of non-synchronous renewable generation.	28		
FWP23-02 Scheduling & Dispatch	**Enhancing and modernising the scheduling and dispatch systems -** Ensuring compliance across the island with the Clean Energy Package and supporting the integration of higher levels of renewable generation.	30		
FWP26-01 NI Negative Reserve Trial	**Enhancing system flexibility -** Enabling wind generation to provide negative reserve on the Northern Ireland system, a technical constraint currently only delivered by conventional generation.	32		
FWP26-02 NI Minimum stability trial	**Trialling a reduction in Northern Ireland's minimum conventional generation requirement -** The trial will look to move from three units to two, following detailed system studies completed in July 2025.	34		
FWP26-03 Multi-Year Plan for market development	**Delivering a rolling, strategic plan outlining SONI's market development priorities for 2026-2030** - The plan will define a clear pathway for the evolution of market design, operations, and investment signals to support decarbonisation, system security, and cost efficiency.	36		
FWP26-04 System Strength	**Developing a new system strength policy -** This will replace global stability constraints with region-specific metrics.	38		

Role 2 - Independent Expert

Covers our responsibility in providing impartial advice, transparent engagement, and evidence-based input to policy and market development.

Deliverable	Scope	Page Reference	Project Symbol	SONI Outcome
FWP25-12 Dispatch Down Action Programme	**Updating our comprehensive plan to reduce renewable dispatch down -** Supporting SONI's Operational Policy Roadmap.	48		
FWP24-05 SONI Price Control 2027	**Developing a business plan for SONI's next price control -** For SONI the 2027-2032 price control is a critical process that will ensure the organisation operates efficiently while delivering the services and outputs that stakeholder and consumers rely on.	50		
FWP26-05 Innovation Strategy	**Developing a comprehensive Innovation Strategy -** Ensuring that SONI is well-positioned to respond to the rapidly evolving energy landscape.	52		
FWP26-06 Grid Forming Strategy	**Delivering a coordinated strategy for deploying Grid Forming (GFM) technology -** Supporting the secure operation of the power system at 95% SNSP and beyond.	54		
FWP26-07 Plan-Led Proposal	**Establish the foundation of a plan-led approach to system development -** By collaborating with the UR and DfE we aim to identify the necessary policy, process and licence changes.	56		
FWP26-08 Digitalisation Strategy with NIE Networks	**Developing and implementing a joint Digitalisation Strategy and Action plan with NIE Networks -** Modernising Northern Ireland's electricity system data and digital infrastructure.	58		
FWP26-09 Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG)	**Developing and implementing a framework to support the Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG) -** Underpinning Northern Ireland's renewable energy investment landscape.	60		
FWP25-03 SONI Price Control Stakeholder Engagement Programme	**Supporting the development of SONI's Business Plan -** Delivering a structured and inclusive engagement programme to inform SONI's next Price Control (SRP27) business plan.	62		

Role 3 - System Planning

Covers our responsibility for planning the tranmission network, securing consents, and coordinating with NIE Networks and stakeholders.

Deliverable	Scope	Page Reference	Project Symbol	SONI Outcome
FWP25-04 Transmission Cluster Policy	**Developing a more plan-led approach to renewable connections -** This project will deliver a new Transmission Cluster Policy for Northern Ireland.	68		
FWP26-10 Ten Year Transmission Forecast Statement	**Reviewing and enhancing the Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement -** This project will consult on changes to methodology, structure, and assumptions.	70		
FWP26-11 Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS) Review	**Reviewing and updating SONI's Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS) -** To reflect the changing generation mix and the rapid growth of energy storage connections.	72		
FWP26-12 Transmission Development Plan 2025	**Delivering the 2025 TDPNI -** A statutory document under SONI's TSO licence. Will outline ten-year projects with updated JPMO-aligned dates.	74		
FWP25-07 FAQ Methodology	**Reviewing and updating the methodology for calculating Firm Access Quantity (FAQ) -** This will ensure a fair, and efficient allocation of capacity for generators.	76		
FWP26-13 North Sperrin Generation Cluster	**Delivering a new high-capacity transmission cluster in the Northern Sperrins -** Connecting significant planned renewable generation efficiently.	78		
FWP26-14Connect West	**Delivering a new 275Kv transmission connection -** This connection between Turleenan and Dromore in Tyrone will address growing demand.	80		
FWP25-08 Joint Project Management Office	**Delivering the Joint Project Management Office (JPMO) -** Improving planning, tracking and delivery of transmission projects, in partnership with NIE Networks.	82		
FWP027: Energising Belfast Project: Castlereagh – Hannahstown	**Delivering new 110kV reinforcements and substation upgrades** to strengthen Belfast's tranmission network and support future demand growth.	84		
FWP034: Mid Antrim Upgrade	**Delivering reinforcements on the Kells - Rasharkin circuit -** Constructing a new substation and a new 110kV line to reduce congestion and support renewables.	86		

Role 4 - Commercial Interface

Covers our role as the commercial interface for connections, contracts, tarriffs and Moyle Interconnector arrangements.

Deliverable	Scope	Page Reference	Project Symbol	SONI Outcome
FWP001 LCIS Phase 2 - Procurement	**Developing and implementing a framework for the procurement of Low Carbon Inertia Services (LCIS) -** Aiming to integrate new technologies that provide inertia and strength. Supports higher renewables and targets.	92		
FWP26-15 LCIS Phase 1 - Voltage & Frequency Dynamic Studies	**Reviewing the NI Minimum Units On (MUON) Constraint group -** Assessing LCIS Phase 1 technologies to support reduced minimum unit on requirements.	94		
FWP26-16 LDES Flexibility Needs Assessment	**Monitoring and implementing the forthcoming EU-wide Flexibility Needs Assessment methodology -** Developed by ENTSO-E and the EU DSO. SONI will lead NI's application with local partners.	96		

Performance Measures

As part of the EPF, the Utility Regulator requires each SONI outcome to be supported by clear performance measures. These provide a practical way to track our progress and show how our actions contribute to system performance and consumer outcomes. The table below outlines our Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for each outcome, with further detail provided in Appendix A.

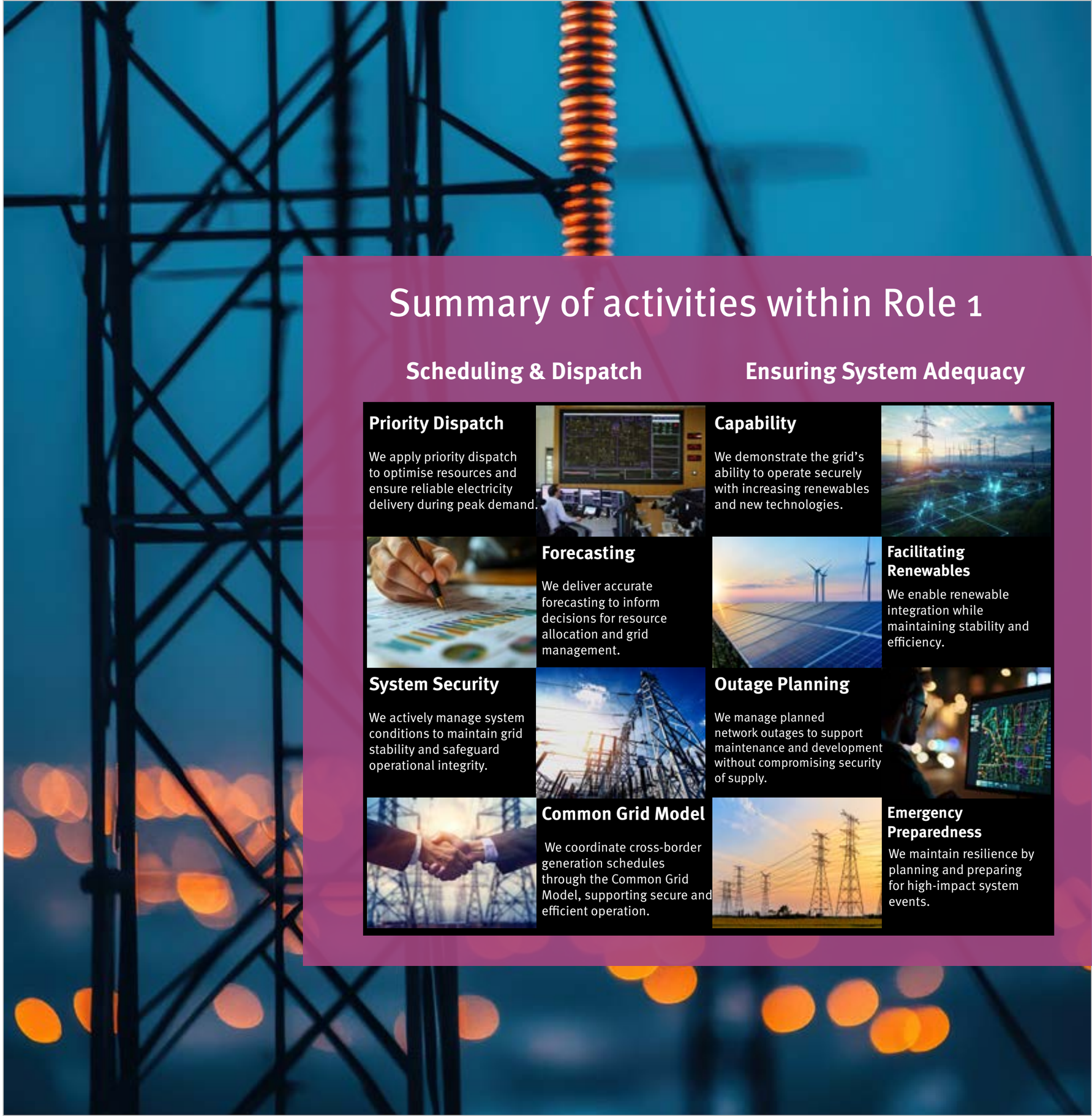
Performance Measure	Target	2019 Baseline	Commentary	Alignment with SONI Outcome
System Non-Synchronous Penetration (SNSP)	75%	65%	Our target for this year is set at the 75% Operational Policy level. Further detail is provided in Appendix A.	This KPI is key to our decarbonisation goals, measuring the percentage of time the system operates at or above the SNSP target. It demonstrates our ability to securely integrate high levels of renewable generation, reducing fossil-fuel reliance. Maintaining system stability at high SNSP also highlights advanced operational control, directly supporting both Decarbonisation and Grid Security outcomes. Our target for this year is set at the 75% Operational Policy level. Further detail is provided in Appendix A.
Imperfections Costs	Determined Annually Ex-Post	To be considered over the period.	This KPI will be reported in the December 2026 Peformance Report using the PLEXOS backcast model, in line with the reporting cycle	This KPI tracks the efficiency of our system operation by comparing the additional costs of managing constraints, reserves, and balancing actions against an unconstrained scenario. Lower imperfections costs show optimised dispatch and network use, delivering better value for consumers. It strongly supports the System-Wide Costs outcome, ensuring the energy transition is achieved cost-effectively.
System Frequency (%)	Within 50Hz ± 0.2Hz for 98% of the time	98%	Measures compliance with Grid Code frequency limits	The System Frequency (%) KPI measures the time system frequency stays within 50Hz ± 0.1Hz, reflecting real-time stability and our ability to respond to sudden changes in supply or demand. Maintaining frequency within this range safeguards Grid Security, and ensures customers receive a consistent, reliable electricity supply, supporting the Service Quality Outcome.
Timely delivery of publications	100%		We will measure timely delivery of publications and materials against the dates in this FWP	This KPI measures our ability to deliver key publications and reports on schedule, providing transparency and confidence to stakeholders. Meeting agreed timeline demonstrates effective planning and accountability, supporting the Service Quality Outcome.
Stakeholder Satisfaction	60%	3/5 (60%)	This framework uses metrics, planned engagement assessment, survey data and qualitative insights from focus groups and case studies	Measured through surveys and feedback, this KPI reflects how well we meet stakeholder needs and expectations. Maintaining a baseline score of 3/5 (60%) or higher shows our commitment to engagement, responsiveness, and delivering value, supporting the Service Quality outcome.

Role 1 - System Operations & Adequacy

Operating and securing Northern Ireland's power system today, while preparing it for a renewable future

Role 1 focuses on our core responsibility for system operation and ensuring system adequacy. It encompasses our day-to-day operational and market activities such as scheduling and dispatch, delivering the future framework for system services, maintaining emergency preparedness, and contributing to overall security of supply, ensuring the lights remain on.

A key element of this role is for us to facilitate the integration of renewable generation, which is vital to achieving the ambitions of the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy. Role 1 is fully aligned with the requirements of the Single Electricity Market (SEM), ensuring that our operational activities support both system security and the efficient function of the all-island electricity market.



Summary of activities within Role 1

Scheduling & Dispatch

Priority Dispatch

We apply priority dispatch to optimise resources and ensure reliable electricity delivery during peak demand.

Forecasting

We deliver accurate forecasting to inform decisions for resource allocation and grid management.

System Security

We actively manage system conditions to maintain grid stability and safeguard operational integrity.

Common Grid Model

We coordinate cross-border generation schedules through the Common Grid Model, supporting secure and efficient operation.

Ensuring System Adequacy

Capability

We demonstrate the grid's ability to operate securely with increasing renewables and new technologies.

Facilitating Renewables

We enable renewable integration while maintaining stability and efficiency.

Outage Planning

We manage planned network outages to support maintenance and development without compromising security of supply.

Emergency Preparedness

We maintain resilience by planning and preparing for high-impact system events.

Role 1 - Summary of Quarterly Deliverables

Our infographic provides a high-level overview of all our projects across the year, mapped by quarter. It offers a simple snapshot of our delivery timelines, showing when projects are scheduled to progress through their key milestones.

QUARTER 1 2025-26

OCT

FWP23-02 Scheduling & Dispatch
1.Testing, training and implementation of SDP02 & SDP-04 in control centre operations

2. Tranche 1 will be in the post-implementation phase

DEC

FWP26-04 System Strength
Agree SONI-EirGrid System Strength Definition

QUARTER 2 2025-26

JAN

FWP23-01 Future Arrangements System Services
High level Design completed and Detailed Design initiated.

FWP26-04 System Strength
Define system strength metrics and commence studies

MAR

FWP26-02 NI Minimum stability trial
Deliver the NI Minimum Stability Trial

QUARTER 3 2025-26

APR

FWP26-01 NI Negative Reserve Trial
Deliver the system trial of negative reserve from wind generation

JUN

QUARTER 4 2025-26

JUL

FWP26-03 Multi-Year Plan for market development
Support the drafting of a consultation on Multi-Year Market Development Plan

SEP

FWP23-01
Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS)

Project Overview

The Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS) project is a major market reform initiative led by SONI and EirGrid to design and deliver a competitive framework for procuring the essential services needed to operate the power system securely with up to 95% System Non-Synchronous Penetration (SNSP) by 2030. Replacing our DS3 System Services arrangements , originally developed to meet the 2020 target of 40% renewables, FASS introduces new mechanisms to meet the 2030 target of 80% renewable electricity. Our project is designed to deliver tangible outcomes: enabling greater renewable integration, improving system stability, supporting innovation by opening the market to a broader range of low-carbon technologies, and ensuring cost-efficient procurement that delivers long-term value for consumers and society while advancing our decarbonisation goals.

Ensuring the secure operation of the electricity system with increasing levels of non-synchronous renewable generation. The project responds to EU legislation, including the Clean Energy Package and Electricity Balancing Guideline, which require reserve services to be procured competitively and closer to real time. FASS will involve re-examining the types of services procured, the required volumes and the commercial incentives needed to attract investment in low-carbon technologies capable of providing critical flexibility and reserve. This is a joint project with EirGrid and progress within this project is subject to SEMC decisions.

Our multi-phase programme spans Establishment, Procurement, Design, Build and Operate phases. Its success is key to delivering investment signals, attracting new service providers, and enabling cost effective, high-renewable operation of the all-island power system. A full overview of milestones planned within this initiative can be found in the latest version of the Phased Implementation Roadmap[2]

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Completion of high level design and detailed design initiated - **March 2026**

2. FASS Phased Implementation Roadmap

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Supports renewable ambition by delivering the system services needed to operate securely with 80%+ renewable generation by 2030.

Market reform & compliance by aligning with EU legislation (CEP, Electricity Balancing Guideline) and SEMC policy decisions.

Investing in innovation by attracting new market participants and incentivising low-carbon technology development.

Future-Proofing by creating a competitive scalable framework capable of meeting evolving system needs.

Enhanced system security by ensuring stability, flexibility, and resilience in a high SNPS system.

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Plan** – Embeds long-term system requirements into a robust market design for system services.
- **Advise** – Provides evidence-based recommendations and proposals to SEMC and Regulatory Authorities.
- **Deliver** – Implements a market-ready procurement framework to meet technical and operational needs.

Service Ambition

FASS represents one of the most significant energy market reform programmes in the history of the all-island, building a future-ready framework to support Northern Ireland's decarbonisation and renewable integration goals. It demonstrates our ambition by transforming how essential services are procured, fostering innovation, and establishing competitive mechanisms that provide clear and predictable signals for investors. This in turn lowers risk, attracts new low-carbon technologies, and ensures long-term system resilience.

Stakeholder Engagement

We have developed this project in close collaboration with the Utility Regulator, DfE, EirGrid and market participants through consultations, technical working groups and public workshops focused on design options and market arrangements. We actively engaged stakeholders throughout the process, taking on board their feedback and triangulating views to inform and refine our approach, ensuring the final design meets both technical and commercial needs.

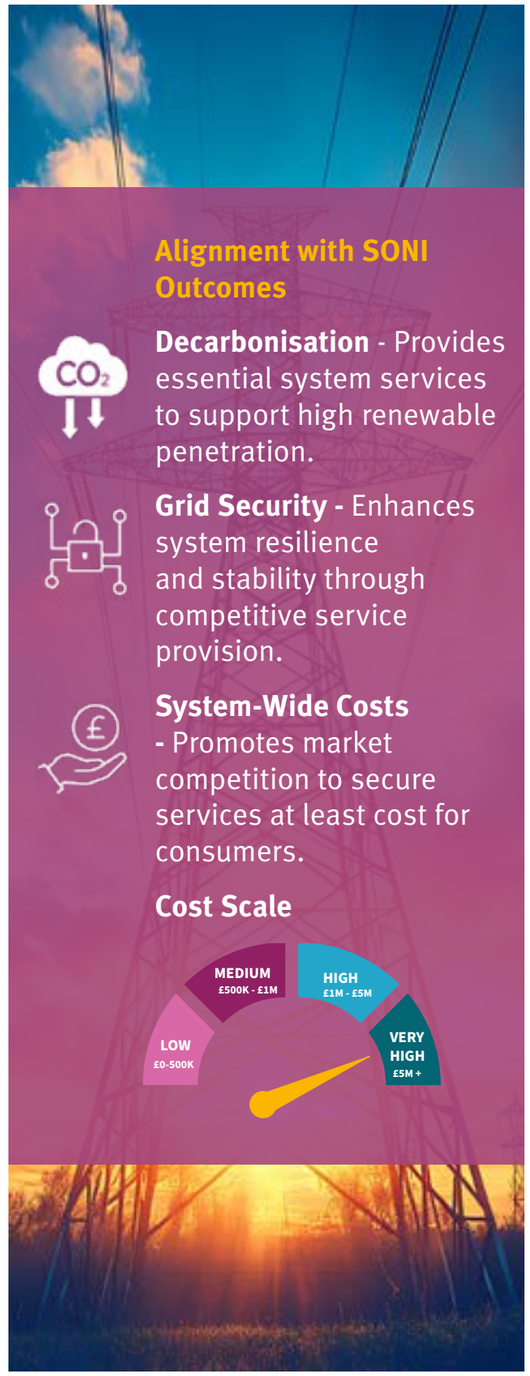
Accountability

We are using a phased delivery approach, with clear governance and milestones overseen by the SEM Committee (SEMC), Regulatory Authorities, and our team. We monitor progress closely and report transparently, risks are mitigated through timely regulatory decisions, stakeholder engagement, and cross-TSO collaboration. At each phase, we actively seek and secure funding approval as a key accountability checkpoint, ensuring effective delivery and value for stakeholders.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below

- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development
- Developing markets through competition and stakeholder engagement and collaboration



FWP23-02
Scheduling and Dispatch Program (SDP)

Project Overview

The Scheduling and Dispatch Project (SDP) is our multi-year programme designed to modernise how the power system in Northern Ireland and Ireland is scheduled and operated in real time. It is designed to enable higher levels of renewable integration, support increasing SNSP, and meet compliance obligations under the EU Clean Energy Package (CEP).

By upgrading our processes, tool and policies, SDP will ensure that the most efficient mix of generation, storage and other resources is dispatched at any given time to meet demand, maintain security of supply, and minimise costs to consumers.

Tranche 1 of our project focuses on operational implementation and includes:

- **SDP-02: Energy Storage Power Station (ESPS) Integration** – enabling battery storage and similar technologies to be incorporated into scheduling and dispatch, reflecting their technical characteristics such as storage limits and negative output ranges.
- **SDP-04: Wind Dispatch Improvements** – improving the way variable wind generation is dispatched, increasing efficient and reducing system constraints.
- **Non-Priority Dispatch Renewables (NDPR**) – part of Tranche 1 but currently paused while further work is undertaken with the Regulatory Authorities to determine the best approach to implementation.

Through these developments, we are laying the foundation for a future-ready dispatch framework that supports a secure, efficient and decarbonised power system.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Testing, training and implementation of SDP-02 & SDP-04 in control centre operations - **November 2025**
- Completion of approved Tranche 1 initatives and transition to post-implementation phase - **December 2025**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Regulatory compliance Aligns our scheduling and dispatch practices with CEP obligations and SEM Committee decisions on dispatch, redispatch and compensation

Renewable integration Improves our dispatch processes for wind and other variable RES, supporting high levels of renewable penetration

System flexibility Incorporates advanced technologies like battery storage into scheduling and dispatch frameworks

Operational security Enhanced visibility and responsiveness in control room operations to maintain system reliability under increasing system complexity

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Operate -** Delivers operational system changes and policies to manage complexity in high-renewable grid.
- **Plan -** Supports long-term planning for market evolution and system resilience.
- **Advise -** Provides evidence-based input into SEM Committee policy decisions and future market design.

Service Ambition

This initiative reflects our ambition by driving a fundamental shift in how renewable and storage assets are integrated and dispatched across the all-island market. By delivering a complex, multi-phase reform that enables higher SNSP (currently 75%, rising to 95% by 2030), and aligns with the NI Energy Strategy and EU Clean Energy Package, we are creating a future-ready dispatch system that supports the energy transition while safeguarding security of supply, cost efficiency and stakeholder confidence.

Stakeholder Engagement

SDP involves extensive engagement with market participants, EirGrid, and Regulatory Authorities, particularly on code changes to the Grid Code, Trading and Settlement Code and Capacity Market Code. We host regular industry workshops, bilateral sessions, and formal consultation to ensure that stakeholders' technical and commercial insights shape the programme. This collaborative approach ensures that reforms are practical, evidence-based, and maintain confidence across the market.

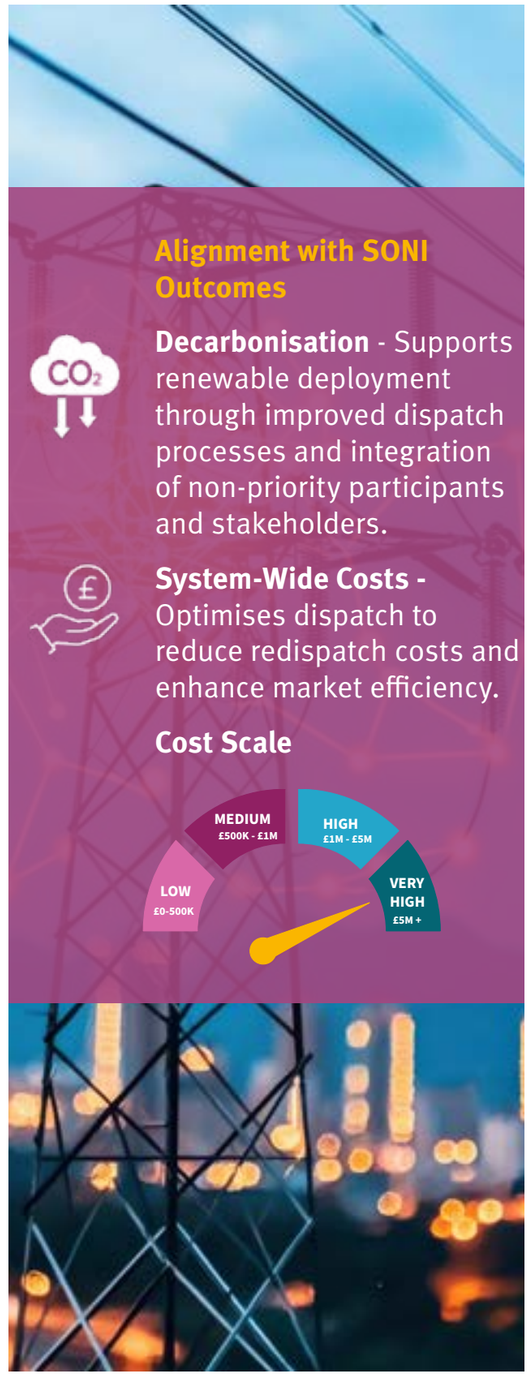
Accountability

We are delivering this initiative under a clear governance framework with defined milestones for each tranche. Transition of Tranche 1 to the post-implementation phase will mark a key step in operational readiness. Our progress is reported through regular updates to the UR and industry, providing transparency on progress, challenges and next steps. The programme's phased approach allows for lessons learned to be incorporated into future tranches, reinforcing our commitment to continuous improvement and delivery against agreed objectives.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development
- Developing markets through competition and stakeholder engagement and collaboration



FWP26-01
Northern Ireland Negative Reserve Trial

Project Overview

This project aims to enable wind generation to provide negative reserve operational requirement during nighttime low-demand periods, reducing reliance on conventional generation for system stability. Negative reserve is essential for managing high-frequency events, and our trial will test the operational and technical feasibility of wind delivering this service. Building on our feasibility studies that we have undertaken and our collaboration with industry, our trial involves technical modification to wind turbines and updates to the Wind Dispatch Tool, with system-level testing planned to validate performance.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Deliver the system trial of negative reserve from wind generation - **June 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Operate -** Enhances real-time operational flexibility by reducing reliance on conventional units for reserve provision
- **Plan -** Supports forward-looking system planning by validating new operational policies and technologies for a high-renewable system

Service Ambition

The Negative Reserve Trial reflects our ambition to decarbonise Northern Ireland's power system by pioneering the use of wind generation to provide negative reserve requirements, a first for the system. This innovative approach reduces reliance on conventional fossil-fuel units for frequency management and supports the transition to a highly renewable, low carbon grid.

The trial represents a step-change in system operation, delivering measurable benefits such as lowering imperfection costs, improving operational flexibility, and creating more space on the grid for renewable energy that would otherwise be curtailed. This enables greater use of clean, low-cost power and accelerates progress towards Northern Irelands decarbonisation goals

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Unlocks renewable capacity by supporting up to 50MW of additional renewable generation by allowing wind to meet the operational negative reserve requirement.

Reduces fossil fuel dependence by minimising the need for conventional generation, lowering emissions.

Improves system flexibility by enhancing our operational capability to maintain security under a wider range of conditions.

Cost efficiency by potentially lowering system operation costs by providing the operational negative reserve requirement.

Supports decarbonisation by contributing to meeting Northern Ireland's renewable targets, supporting up to 50MW of additional renewable generation.

Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout this project we have actively engaged with industry to ensure transparency and collaboration throughout the trial process. We provide ongoing status updates to the Operational Policy Review Committee (OPRC) and seek their approvals as required, ensuring governance and oversight at every stage. Ahead of the trial, we will update operational constraints which will be communicated, and undertake a review of lessons learned and further update operational policies for enduring implementation. Our approach ensures industry awareness, stakeholder confidence, and alignment with operational needs as the project progresses.

Accountability

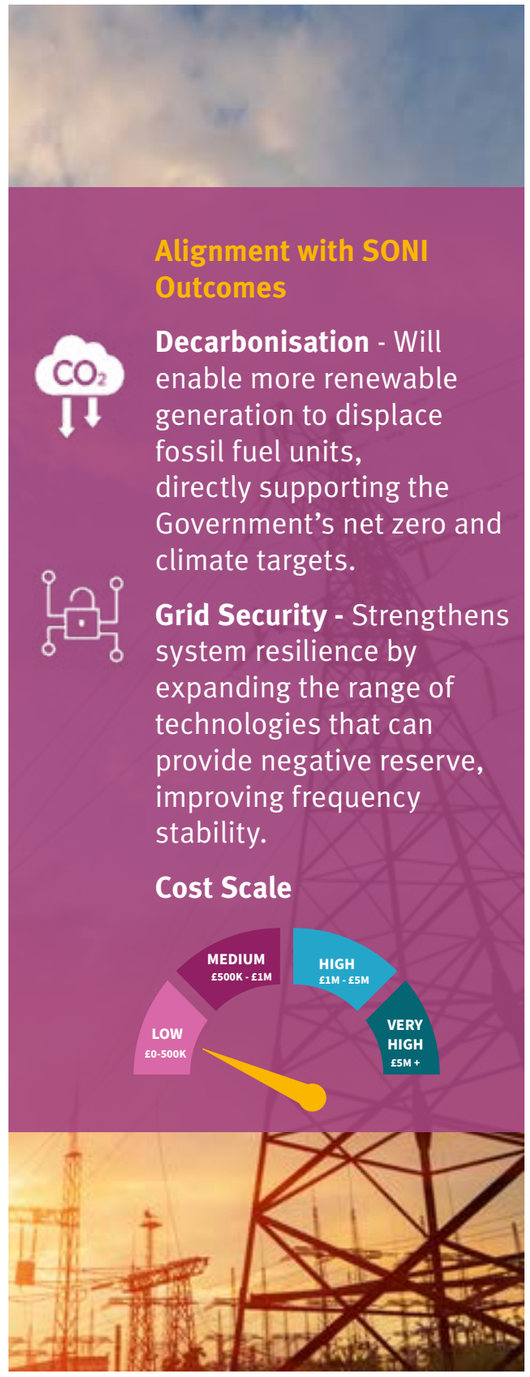
For this project we have a clear delivery structure and measurable outcomes with defined stages covering feasibility, technical modifications, system trials, and enduring policy implementation. We undertake regular updates to the OPRC, ensuring robust governance and oversight.

- We hold ourselves accountable through ongoing engagement with industry stakeholders to review technical readiness and trial design.
- We document lessons learned to inform future operational policies and market arrangements.
- We provide updates to Operational Constraints at both trial and enduring stages.
- These measures will ensure progress is trackable, feedback is embedded, and decision-making is evidence-based.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development
- Developing markets through competition and stakeholder engagement and collaboration



FWP26-02
Northern Ireland Minimum Stability Trial

Project Overview

Under this project we are trialling a major operational initiative to test reducing Northern Ireland's minimum conventional generation requirement from three large units to two, a limit that has been in place for many years to ensure grid stability. In July 2025, we initiated and completed a detailed suite of studies assessing system performance, inertia levels, and voltage stability under lower minimum generation conditions.

In August 2025, we started the trial period, which will run for at least four months to evaluate how the system performs across a range of real-world operation scenarios, including periods of low demand and high renewable penetration.

Our project is a key step towards reducing operational constraints, and reliance on fossil-fuel units, supporting Northern Ireland's decarbonisation targets while maintaining a secure, reliable electricity system. We will use our findings to inform enduring operational policy changes and deliver long-term benefits for consumers through reduced costs and increased renewable integration.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Deliver the NI Minimum Stability Trial - **January 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** This project will provide data-driven recommendations on operational limits to stakeholders and the Utility Regulator.
- **Plan -** Supports forward-looking system planning by validating new operational policies and technologies for a high-renewable system.
- **Operate -** Will enhance real-time system operation by validating a lower minimum generation requirements.
- **Deliver** - Execution of a live trial that allow us to translate analytical studies into operational change.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Enabling greater renewable integration by lowering dependency on conventional units.

Reducing operational constraints and improving system flexibility by proving the grid can stay stable with fewer conventional generators online.

Supporting decarbonisation by reducing the reliance on fossil-fuel based generation.

Lowering system costs through reduced imperfections costs.

Service Ambition

The NI Minimum Stability Trial reflects our ambition to transform how the Northern Ireland power system operates by pioneering an enduring reduction in minimum unit requirements, something that has not been attempted here before. Through innovative system studies and a live trial, we are addressing a long-standing operational constraint that has limited renewable integration. By proving that stability can be maintained with fewer conventional units on the system, this initiative is opening the way for more renewable generation, lowering system costs, and supporting Northern Irelands transition to a secure, low-carbon energy future.

Stakeholder Engagement

We have managed our engagement for the NI Min Stability Trial through the Operational Policy Review Committee (OPRC), providing structured oversight and clear communication on project progress. We share updates to operational constraints in advance of the trial, with regular status reports reviewed by the OPRC throughout delivery. Our findings from the trial, along with proposed updates to operational policy, will be communicated ahead of implementation to ensure transparency and alignment with system needs.

Accountability

We have underpinned a clear governance and review structure, with milestones covering study completion, trial initiation, ongoing performance assessment, and enduring policy recommendations.

- We provide regular reporting to the OPRC ensuring oversight
- Findings and lessons learned will be fully documented and shared with stakeholders.

Our structured approach provides transparency, measurable outcomes, and evidence-driven decision making.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development

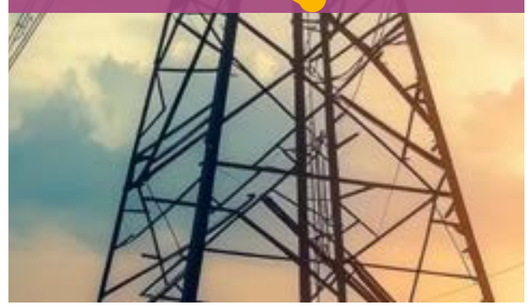
Alignment with SONI Outcomes

Decarbonisation - Will reduce reliance on fossil-fuel units, which will enable greater renewable penetration.

Grid Security - Will ensure that SONI maintain security and stability while testing lower unit operation.

System-Wide Costs - Will reduce imperfections costs and supports more efficient system operation.

Cost Scale



FWP26-03
Multi-Year Market Development Plan (2026-30)

Project Overview

This project supports the Regulatory Authorities in delivering a comprehensive Multi-Year Development Plan for 2026-2030, which will outline the priorities and direction for evolution of electricity market design, operational arrangements, and investment signals to support Northern Ireland's energy transition. While the plan is formally led by the Regulatory Authorities, we play a crucial supporting role, providing detailed analysis, drafting material, and leading engagement with industry stakeholders, policy makers and Regulatory Authorities.

This initiative will help establish a strategic forward-looking market framework that supports innovation, incentivises low-carbon investment, and ensures the electricity market is well-equipped to respond to increasing renewable generation, system complexity, and consumer expectations.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

Support the drafting of a consultation on Multi-Year Market Development Plan – **September 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise** - This project provides expert, evidence-based recommendations to the Regulatory Authorities to inform market design decisions
- **Plan -** Shapes a clear, long-term roadmap for market evolution to meet decarbonisation, security and efficiency goals
- **Deliver** - Supports implementation of regulatory priorities by coordinating stakeholder engagement and consultation

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Supporting decarbonisation goals by identifying necessary market changes to enable higher renewable integration and meet climate targets.

Shaping market evolution by providing a clear, forward-looking roadmap for market design and investment priorities.

Driving stakeholder collaboration by encouraging industry, policymakers and Regulatory Authorities to work together towards shared objectives.

Enhancing regulatory decision-making by offering expert analysis and evidence-based recommendations to support the Regulatory Authorities.

Service Ambition

The Multi-Year Development Plan reflects our ambition to shape the future of Northern Ireland's electricity market in a way that has not been done before. It marks a major step toward ensuring the market can keep pace with rising renewable targets, strengthen system security, and deliver better value for consumers. By supporting the Regulatory Authorities with expert analysis, drafting, and consultation, we are helping to build a transparent, forward-looking strategy that aligns market arrangements with the demands of a rapidly changing energy landscape.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder collaboration is central to this project. We have led extensive engagement with industry participants, policymakers and the Regulatory Authorities to ensure the plan reflects a broad range of perspectives. This includes bilateral meetings, and industry forums to gather feedback and build consensus on proposed market developments. By fostering open dialogue and transparency, the plan will be shaped around stakeholder needs whilst supporting regulatory decision-making and long-term market stability.

Accountability

Accountability is maintained through our structured support for the Regulatory Authorities, including detailed milestones for drafting and consultation, transparent reporting on stakeholder feedback, and clear documentation of proposed market change. Our role ensures that regulatory decisions are evidence-based, that stakeholder views are properly represented, and that progress is visible to all parties involved.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration
- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

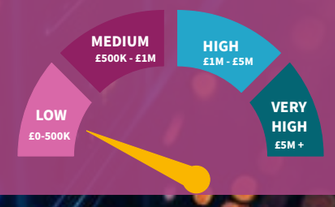
Decarbonisation - Identifies market changes required to integrate higher levels of renewable generation and achieve climate targets.

Grid Security - Will ensure market design and operations evolve in line with maintaining system reliability and resilience.

System-Wide Costs - Will promote efficient investment signals and cost-effective market arrangements for consumers.

Service Quality - This project will build trust through transparency, open consultation, and responsiveness to stakeholder input.

Cost Scale



FWP26-04
System Strength

Project Overview

This project aims to transition from global stability constraints to targeted, region-specific metrics that more accurately reflect system strength challenges in a high inverter-based resource (IBR) environment. System strength is important for the maintenance of normal power system operation, for the power system's dynamic response during a disturbance, as well as for returning the power system to stable operating conditions. Adequate system strength is required to support voltage stability, correct operation of protection and power quality.

Our initiative will develop a new system strength policy, paving the way for a secure, low-carbon power system with reduced reliance on legacy operational limits.

Our ultimate goal is to relax and eventually remove the System Non-Synchronous Penetration (SNSP) and Minimum Units on (MUON) constraints, while continuing to track them as reportable metrics. This represents a change in operational practice, improving system resilience in operational practice while also enabling greater renewable integration.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Agree SONI-EirGrid System Strength Definition - **December 2025**
- Define system strength metrics and ongoing studies - **March 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Provides evidence-based recommendations for evolving system policies and regulatory frameworks.
- **Plan -** Establishes a new framework for long-term system strength management and investment.
- **Operate -** Improves operational decision-making and stability in a high-renewable grid.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Enables renewable growth – Facilitates higher penetration of IBRs by providing a meaningfully measure of system performance; which can support relaxing other less targeted global constraints (SNSP, MUON).

Operational flexibility – Supports a smooth transition to a future-proof grid with optimised operational margins.

Policy and framework development – Establishes a robust system strength policy and enhanced system monitoring

Long-Term efficiency – Reduces unnecessary system costs by optimising stability services and resource dispatch.

Service Ambition

This initiative showcases our ambition to transform how stability is defined and managed on the power system, a shift not undertaken before in Northern Ireland. By moving away from rigid global constraints to a more flexible, evidence-based operational model, we are pioneering an approach that unlocks greater renewable integration while maintaining system resilience. This positions Northern Ireland at the forefront of advanced system strength planning, aligning with international best practice and setting a new benchmark for efficient, secure grid operation in a low-carbon future.

Stakeholder Engagement

This initiative will involve extensive engagement with industry, Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), Regulatory Authorities, and NIE Networks to ensure the System Strength policy and framework are practical, effective, and widely supported. Our collaboration with these groups will provide valuable technical expertise, align plans with regulatory expectations, and ensure operational requirements are fully considered. Our ongoing engagement will focus on sharing insights from technical studies, incorporating feedback into policy development, and building confidence in the phased removal of constraints.

Accountability

We will ensure delivery is governed by clear milestones: development of the system strength policy, operational trials, and phased removal of global constraints. Oversight is maintained through regular reporting to SEMC, Regulatory Authorities, and industry stakeholders, ensuring transparency and measurable outcomes.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- Whole system collaboration and coordination with 3rd parties, and NIE Networks across its various roles as a TO, DNO and DSO

Summary of SONI Outcomes for Role 1

Decarbonisation

Role 1 is helping to deliver decarbonisation by removing barriers that limit renewable energy and building the policies, tools, and markets needed to integrate clean technologies. The Minimum Stability Trial and Negative Reserve Trial show that we can successfully run the system safely with fewer fossil fuel generators, creating more space for wind and solar. With the System Strength project, we are replacing outdated operating limits with smarter, more targeted approaches that maximise renewable generation. With the Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS) project we are redesigning market arrangements so that low-carbon solutions are rewarded, while the Multi-Year Market Development Plan will give investors clear, long-term directions. Together our initiatives are directly enabling Northern Ireland to meet its 80% renewable electricity target by 2030.

Grid Security

We are strengthening security of supply by modernising our operational systems and planning for extreme scenarios. Our Scheduling and Dispatch Programme (SDP) is upgrading technology, policies, and training to better manage renewable generation and energy storage in real time. Our System Strength project and operational trials that we are carrying out, are allowing us to demonstrate that stability on the system can be maintained with fewer fossil fuel units. The market reform projects that we have initiated are ensuring that security is built into every stage of system operation. Our Negative Reserve Trial is testing innovative ways to manage surplus renewable output while maintaining system stability. Together, these projects demonstrate our proactive approach to ensuring that as decarbonisation accelerates, security of supply is not compromised.

System-Wide Costs

We are focused on delivering better value for consumers by streamlining operational processes and fostering competitive, transparent procurement. Our Negative Reserve and Minimum Stability Trials target costly requirements to keep fossil fuel generations running unnecessarily, with the potential to save millions of pounds annually. Our FASS project will introduce auctions to secure services at the best price, while our Multi-Year Plan aims to reduce risk and keep investment costs down. Through the SDP project, the changes that we will make will ensure that power flows are managed in the most efficient way, which ultimately will drive cost savings across the system.

Service Quality

We continue to improve service quality by ensuring that we deliver transparent, robust processes and clearer long-term planning. Our Multi-Year Market Development Plan that we are supporting ensures that market participants understand future priorities and can fully engage with us early on. Our SDP project will improve the reliability and efficiency of control room operations. Across the four SONI outcomes, we have a programme of structured enagement with Regulatory Authorities, market participants an communities to ensure we listen to views, respond, are accountable and feed back on action we have taken across all projects within Role 1.

Role 2 Independent Expert

Providing trusted expertise and transparent engagement to shape policy and deliver consumer value

Role 2 reflects our responsibility to act as a trusted and impartial expert voice for stakeholders, ensuring that their perspectives are actively understood and meaningfully incorporated into decision-making. We approach this role by leading structured engagement activities, providing clear, evidence-based expertise, and ensuring transparency in how we develop and communicate our plans.

Key activities under this role include the delivery of our Dispatch Down Action Programme, development of a Plan-Led Proposal, preparation for the forthcoming SONI Price Control (SRP27) and wider industry consultation processes. Through this role, we ensure that stakeholders have a direct and credible channel into the development of system and market arrangements, while we work to strengthen collaboration across industry, government, and consumers.

Summary of activities within Role 2

Expert Voice

NI Voice in Europe

We represent Northern Ireland's interest in European forums and all-island engagements.

Regulatory Engagement

We work closely with the Utility Regulator to align our activities with compliance and deliver better outcomes for consumers.

Transparency

We promote openness and accountability by publishing clear and accessible information.

Industry Governance

Grid Code Management

We maintain and develop the Grid Code with stakeholders to reflect evolving system needs.

EU Network Code Implementations

We align Northern Ireland's arrangements with European market and operational standards.

Stakeholder Advisory Challenge Group

We run a dedicated group to gather structured feedback on SONI's Price Control and other key initiatives including the EPF.

Summary of Quarterly Deliverables

Our infographic provides a high-level overview of all our projects across the year, mapped by quarter. It offers a simple snapshot of our delivery timelines, showing when projects are scheduled to progress through their key milestones.

QUARTER 1 2025-26

OCT

FWP26-06 Grid Forming Strategy

1. Industry webinar grid forming technology
2. Publish the all-island Grid Forming Strategy with EirGrid
3. Commence evaluation of grid-code grid forming requirements for HVDC

DEC

QUARTER 2 2025-26

JAN

FWP26-05 Innovation Strategy
Delivery of Innovation Strategy

FWP24-05 FWP26-05 Innovation Strategy
Delivery of Innovation Strategy

FWP24-05 SONI Price Control 2027
Submission of Business Plan to UR

MAR

QUARTER 3 2025-26

APR

FWP26-07 Plan-led Proposal
Development and submission of recommendations report to UR and DfE

FWP25-12 Dispatch Down Action Programme
Update draft Dispatch Down Action Plan

FWP25-03 SONI SRP27 Stakeholder Engagement Programme
Deliver full stakeholder engagement programme

JUN

QUARTER 4 2025-26

JUL

FWP26-08 Digitalisation Strategy with NIE Networks
Publish Strategy

FWP25-03 Dispatch Down Action Programme
Progress operational policies and progress chosen solutions

FWP26-09 Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG)

1. Implement the auction platform
2. Run first competitive auction and manage Tier 1 disputes

SEP

FWP24-05 SONI Price Control 2027
Supporting query process following Business Plan submission

FWP25-12
Dispatch Down Action Programme

Project Overview

Our Dispatch Down Action Programme is a key initiative within our Operational Policy Roadmap, which sets out a structured plan for evolving operational policy across Dynamic Stability, Reserves and Ramping, and Operational Security. Our programme provides us with a critical opportunity to evaluate a range of measures to reduce dispatch down of renewable generation, supporting Northern Ireland's transition to a low-carbon, high-renewable power system. Our Dispatch Down Action Programme was established in 2024 in response to a significant increase in dispatch down costs and stakeholder challenges regarding how these costs would be addressed. We formed a dedicated project team to identify the root causes of increasing constraints and develop a comprehensive, multi-phase action plan to manage them both in the short and long term.

Our programme is built on comprehensive studies and analysis designed to support decision-making by the Operational Policy Review Committee (OPRC) and inform the initiation of our trials. These trials will act as a stepping stone to enduring operational policies capable of operating at 95% SNSP, unlocking renewable integration and reducing reliance on fossil-fuel generation. The Dispatch Down Action Plan falls within SONI's TSO activities.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Update draft Dispatch Down Action Plan- **June 2026**
- Progress operational policies and implement solutions including Virtual line Project completed, Dynamic Line Rating scope and implementation plan - **September 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Provides evidence and recommendations to stakeholders and Regulatory Authorities into long-term system strategy.
- **Plan -** Integrates dispatch down reduction measures into long-term system strategy.
- **Operate -** Implements operational changes to improve system flexibility and efficiency.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Reducing renewables curtailment by delivering operational changes that allow more renewable energy to run on the system.

Supports 95% SNSP by laying the groundwork for achieving high SNSP operation, enabling greater renewable penetration.

Evidence-based policy change by using robust analysis to inform trials and long-term operational strategies.

Cost efficiency by reducing dispatch down costs and improving system-wide operational efficiency.

Strategic impact by aligning with the Operational Policy Roadmap to ensure coherent policy evolution across stability, reserves and security.

Service Ambition

This initiative reflects our ambition to tackle one of the most significant operational and cost challenges in the power system – the dispatch down of renewable generation. By leading coordinated studies, trials, and policy development, we are breaking new ground in creating the condition for higher levels of renewable operation. This approach sets a clear path toward reducing unnecessary curtailment, enabling more clean energy on the grid, and supporting Northern Ireland's wider decarbonisation goals. .

Stakeholder Engagement

Our Dispatch Down programme is supported by our structured and frequent engagement with key stakeholders, including quarterly meetings with RenewableNI, regular engagement with renewable developers and operators, and close collaboration with NIE Networks. We also hold bi-weekly sessions with DfE and the Utility Regulator to provide updates, gather input, and ensure alignment on actions to reduce dispatch down. This frequent and open engagement ensures our stakeholders remain fully informed and able to shape decisions throughout this project.

Accountability

Our programme follows a robust governance structure with clearly defined milestones, regular executive oversight, and transparent reporting to the Utility Regulator, government, and stakeholders. Our progress is measured through bi-weekly updates to DfE and UR, quarterly industry briefings and publication of key deliverables. This will ensure clarity of actions, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous stakeholder engagement.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- Whole system collaboration and coordination with 3rd parties, and NIE Networks across its various roles as a TO, DNO and DSO

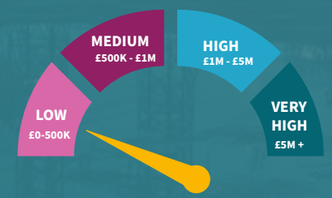
Alignment with SONI Outcomes

Decarbonisation - Supports renewable integration by minimising curtailment.

Service Quality - Strengthens trust and transparency through structured engagement and clear communication of solutions.

System-Wide Costs - Directly addresses a major cost drive, ultimately with the aim of delivering consumer savings.

Cost Scale



FWP24-05
SONI Price Control 2027-2032 (SRP27)

Project Overview

The Utility Regulator uses price controls to mimic the effect of competition on natural monopolies such as SONI. Our price control for 2027-2032 (SRP27) is essential in ensuring that we operate efficiently while delivering the services and outputs that key stakeholders and consumers rely on.

Our current price control which began in 2020 has been subject to an additional one-year extension, approved by the Utility Regulator, to enable us to engage more deeply with our stakeholders, implement further changes within our own organisation as a result of the ongoing implementation of TSO Licence Condition 42 ("LC42"), and ensure our Business Plan rises to the opportunity and challenges of Northern Ireland's energy transition in the coming years. Given the scope and importance of price controls, they are a fundamental project for any regulated entity and will include input from the whole business.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Business plan submission to UR - **March 2026**
- Supporting query process after business plan submission[3] - **September 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Development of submission is supported by data and technical expertise to inform evidence-based guidance and supporting information.
- **Plan -** Supports SONI's ongoing role in planning the optimal future design of the network and all-island electricity market.
- **Deliver** - Ensures delivery of our core remit to operate a safe, secure transmission system with the Price Control supporting the key plans like the Transmission Development Plan, Shaping our Electricity Future, and the Operational Roadmap.
- **Operate -** Funding submissions under the Price Control support delivery plans and enable operation of a more complex, technology-rich electricity system through the energy transition.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Supporting decarbonisation by funding delivery of renewable and net zero targets.

Ensuring grid security with investment to operate a secure, low-carbon system.

Delivering value by achieving outcomes at the lowest reasonable cost for consumers.

Strengthening planning through alignment with SONI's development and operational roadmaps.

Enhancing engagement with stakeholder input and transparent communication.

Service Ambition

Building on our Strategy 2025-31, our SRP27 Business Plan submission will set out our resource requirement to deliver on our strategy and the NI Executive's Energy Strategy and renewable targets. Our Business Plan will provide a robust justification for all resource asks to demonstrate that we are working efficiently and delivering positive value to electricity consumers in Northern Ireland.

Stakeholder Engagement

We have ongoing engagement with industry and key stakeholders as outlined in our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2024-26. We established our Stakeholder Advisory Challenge Group comprising of an array of experienced subject matter experts representing key stakeholders. Our group's primary focus is to provide feedback on our thinking while developing our SRP27 Business Plan. Additionally, we will maintain ongoing engagement through various channels, including bilateral meetings and industry forums, throughout the year.

Accountability

We have a clear delivery structure for this project, and we have embedded accountability through the establishment of a dedicated project steering group. This group comprises relevant senior leadership within SONI, and we regularly report to our independent board. We also engage regularly with key stakeholders through the Stakeholder Advisory and Challenge Group and through direct, regular bilateral meetings with the Utility Regulator. As part of our SRP27 project plan and Business Plan submission, we will engage our internal audit function to provide independent validation of the Business Plan preparation process.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation

3 This project will run into 2026-27 as the timelines are driven by the Utility Regulator

FWP26-05
Innovation Strategy

Project Overview

This project will deliver our comprehensive innovation strategy to guide our efforts in enabling a power system capable of operating at System Non-Synchronous Penetration (SNSP) levels of up to 95% by 2030 and 100% by 2035. Our Innovation Strategy will define our role in fostering innovation, identifying priority areas for research and development, and accelerating the deployment of technologies that support a secure, low-carbon energy system.

Our plan will be developed through stakeholder engagement, alignment with international best practice, and integration with wider system planning and market development work. We will create a structured framework for innovation investment and collaboration with industry, regulators, and technology providers to ensure we are equipped to meet future operational challenges.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Delivery of Innovation Strategy - **March 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Shapes innovation policy and priorities to inform government, regulator, and stakeholders.
- **Plan -** Integrates innovation into long-term system development and investment strategies.
- **Deliver** - Establishes a roadmap for implementing transformative solutions to meet operational goals.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Strategic direction for innovation by providing a clear framework for innovation priorities and investment decisions.

Supports decarbonisation goals ensuring the system is ready to operate securely at 95%-100% SNSP levels.

Accelerate technology adaption by identifying and advancing innovative tools, services, and system solutions.

Global Leadership by positioning SONI as a leading transmission system operator in innovation for renewable integration and system flexibility.

Service Ambition

The Innovation Strategy showcases our ambition by aligning our innovation agenda directly with Northern Ireland energy transition targets. Our Innovation Strategy moves beyond incremental improvements to deliver a forward-looking, transformative programme that equips the transmission system to handle unprecedented levels of renewable generations.

Stakeholder Engagement

We will develop our Innovation Strategy with a collaborative approach, using our Stakeholder Advisory Challenge Group as a key forum to gather input and feedback on our priorities. Our engagement will extend to industry stakeholders, including RenewableNI, the Electricity Association of Ireland, and NIE Networks, ensuring that our strategy reflects the needs and expertise of the wider energy system. Our approach fosters transparency, encourages collaboration across the organisation, and ensures our Innovation Strategy is developed with practical insights to support innovation across the electricity system.

Accountability

Out strategy will be delivered through a phased approach: initial approach, draft strategy, and final strategy sign-off. Oversight will be provided by our executive leadership.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- Collaborating and coordinating to promote a holistic, customer based service approach to digitalisation

FWP26-06
Grid Forming Strategy

Project Overview

This initative will deliver a comprehensive strategy for deploying Grid-Forming (GFM) technology across the all-island power system. GFM is a cutting-edge control capability that enables inverter-based resources (IBRs) to autonomously regulate voltage and frequency, replicating the stabilising characteristics of synchronous machines. Its integration will reduce reliance on synchronous generation, increase renewable penetration, and enable secure operation at System Non-Synchronous Penetration (SNSP) levels of 95% and beyond.

Our Grid Forming Strategy will define a system-wide vision for GFM adoption, outline the enabling technical, operational and regulatory conditions, and identify key implementation priorities. It will also ensure we are aligned with international best practice and European regulatory frameworks. This will deliver a coordinated and efficient transition to advanced grid control.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Industry webinar grid forming technology - **December 2025**
- Publish the all-island Grid Forming Strategy with EirGrid - **December 2025**
- Ongoing evaluation of grid-code grid forming requirements for High Voltage Direct Current (HDVC) - **December 2025**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Informs Regulatory Authorities, policymakers, and industry with evidence-based recommendations.
- **Plan -** Provides a system-wide roadmap for GFM adoption to support future grid needs.
- **Deliver** - Establishes clear steps to integrate the GFM into operational practice and system design.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Enables high renewable penetration by supporting secure system operation at SNSP levels of 95% and beyond.

Reduces dependence on Conventional Units will minimise the needs to dispatch synchronous generation, lowering emissions and costs.

Stabilises grid conditions by improving system stability, enabling grid forming IBRs to operate effectively in weak grid conditions.

International alignment will ensure Northern Ireland is at the forefront of innovation meeting global best practices and EU requirements.

Service Ambition

This initiative shows our ambition to fundamentally change how stability is delivered, allowing the power system to operate securely with far less dependence on synchronous generation. It lays out a long-term, system-wide vision for GFM deployment, strengthening Northern Ireland's position as a frontrunner in modern grid stability solutions.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our Grid-Forming Strategy will be shaped through our close collaboration with industry stakeholders, Original Equipment Manufacturers, Regulatory Authorities and NIE Networks. Our engagement will focus on sharing technical expertise, gathering feedback on proposed approaches, and building consensus on priorities for implementing grid-forming capabilities. Our collaborative approach ensures that the strategy is practical, technically robust, and aligned with regulatory and operational needs, while supporting innovation.

Accountability

Our Grid Forming Strategy will follow a structured development process:

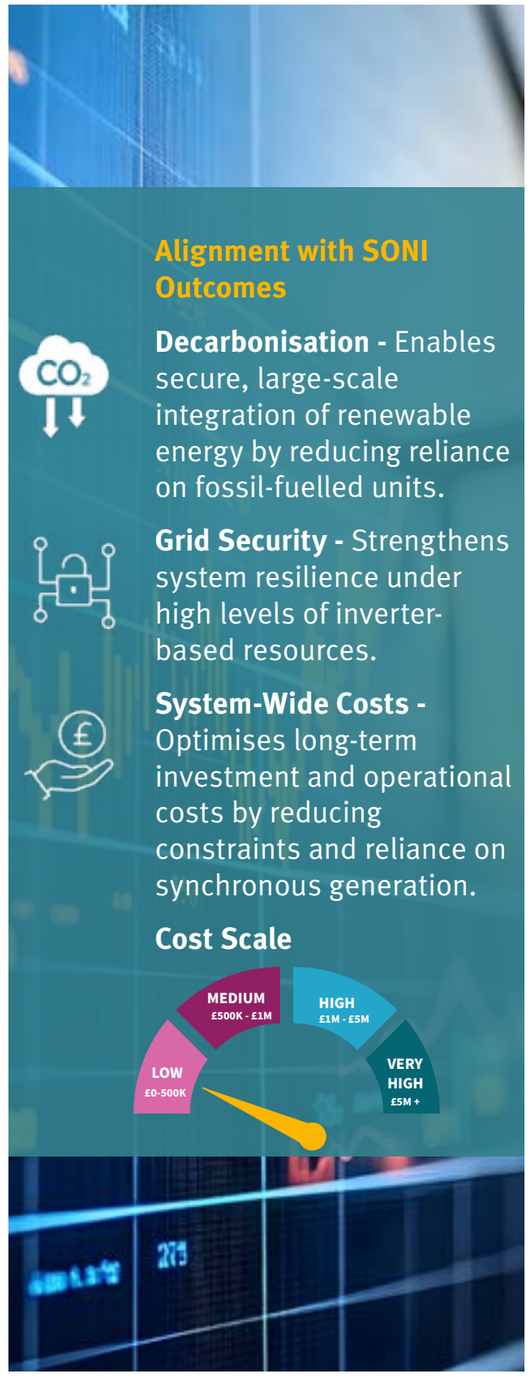
- Technical assessment of GFM functionality and system benefits.
- Stakeholder engagement to identify barriers, opportunities, and enabling conditions.
- Publication of Grid Forming Requirements aligned with EU network codes

Our progress will be reviewed by SONI leadership, with regular updates to Regulatory Authorities and stakeholders, ensuring transparency and measurable outcomes.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of open and collaborative innovation



FWP26-07
Plan-Led Proposal

Project Overview

This project focuses on our collaboration with the Utility Regulator and DfE to identify the key enablers for transitioning to a plan-led approach to network development. Currently, system development is largely driven by where developers choose to connect, often overlooking our system signals and leading to inefficiencies such as network constraints and costly additional reinforcement for consumers. Shaping our Electricity Future estimated that a plan-led approach could reduce network delivery costs up to threefold compared to the current developer-led model.

Moving to a more proactive, plan-led model will provide greater efficiency for consumers, more certainty for investors, and stronger alignment with Northern Ireland's Climate Action Plan targets. Our work also directly supports delivery of the NI Energy Strategy, in partnership with DfE, by shaping the policy and investment framework needed to accelerate the transition to net zero.

This project is the first step in a wider multistage programme, working with statutory partners to define the policy process, and licence changes needed, as well as timelines and robust signals to support this shift. The resulting action plan will also include an assessment of the net benefits to consumers and society.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Development and submission of recommendations report to Utility Regulator and DfE - **April 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Provides evidence-based insights to DfE and UR to shape policy and outline key changes needed for a plan-led approach.
- **Plan -** Defines clear pathways to a plan-led approach to enable efficient, cost-effective system development and decarbonisation.
- **Deliver** - Supports stronger investment signals for developers and streamlines SONI's delivery portfolio through aligned system planning.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Supporting efficiency by reducing duplication and avoiding costly, reactive network reinforcements.

Enabling decarbonisation by aligning infrastructure planning with Climate Action Plan targets.

Strengthening collaboration with statutory partners to ensure robust, future-proof policy and processes.

Delivering certainty for developers and investors through a clear, proactive grid development framework.

Reducing system costs by optimising network planning to minimise consumer expenditure.

Service Ambition

Our Plan-Led Proposal represents a significant step in moving away from the traditional developer-led approach that has often resulted in piecemeal and less efficient grid development. By working with DfE, the UR and other stakeholders to define the necessary policy, licence and process changes, we are establishing the foundations for a more coordinated forward-looking model. This approach will give developers clearer and more predictable investment signals, reduce costs for consumers and help accelerate Northern Ireland's progress towards it decarbonisation goals.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our development of a more plan-led approach will be multi-staged and will require significant engagement across a range of our stakeholder groups. Our core engagement for this initial phase will be focused between SONI, the Utility Regulator and DfE.

Accountability

We have embedded accountability through the execution of our licence obligations which ensure we plan and operate the transmission in a safe, secure and economic manner. Our accountability is demonstrated through our active drive to develop this action plan with our statutory partners.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

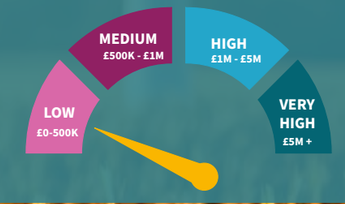
Decarbonisation - Translating policy into credible efficient projects that accelerate decarbonisation of the power system and other sectors.

Grid Security - Ensuring system stability with appropriate fuel mix, operational tools, and systems under a plan-led model.

System Wide Costs - Reducing duplication and inefficiencies in grid connection to lower overall costs for consumers.

Service Quality - Delivering clearer investment signals, improved efficiency, and consumer benefits through a predictable, plan-led process.

Cost Scale



FWP26-08
Digitalisation Strategy with NIE Networks

Project Overview

Our Digitalisation Strategy will provide a unified, forward-looking framework for both SONI and NIE Networks to digitalise energy system operations and improve data accessibility. Aligned with our new licence condition from the Utility Regulator, our Digitalisation Strategy will set out our approach to digitalisation, define our priority actions in our accompanying Digitalisation Action Plan, and ensure transparency and accountability in delivering benefits for consumers and stakeholders. This project aligns with Licence Condition 43 of our TSO licence. Our work underpins Northern Ireland's energy transition, ensuring an efficient, innovative, and integrated electricity system.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Publish SONI's Digitalisation Strategy with an accompanying Digitalisation Action Plan - **September 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Provides a robust evidence base for regulatory, policy, and market recommendations through enhanced data visibility and analytics.
- **Plan -** Enables data-driven decision-making and smarter network planning, supporting the shift to a flexible, decarbonised energy system.
- **Deliver -** Establishes a clear action plan with measurable milestones, ensuring transparency in the delivery of SONI's digitalisation commitments.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Greater system efficiency by optimising planning, operation, and coordination of the transmission network through improved data and digital tools.

Stronger accountability with clear processes for consultation, review, and regulatory oversight to ensure benefits for consumers and system participants.

Integration and flexibility will support interoperability and cross-sector integration to enable a smarter, more resilient energy systems.

Transparency and Accessibility with open and user-friendly access to data and insights for stakeholders, fostering innovation and collaboration.

Service Ambition

Our Digitalisation Strategy reflects our ambition to transform how data and technology are used to plan, operate, and manage the power system. It moves beyond incremental improvements, delivering a cohesive and forward-looking approach that aligns with best practice in the UK and EU, promotes innovation, and supports a smart, sustainable energy future.

Stakeholder Engagement

We will engage with NIE Networks on this joint strategy alongside a broad range of stakeholders, including the Utility Regulator, industry participants, consumer representatives, and other groups, to ensure that the strategy reflects user needs, drives innovation, and protects consumer interest. Feedback, gathered through the Utility Regulators consultation process and decision paper, will guide the design of data services, governance framework, and investment priorities, ensuring that digitalisation delivers measurable benefits for consumers and system users. We also play a key role in coordinating across the energy sector, embedding best practice with energy policy and regulatory obligations.

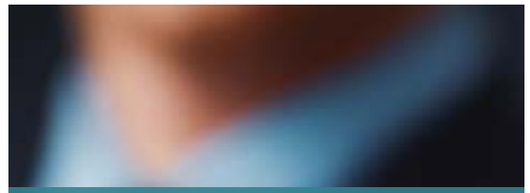
Accountability

Delivery of our Digitalisation Strategy will be supported by our Digitalisation Action Plan with defined timelines, measurable outcomes and transparent reporting. Our progress will be reviewed annually, with oversight from the Utility Regulator and feedback from stakeholders embedded at each stage. This ensures clarity of scope, measurable milestones, and continuous improvement, with benefits for all system users clearly demonstrated.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation



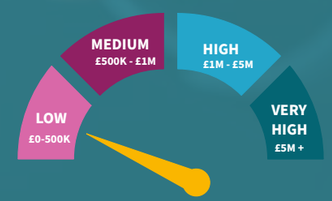
Alignment with SONI Outcomes

Decarbonisation - Supports the energy transition by improving access to high-quality data, enabling better planning, forecasting, and integration of renewable technologies.

Service Quality - Enhances stakeholder experience through easier access to energy system data and greater engagement opportunities.

System-Wide Costs - Drives efficiency by reducing duplication, streamlining processes, and enabling data-drive decision-making, ultimately lowering costs for consumers.

Cost Scale



FWP26-09
Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG)

Project Overview

The Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG), led by DfE, is a key initiative to accelerate renewable energy deployment and deliver Northern Ireland's ambitious 2030 target of 80% renewable electricity consumption. REPG provides a clear, reliable pathway for developers to secure long-term revenue through competitive auctions, giving investors confidence to build large-scale renewable projects.

We play a key supporting role in delivering this scheme, providing the technical expertise, market design input, and operational capability needed to make REPG a success. This includes designing and operating the auction platform, running competitive auctions, and managing tier 1 disputes, ensuring transparency and confidence in the process.

By helping to deliver REPG, we are supporting Northern Ireland's clean energy transition and enabling a strong, stable market for renewable generation

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Implement the auction platform - **July 2026**
- Run first competitive auction and manage Tier 1 disputes - **September 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise** - Provides market and operational expertise to shape auction design.
- **Plan** - Supports strategic energy planning through auction implementation.
- **Deliver** - Supporting DfE by designing and implementing the auction platform.
- **Operate** - This is a key focus of this project, building, operating and managing the auction platform and processes.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Supporting decarbonisation by enabling the scale of renewable generation needed to achieve climate targets.

Delivering market confidence by providing developers and investors with transparent predictable processes for securing support.

Reducing costs by using competitive auctions to deliver renewable energy at the lowest cost to consumers.

Driving investment by stimulating significant trade and investment in Northern Ireland energy sector, boosting economic growth.

Strengthening SONI's role by reinforcing SONI's expertise in delivering market mechanisms that underpin the energy transition.

Service Ambition

This project is central to Northern Ireland's energy strategy and climate commitments. Our role reflects an ambitious approach to market design and delivery, ensuring auctions are fair, efficient, and robust while enabling the large-scale deployment of renewable technologies at pace.

Stakeholder Engagement

The REPG is being developed in close collaboration with the DfE as the lead authority. We are supporting this by engaging extensively with policymakers, the Utility Regulator, and renewable developers to ensure the scheme design meets the needs of all stakeholders. Our role includes:

- Working closely with DfE and the UR to align scheme delivery with energy policy and regulatory requirements.
- Providing updates on auction design implementation timelines, and dispute resolution processes to ensure fairness and accessibility.

Accountability

The scheme is governed by a clear regulatory and policy framework, with us providing auction delivery, robust dispute resolution, and regular reporting to DfE and the Utility Regulator. Our structured approach ensures strong governance, stakeholder confidence and measurable success.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

Decarbonisation - Pivotal to achieving Northern Ireland's renewable energy and net zero goals.

System-Wide Costs - Competitive procurement helps deliver renewables at best value for consumers reducing constraints and reliance on synchronous generation.

Cost Scale

FWP25-03
SONI SRP27 Stakeholder Engagement Programme

Project Overview

We will deliver a comprehensive and structured engagement programme to inform the development of our Business Plan for the next price control period (2027-2032). Our programme will ensure stakeholder perspectives are embedded in every stage of the plan development, building trust, fostering collaboration, and delivering outcomes that reflect the needs of consumers, industry, and policymakers.

We will engage widely with stakeholders including consumers, industry representatives, the Utility Regulator, and government partners to gather feedback and test proposals. Insights will be gathered through formal consultations, workshops and targeted bilateral engagements.

Our engagement process will be ongoing, transparent, and iterative, ensuring the Business Plan adapts to regulatory and market changes, and remains aligned with the expectations of stakeholders and consumers. Our programme will ensure our Business Plan is informed by a broad range of voices, improving trust, transparency, and support for delivery of a secure, decarbonised energy system.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Deliver full stakeholder engagement programme to support SRP27 Business Plan - **Ongoing until March 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise** - Uses stakeholder insights to provide evidence-based guidance to the Utility Regulator and policymakers.
- **Plan** - Develops clear, credible business plans aligned with energy transition goals.
- **Deliver** - Ensures confidence in future investment and operational strategies.
- **Operate** - Embeds feedback into a flexible stakeholder-focused transmission system.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Driving better outcomes by embedding stakeholder feedback to shape targeted effective plans.

Building trust and confidence through early, transparent engagement.

Fostering collaboration by securing stakeholder buy-in to support delivery.

Service Ambition

This programme sets a new standard for transparency and inclusivity in our planning process, ensuring stakeholder priorities and perspectives are at the forefront of our next price control. By engaging widely across consumer groups, industry, Utility Regulator, and policy makers, our initiative will help shape future delivery plans that directly support the energy transition and deliver long-term value for consumers.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our stakeholder engagement programme for our next Price Control is designed to ensure a wide range of voices help shape our business plan. We are engaging extensively with consumers, industry representatives, the Utility Regulator and government through workshops, bilateral meetings, research studies, and formal consultation. Our Stakeholder Advisory Challenge Group was established last year to provide expert feedback and scrutiny, helping to ensure our plans are robust and transparent. Our structured and ongoing engagement ensures the business plan reflects stakeholder priorities, supports collaboration across the energy sector, and delivers value for consumers while enabling the energy transition.

Accountability

We have embdedded accountability in this initiative through clear timelines, milestones, and structured reporting on engagement outcomes. Oversight will be ensured through our Stakeholder Advisory and Challenge group, formal consultations, and regular collaboration with the Utility Regulator, providing stakeholders with confidence that their feedback is fully considered and acted upon.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation

Summary of SONI Outcomes for Role 2

Decarbonisation

We are advancing decarbonisation by aligning regulatory, market, and innovation strategies with Northern Ireland's net zero ambitions. Supporting the NI Energy Strategy will ensure that our work is fully aligned with government climate policy, while our Plan-Led Proposal creates a more proactive and designed approach to infrastructure delivery, ensuring projects are in the right place to enable renewable generation. With our Innovation Strategy and Grid Forming Strategy, we are preparing the electricity system to integrate the next generation of clean technologies, reducing dependency on fossil fuels and supporting the transition to a 95%-100% renewable system.

Grid Security

Our initiatives detailed in Role 2 are helping to enhance Grid Security by embedding resilience, innovation, and transparency into all regulatory and policy engagement. Under our Price Control 2027-2032 we will seek to secure the funding that is needed to ensure delivery of reliable operations and prepare for future network needs in Northern Ireland. Our Digitalisation Strategy that we will develop with NIE Networks will improve the visibility of system conditions and decision-making, which will enable enable us to be more agile in our response to risks. Our Grid Forming Strategy establishes a clear pathway for deploying advanced technologies that stabilise the grid as reliance on conventional generation decreases. Our work in these areas will ensure that the transmission system is robust, future-proofed and capable of securely managing the increasing renewable generation on the grid, recognising the different characteristics of renewable generation.

System-Wide Costs

We have created a dedicated SRP27 Price Control stakeholder engagement process that will be used to identify our stakeholders priorities and for these to be tested and triangulated against our regulatory and legislative obligations before we finalise our Business Plan proposals. This process will ensure that we fully consider the resources that we will need and that these are justified, carefully balancing consumer affordability with the need for system investment. Our Plan-Led Proposal will reduce future costs by shifting from reactive to strategic infrastructure planning, which will avoid network congestion. Our Dispatch Down Action Programme identifies and reduces high system costs caused by operational constraints.

Service Quality

We are raising service quality by improving transparency, building trust, and embedding stakeholder input into decision-making. Our Price Control Stakeholder Engagement process gives customers, Regulatory Authorities, and communities a strong voice in shaping our future plans, while our Digitalisation Strategy makes information more accessible and actionable. Equally our Dispatch Down Programme demonstrates responsiveness to industry concerns by providing regular reporting, analysis and updates. Initiatives like our Grid Forming Strategy and Innovation Strategy ensure that we are delivering cutting-edge services that prepare the grid for future needs, while our Plan-Led Proposal will give all stakeholders clear visibility of how and why infrastructure decisions are made.

Role 3 System Planning

Planning a future-ready grid to enable decarbonisation and secure electricity for all

We are independent of interests in the generation and supply of electricity and is responsible for planning the configuration of the transmission system and securing all necessary consents. Our approach is set out in our three-part Grid Development Process, which is underpinned by close co-ordination with NIE Networks, the Transmission Asset Owner who is responsible for building, maintain, and replacing transmission assets in Northern Ireland.

As demand, generation, and interconnection patterns evolve, power flows across the transmission network change. To maintain performance and reliability, the transmission system must be adapted and strengthened in an economic, efficient, and coordinated way. We work with NIE Networks on functional and design specifications, options reports and other pre-construction activities, alongside this we also engage with other stakeholders including the Utility Regulator, communities, landowners and government departments.

Our Grid Development Process, particularly Part 2 (pre-construction), is reliant on collaboration with these stakeholders and on processes set out in the Transmission Interface Agreement with NIE Networks.

Summary of activities within Role 3

System Planning

Assess & Communicate System Needs

We identify long-term network requirements and share them with stakeholders to guide investment and planning.

Outline Design & Consenting

We prepare indicative designs and secure consents, balancing system needs with environmental and community considerations.

Project Scoping & Feasibility

We evaluate potential solutions early to confirm they are technically and economically viable.

Handover & Commissioning

We transfer approved projects for delivery, ensuring readiness for construction and operation.

Summary of Quarterly Deliverables

Our infographic provides a high-level overview of all our projects across the year, mapped by quarter. It offers a simple snapshot of our delivery timelines, showing when projects are scheduled to progress through their key milestones.

QUARTER 1 2025-26

OCT

FPW25-04 Transmission Clusters Policy
Publication of Decision paper

FWP26-12 Transmission Development Plan 2025
Publish Consultaton

FWP26-11 (TSSPS) Review
Consultation on changes

FWP26-14 Connect West
1. Confirm & Publish Final option
2. Submit TNPP to UR

DEC

FWP25-08 JPMO
1. Publish updated TDPNI timeline
2. Introduce quarterly programme updates

QUARTER 2 2025-26

JAN

FWP25-07 FAQ Methodology
Consult on proposed change

FPW25-04 Transmission Clusters Policy
Final Proposal incorporated into the TCCMS & consulted on

FWP26-12 Transmission Development Plan 2025
Submit TDNPI for UR approval

MAR

FWP26-13 North Sperrin Generation Cluster
Confirm Initial Preferred Option

FWP034: Mid Antrim Upgrade
Delivery of Part 2c Stakeholder Engagement

QUARTER 3 2025-26

APR

FWP25-07 FAQ Methodology
Publish decision on new FAQ methodology

FWP034: Mid Antrim Upgrade
Submission of Planning Application

JUN

QUARTER 4 2025-26

JUL

FWP26-10 Ten Year Transmission Forecast Statement

Publication of Consultation paper

SEP

FWP25-04
Transmission Cluster Policy

Project Overview

Our Transmission Cluster Policy is a Northern Ireland specific initiative designed to manage the sharp increase in renewable connection applications expected. Unlike our current developer-led mode, which can create inefficiencies where grid capacity is limited, our policy establishes a structured, localised framework tailored to Northern Irelands unique energy landscape. By enabling anticipatory investment, it allows us to plan and deliver transmission infrastructure in a more coordinated and cost-effective way. Our policy will ensure alignment with Northern Ireland's Energy Strategy and climate legalisation while providing a clear pathway for connecting large volumes of renewable generation, helping to meet Northern Ireland's net zero targets.

We will propose a final policy and incorporate this into the Transmission Connection Charging Methodology Statement (TCCMS). Following this we will undergo a further public consultation and seek final approval from UR on any amendments.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Final Proposal set out in decision paper for the Transmission Cluster Policy incorporated into the TCCMS and issued for consultation - **March 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Provides clear evidence-based guidance to DfE, UR and industry on optimal renewable connections to enable efficient long-term grid planning.
- **Plan -** Introduces a plan-led cluster approach to cut constraints, optimise investment, and give developers and communities greater clarity.
- **Deliver -** Implementing a structured transmission cluster model to connect renewables efficiently, supporting targets while minimising costs and disruption.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Efficient renewable integration by facilitating the connection of large-scale renewable generation in areas of limited grid capacity, supporting the delivery of net zero targets.

Cost savings for consumers by reducing the need for piecemeal, develop-led network reinforcements, avoiding duplication and minimising overall infrastructure costs.

Policy alignment by supporting the Climate Action Plan and ensuring grid readiness for accelerated renewable development.

Future-proofed grid by providing a scalable and coordinated approach that anticipates future connection needs, delivering long-term system efficiency and resilience.

Service Ambition

We show ambition in this project by proactively tackling the challenge of connecting large volumes of renewable generation in areas with limited grid capacity, an approach not previously taken in Northern Ireland. By moving from a reactive, developer-led model to a forward-looking, coordinated cluster approach, we are pioneering a more strategic and efficient way of planning infrastructure. This positions the transmission system to better support Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets and reflects our commitment to innovation and long-term system transformation.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our engagement for the Transmission Cluster Policy has been central to its development. Feedback from our consultation published in June 2025, will be used to deliver our Final Proposal Paper outlining stakeholder input and the proposed final policy design. Our approach ensures stakeholder views are fully considered and directly influence the final proposal. Our Final Proposal Paper will then be incorporated into the Transmission Connection Charging Methodology Statement (TCCMS), which will undergo a further public consultation, and then be submitted to UR for their approval providing continued transparency and engagement throughout the process.

Accountability

We have embedded accountability in this project through our transparent consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Utility Regulator, DfE, NIE Networks, developers and communities. By developing a clear policy framework and quantifying consumer benefits, we are ensuring that investment decisions are evidence-based, transparent and openly justified while also delivering value for money.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

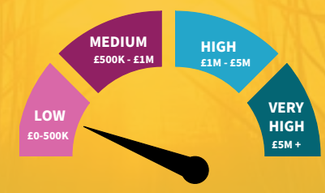
Decarbonisation - Enabling efficient large-scale renewable connections to achieve net zero goals.

Grid Security - Coordinated investment will strengthen resilience, reducing constraints while maintaining stability as renewables increase.

System-Wide Costs - Moving to a plan-led grid development will reduce duplication and inefficient reinforcements, cutting costs for consumers.

Service Quality - Built through consultation with government, UR, industry and communities to ensure trust and inclusivity.

Cost Scale



FWP26-10
Ten Year Transmission Forecast Statement (TYTFS)

Project Overview

Our Ten Year Tranmission Forecast Statement (TYTFS) is a statutory document described in Condition 33 of the TSO Licence that sets out changes on the transmission over a ten-year period, including opportunities for new generation and demand connections. Over the last decade, this document has been prepared and published as an all-island document in conjunction with EirGrid.

With the scale and pace of change in the energy industry in working towards meeting decarbonisation targets, it is important that this statement is robustly reviewed to ensure it successfully signals opportunities for developers while also delivering positive, efficient outcomes for consumers. Some areas being considered include the preparation of a NI-focused TYTFS and a review of the methodologies for assessing generation and demand opportunities. Consideration will also be given to how our TYTFS can best support moving to a more plan-led approach.

Under our licence, any change to the form of the TYTFS is subject to approval by UR and supported by an industry consultation on the new format.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Publication of Consultation Paper - **September 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Renewed content and format will be better able to support and inform government policy.
- **Plan -** Using our technical expertise to provide evidence-based data to signal opportunities on the transmission system.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Supporting decarbonisation by providing clear forward-looking information to help meet climate and renewable energy targets.

Strengthening investment signals by offering robust, NI-focused insights on transmission developments, improving visibility for developers.

Enabling a more plan-led approach by aligning with SONI's efforts to move towards a more proactive, efficient grid development strategy.

Delivering consumer value by helping to ensure efficient investment decisions, supporting lower system costs and long-term benefits for consumers.

Service Ambition

Through this project we show ambition by strengthening the TYTFS as a forward-looking planning tool, introducing improved methodologies, clearer investment signals, and a stronger-focus on supporting a plan-led approach. Our goal is to give developers and policymakers better insights to guide efficient investment, accelerate renewable integration, and ensure the grid evolves in line with net zero targets.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our development of the updated Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement will involve targeted engagement with industry to gather feedback on proposed methodologies and assumptions. Any proposed changes to the TYTFS will be consulted on with EirGrid. We will also work closely with the Utility Regulator to review and agree new methodologies and reporting structures, ensuring alignment with regulatory expectations and securing formal approval.

Accountability

This project demonstrates our accountability by delivering a statutory, regulator-approved statement that clearly outlines network changes, timelines, and investment priorities. Mandatory consultation ensures transparency and stakeholder input, while structured reviews and regulatory oversight provide assurance that the TYTFS reflects evolving policy, technology and system needs.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration:
- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

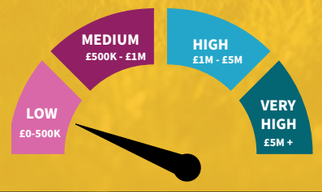
Decarbonisation - Enhanced format and signalling will help support and inform developers with respect to project opportunities.

Grid Security - Improved methodologies will ensure that opportunities are set out more accurately to reflect grid opportunities while also ensuring grid resilience and stability.

System-Wide Costs - This policy is being developed through consultation with government, UR and industry.

Service Quality - Improved signalling of opportunities should help avoid inefficient reinforcement and in turn help lower overall system costs for consumers.

Cost Scale



FWP26-11
Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS) Review

Project Overview

Our Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS) sets out the minimum requirements for the planning of the transmission system. They set out a range of scenarios under which the grid must remain secure when modifying the transmission system. This includes connection and network infrastructure projects. The growing volume and mix of technologies including many energy storage projects connecting to the system, have led to the need to review the existing standards. Our review seeks to ensure the standards reflect robust evidence-based assumptions including connection design, and how the technologies have and will be dispatched alongside other technologies on the system. Our key aim of this review is to ensure that the ongoing integration of projects on to the system supports grid security.

In particular this project will update a number of criteria relating to the design of energy storage connections and dispatches used when performing assessments on the transmission system for new connections.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Consult on proposed TSSPS updates - **October 2025**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Plan -** Supporting the integration of renewables and supporting technologies, ensuring the transmission network is designed for future needs.
- **Deliver -** Balancing the transition in a safe, secure and just way ensuring that infrastructure delivery is underpinned by clear, consistent standards for efficiency and reliability.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Supporting decarbonisation by updating standards to enable higher renewable and storage integration.

Strengthening system security through clear future-proofed planning and operational requirements.

Providing clarity for investment to ensure efficient, cost-effective network development.

Enhancing transparency via consultation and regulatory engagement on proposed changes.

Service Ambition

We have strengthened our ambition within this project by modernising planning and security standards to reflect Northern Ireland's evolving energy landscape. Our review incorporates requirements for energy storage, updated renewable assumptions, and best practices from across the industry. By setting clear, future-proofed standards, we are building a secure, low-carbon electricity system and supporting efficient long-term investment.

Stakeholder Engagement

We will consult on the proposed changes to the Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS) before submitting them to the Utility Regulator for approval. Our engagement will ensure transparency and provide stakeholders with an opportunity to review and contribute to the updated standards. We will also work closely with NIE Networks and EirGrid to ensure the proposed changes are aligned across the transmission system, reflect operational needs, and support the safe and efficient development of the network.

Accountability

We have built clear accountability in this project through a structured process of consultation, regulatory approval, and transparent reporting. Our project has defined deliverables, including the drafting of revised standards, public consultation on proposed changes, and submission to the Utility Regulator for approval. Our engagement with NIE Networks and EirGrid ensures alignment across system planning and operations, while timelines and milestones are tracked through SONI's governance processes. Our structured approach demonstrates how SONI's planning standards remain robust, future-proofed, and responsive to stakeholder input and regulatory oversight.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration:
- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development
- Whole system collaboration and coordination with 3rd parties, and NIE Networks across its various roles as a TO, DNO and DSO.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

Decarbonisation - Enables greater renewable and storage integration by ensuring planning standards reflect a low-carbon system.

Grid Security - Provides robust, future-proofed standards to maintain system stability and security.

System-Wide Costs - Offers clarity for investment decisions, helping reduce inefficiencies and costs.

Cost Scale

FWP26-12
Transmission Development Plan 2025

Project Overview

Our Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland (TDPNI) is a statutory document required under Condition 40 of our TSO licence. It provides a comprehensive, forward-looking view of all transmission system investments over the next ten years, including major reinforcements, new connections and asset replacement programmes. Our 2025 TDPNI will detail all projects that are proposed, in development, or progressing, with fully updated timelines, costs and delivery milestones. For the first time, these timelines and estimated completion dates will be informed by our Joint Project Management Office (JPMO), which is a collaborative initiative created between SONI and NIE Networks to enhance accuracy, transparency, and consistency in project planning and reporting.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Publish TDPNI Consultation - **October 2025**
- Submit TDPNI for UR approval - **February 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Provides evidence-based insight for policymakers and the Utility Regulator on grid investment needs.
- **Plan -** Central to SONI's long-term system planning role, ensuring a robust and future-reading grid.
- **Deliver -** Supports delivery of infrastructure projects by establishing realistic and transparent timelines.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Enhanced coordination by incorporating JPMO data for accurate and consistent timelines.

Supports the energy transition by identifying essential upgrades and reinforcement to enable renewable integration.

Regulatory compliance by ensuring SONI meets their statutory requirements under the TSO licence.

Efficient investment planning by providing stakeholders with reliable information to support strategic decision making.

Service Ambition

Our 2025 TDPNI reflects our ambition to raise the standard of long-term planning by improving transparency, coordination, and accuracy. By integrating JPMO data, it sets a new benchmark for reporting and delivery certainty, supporting Northern Ireland's renewable energy goals and the evolving needs of the power system.

Stakeholder Engagement

We will hold a public consultation on the draft TDPNI, providing transparency and opportunities for stakeholder feedback. This will be supported by our targeted engagement with key stakeholders to review proposed updates, delivery timelines, and investment priorities. We will collaborate closely with NIE Networks when preparing the TDPNI as they are the Transmission Owner. NIE Networks provide information on their asset replacement projects to allow industry to see the full suite of tranmission projects planned. This includes asset replacements by NIE Networks and the upgrades we are responsible for planning. Feedback will be incorporated into our final plan before submission to the Utility Regulator, ensuring it reflects stakeholder needs and priorities.

Accountability

Within this project, we have ensured that there are clear processes, milestones, and governance set out to deliver the TDPNI to a high standard. Our TDPNI's structure and content are subject to Utility Regulator approval, with full stakeholder consultation and alignment with NIE Networks' asset replacement plans to ensure visibility and oversight.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration:
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

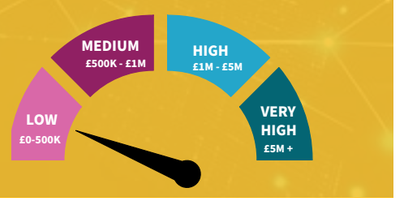
Decarbonisation - Enables efficient integration of renewable energy by identifying future network requirements.

Grid Security - Supports secure, reliable electricity through strategic infrastructure planning.

System-Wide Costs - Improves efficiency and cost-effectiveness by providing clarity and certainty for investments.

Service Quality - Offers stakeholders accurate detailed information to support engagement and decision-making.

Cost Scale



FWP25-07
Firm Access Quantity (FAQ) Methodology

Project Overview

This project will review and update our Firm Access Quantity (FAQ) methodology, which has been in place since 2013, to reflect today's energy landscape and regulatory requirements. The updates we will make incorporate more realistic dispatch modelling, including a broader mix of technologies such as solar PV and battery storage, and better assess how different technologies interact. Our goal is to create a modern, fit for purpose FAQ policy that encourages investment in renewable generation while protecting consumers from excessive constraint costs.

Our review requires updates to both software and methodology/policy, ensuring alignment with evolving regulation and market design. This work also seeks to provide greater clarity for large-scale generation projects regarding their pathway and timelines for achieving full access to the grid, supporting transparency and informed investment decisions.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Consult on proposed changes to FAQ calculation methodology - **January 2026**
- Publish decision on new FAQ methodology - **May 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Providing expert recommendations to UR and SEMC to modernise access policy.
- **Plan -** Aligning firm access with the Transmission Development Plan to ensure efficient long-term planning.
- **Deliver -** Supporting delivery of infrastructure and system changes by enabling better investment signals.
- **Operate -** Ensuring operational feasibility by integrating realistic dispatch modelling and system constraints.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Updating policy and methodology to reflect today's policies, regulatory frameworks and technology mix.

Providing clarity for developers on pathways and timelines to firm access, improving planning and investment certainty.

Supporting investment in renewable and low-carbon generation by providing clear, transparent access arrangements.

Reducing constraint costs by aligning firm access arrangements with efficient grid operation.

Improving transparency through ongoing engagement with the Utility Regulator, SEMC, NIE Networks, and industry stakeholders.

Service Ambition

This project reflects our ambition to lead in modernising critical market methodologies in Northern Ireland. We are going beyond traditional approaches by developing a future-proofed FAQ framework that incorporates a wider range of technologies and realistic dispatch scenarios than are currently utilised. This forward-looking approach will give investors clearer, more reliable signals, ensure fair participation across all market participants and enable more efficient grid operation as renewable penetration grows.

Stakeholder Engagement

We have actively engaged with Renewables NI to discuss key issues and priorities related to the FAQ Methodology Review. Engagement with the Utility Regulator will continue to ensure alignment on timelines and next steps. We will hold a public consultation on our proposed changes to the calculation methodology, with feedback used to shape our final design. Our decision paper will then be published to confirm the new methodology, ensuring transparency and stakeholder input at every stage.

Accountability

We have underpinned accountability in this project with clear governance and collaboration:

- We engage closely with the Utility Regulator and SEMC to ensure regulatory alignments
- We coordinate with NIE Networks to ensure operational practicality
- We particpate in ongoing industry engagement with transparent consultation and working groups
- We are committed to data-driven, economic analysis to support all recommendations and ensure consumer value.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration:
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

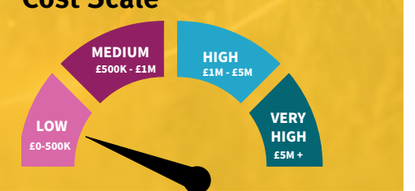
Decarbonisation - Supporting investment in renewable generation by ensuring fair and transparent access arrangements.

Grid Security - Aligns firm access arrangements with system capabilities, balancing renewable growth with secure operations.

System-Wide Costs - Minimises constraints and redispatch costs by optimising access policies in line with network development.

Service Quality - Provides clarity and confidence for developers, stakeholders and UR through transparent evidence-based decision making.

Cost Scale



FWP26-13
North Sperrin Generation Cluster

Project Overview

Our proposed North Sperrin Generation Cluster will deliver a new high-capacity transmission substation to accommodate a significant pipeline of renewable generation in the Northern Sperrins area. Developed under our Transmission Cluster Policy, this project aims to connect multiple generators through a single, strategically located node, reducing the needs for extensive individual connections and optimising network investment.

By concentrating connection infrastructure, our project will minimise environmental impact, provide greater certainty for developers, and ensure that the transmission network is prepared to support Northern Ireland's long-term decarbonisation goals.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Confirm Initial Preferred Option - **March 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Informs policymakers and the Utility Regulator on strategic renewable connection opportunities in the Northern Sperrins.
- **Plan -** Central to SONI's planning role, ensuring coordinated network design to integrate large-scale renewable generation.
- **Deliver -** Supports efficient, cost-effective delivery of infrastructure by clustering connections and minimising disruption.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Supporting renewable integration by providing a high-capacity substation to accommodate significant new renewable generation in the Northen Sperrins.

Future-proofs the grid by creating capacity to support demand growth in the area and net zero targets.

Reduces infrastructure requirements by minimising the need for multiple individual connections by clustering generation, lowering environmental and community impacts.

Service Ambition

Our ambition is reflected in this project through our transformational approach to connection policy, moving from piece meal, developer-led connections to a strategic cluster model. This reduces the need for multiple new lines, cutting costs, minimising environmental impact, and accelerating renewable integration. Our scale of ambition lies in delivering a high-capacity substation designed to support significant renewable growth in the region. The pace is challenging, with work aligned to near-term energy targets and the project will deliver measurable outcomes such as reduced curtailment, more efficient use of infrastructure, and accelerated progress towards renewables targets.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our engagement will focus on collaboration with local planners and public representatives, including councillors, MLAs, and MPs, to ensure transparency and local input into our project's development. Our early engagement will help build understanding of project objectives, address concerns, and support a coordinated approach to planning and delivery.

Accountability

Our project has a well-defined scope and aligns with our new Transmission Cluster Policy. The delivery of a new high-capacity substation provides a clear, tangible outcome that can be monitored at each stage, from consultation to commissioning. We habe actively sought input from developers, statutory bodies and communities to shape the approach, ensuring the project reflects stakeholder needs. By designing our cluster to minimise new infrastructure and costs, we are showing accountability not just in delivery but in how stakeholder input and consumer value have been built into our plan from the start.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration:
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- Whole system collaboration and coordination with 3rd parties, and NIE Networks across its various roles as a TO, DNO and DSO

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

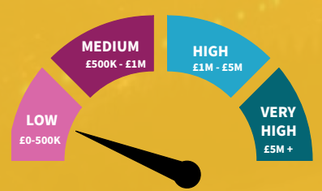
Decarbonisation - Supports Northern Ireland's net zero targets by enabling large-scale renewable connections in a high-resource area.

Grid Security - Strengthens the transmission network to handle increased generation and demand securely.

System-Wide Costs - Reduces duplication of infrastructure by clustering connections delivering cost efficiencies for consumers.

Service Quality - Provides developers with greater connection certainty, while ensuring transparent planning and engagement with local stakeholders.

Cost Scale



FWP26-14
Connect West

Project Overview

Our Connect West Project responds to the increasing volume of renewable generation seeking to connect in the west of Northern Ireland, where existing network capacity is limited. To address this, the project will deliver a new 275KV transmission connection between Turleenan and Dromore in Tyrone.

Our strategic reinforcement will strengthen our transmission network in the area, enabling the secure connection to additional renewable generation while future-proofing the grid to meet long-term Net Zero and electricity demand growth.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Confirm and publish Final Preferred Option - **December 2025**
- Submit TNPP to UR for approval - **February 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Plan -** This projects is core to SONI's planning role. It sets out a structured reinforcement to meet forecast generation and demand growth.
- **Deliver** - By progressing this major reinforcement, SONI is ensuring renewable developers can connect on time and the grid remains reliable.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Enabling renewables growth by providing the capacity for largescale connections, supporting net zero targets.

Future-proofing the grid in the west ensuring security of supply and resilience for both generation and demand.

Delivering value for consumers by reducing network constraints and curtailment, avoiding costly interim reinforcements.

Supports regional development by enabling investment and economic actively listed to renewable deployment.

Service Ambition

Our Connect West project showcases our ambition to plan ahead of need, building the transmission network not just for today's requirements but for the energy system Northern Ireland will rely on in the decades to come. By delivering a new 275 kV connection between Turleenan and Dromore, we are opening up capacity in the west to accommodate future renewable generation and demand growth. This forward-looking approach goes beyond traditional, reactive development, setting a clear example of how strategic infrastructure planning can help deliver the transition to net zero while reducing long-term system costs.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our engagement will focus on collaboration with local planners and public representatives, including councillors, MLAs, and MPs, to ensure transparency and local input into the project's development. Our early engagement will help build understanding of project objectives, address concerns, and support a coordinated approach to planning and delivery.

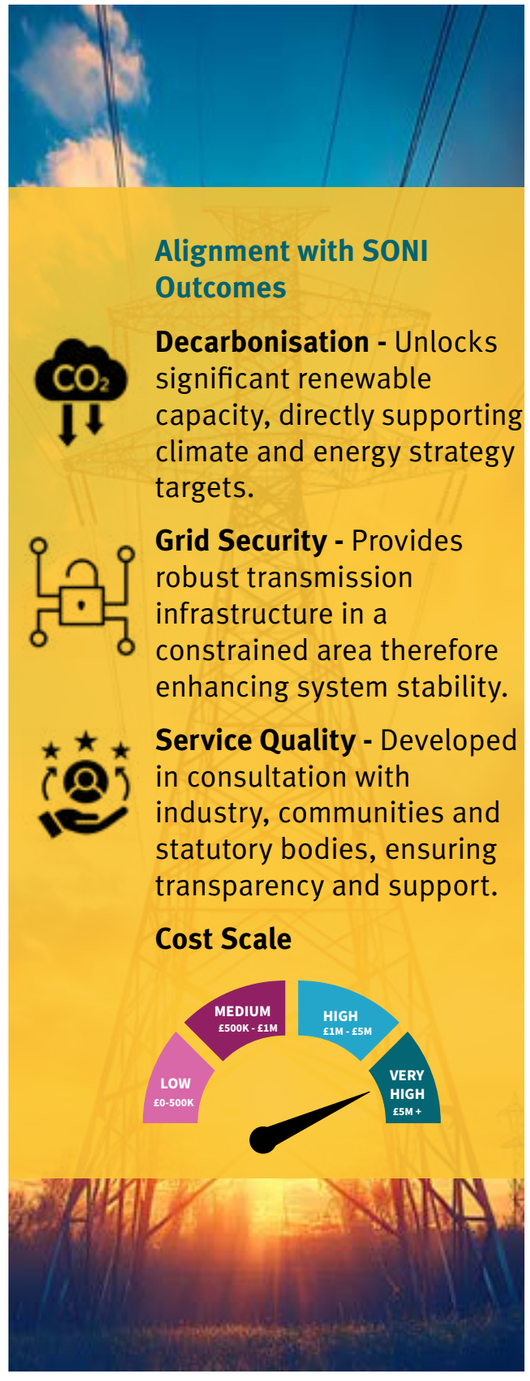
Accountability

Our delivery plan for a new 275 kV connection between Turleenan and Dromore demonstrates accountability. Our project scope is clear, with milestones that allow progress to be tracked by stakeholders and industry. We will engage with local council representatives and elected. Our approach ensures that the investment delivers real and visible benefits to consumers. These benefits are: reduced constraint; increased capacity, and greater security of supply, while allowing stakeholders to see how their input has been incorporated into ourfinal plan.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration:
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- Whole system collaboration and coordination with 3rd parties, and NIE Networks across its various roles as a TO, DNO and DSO.



FWP25-08
Joint Project Management Office

Project Overview

The Joint Project Management Office (JPMO), established by SONI and NIE Networks, is a central platform to coordinate the delivery of all transmission infrastructure projects required to meet Northern Ireland's energy targets. Building on its establishment in last year's plan, our JPMO now moves into its next phase of operation, focusing on publishing updated timelines in our TDPNI, providing quarterly progress updates, and implementing acceleration plans for each project to minimise delays.

Our joint approach creates a single end-to-end programme for transmission investment, providing oversight of all network reinforcement, refurbishment, and customer projects. By improving transparency, enhancing collaboration, and streamlining project delivery, our JPMO will play a critical role in managing the unprecedented scale of work needed to deliver Northern Ireland's energy transition.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Publish updated TDPNI timelines - **October 2025**
- Introduce quarterly programme updates and acceleration opportunities - **December 2025**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Supplies accurate, evidence-based progress tracking and reporting to inform policymakers, Utility Regulator and stakeholders.
- **Plan -** This project is central to SONI's planning role, providing a single, coordinated programme for transmission investment to meet future system needs.
- **Deliver -** This project is focused on accelerating project timelines, optimising delivery, and ensuring infrastructure is in place to support the energy transition.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Driving efficient delivery of transmission infrastructure projects to meet energy targets.

Enhancing transparency with quarterly updates and clear progress tracking against baselines.

Optimising investment planning through a single, coordinated end-to-end programme for all transmission projects.

Streamlining collaboration between SONI and NIE Networks to ensure alignment and proactive issue resolution.

Accelerating project timelines with dedicated acceleration plans to minimise delays and deliver key reinforcements faster.

Service Ambition

Our JPMO represents a transformative step in how transmission infrastructure is planned and delivered in Northern Ireland. It introduces a single coordinated programme to manage an unprecedented amount of work, ensuring delivery at pace to meet energy targets. By embedding acceleration planning, iterative process improvements, and stronger collaboration between SONI and NIE Networks, our JPMO sets a new standard for transparency, efficiency and delivery in infrastructure development.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our JPMO is built on close collaboration between SONI and NIE Networks, ensuring alignment on all transmission investment projects. We engage regularly with the Utility Regulator to provide transparency on programme progress, timelines and delivery priorities. Our industry stakeholders are kept informed through quarterly updates and publications such as our TDPNI, helping to build trust, provide clarity and encourage collaboration in addressing delivery challenges across the sector. Alongside this we actively participate in DfE's Grid Development Monitoring Group.

Accountability

We have embedded clear accountability in the JPMO through defined milestones, joint governance between SONI and NIE networks, and formal reporting mechanisms such as our TDPNI and quarterly progress updates. Our JMPO tracks performance against baselines plans enabling early action on delays and ensuring decision-makers are equipped with accurate timely data. Its oversight of all transmission investment streams ensures alignment with regulatory expectation and transparent reporting to stakeholders.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration:
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- Whole system collaboration and coordination with 3rd parties, and NIE Networks across its various roles as a TO, DNO and DSO

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

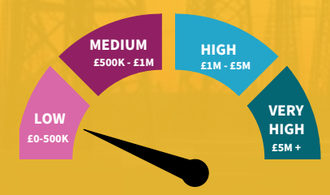
Decarbonisation - Enables timely delivery of transmission infrastructure critical to achieving net zero goals.

Grid Security - Improves oversight and coordination to ensure network reinforcements and upgrades maintain system resilience.

System-Wide Costs - Reduces inefficiencies through better planning, prioritisation and optimisation of investment and benefits consumers.

Service Quality - Developed in consultation with industry, communities and statutory bodies, ensuring transparency and support.

Cost Scale



FWP027
Energising Belfast Project: Castlereagh - Hannahstown

Project Overview

Our Energising Belfast Project is a major reinforcement initiative centered on the Castlereagh – Hannahstown 110kV corridor and wider Belfast network. Its purpose is to strengthen grid security in the Belfast area, replace ageing infrastructure, and create capacity for future demand growth and renewable integration.

Work to date has included the identification of two potential substation sites and progress to Head of Terms with landowners. Negotiations have been protracted and we continue to engage actively with the relevant parties while also progressing assessment of alternative sites to ensure deliverability. Cable design has been advanced for the majority of the Donegall Main to Belfast Central route, with our final design contingent on confirmation of the substation locations. We continue to engage with local representatives and planners on zoning designation and EIA requirements.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- As mentioned, we have not included any specific deliverables for this project this year due to legal and commercial sensitivities. The project has been included in our Forward Work Plan to provide transparency on its status and to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to progressing this critical reinforcement.

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Plan -** Ensures proactive, coordinated planning to deliver long-term network reinforcements.
- **Deliver -** Progressing a major infrastructure project that will strengthen resilience and support growth in the city centre.
- **Operate -** Reinforces the system to maintain reliability in real-time as demand and renewable penetration increase.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Enhanced security of supply by strengthening the resilience of the Belfast network, reducing vulnerability and ensuring

Capacity for growth by providing additional network capacity to support future demand growth in Belfast and enable greater renewable integration

Infrastructure renewal by modernising outdated circuits and substations, improving long-term system resilience.

Service Ambition

This project reflects our ambition to deliver a secure and modern electricity system capable of supporting the growth of Northern Ireland's capital city. By upgrading and reinforcing critical 110kV infrastructure, the project will address existing network vulnerabilities, enable future demand growth, and provide a platform for increased renewable integration. Our work is future-proofing Belfast's transmission network to ensure the city remains resilient, competitive, and prepared for the energy transition.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our engagement is central to Energising Belfast. We have held discussions with local representatives, planners and community stakeholders to ensure that the project's development takes account environmental, planning and socio-economic considerations. As site options are confirmed, further public and stakeholder engagement will be undertaken in line with the Grid Development Process, including formal consultation opportunities. We recognise the importance of building understanding and trust around a project of this scale and continue to prioritise open, constructive dialogue with all relevant parties to support its successful delivery.

Accountability

We are committed to maintaining the transparency and strong governance throughout the delivery of this complex project. Our progress is overseen through established project management structures, with regular reporting to the Utility Regulator and alignment with the Grid Development Process. We continue to evaluate technical, environmental, and socio-economic factors to ensure that all project decisions are robust and evidence-based. Where challenges arise,we are proactive in reassessing options and communicating implications clearly, ensuring that accountability remains central to how the project is managed.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration:
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- Whole system collaboration and coordination with 3rd parties, and NIE Networks across its various roles as a TO, DNO and DSO.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

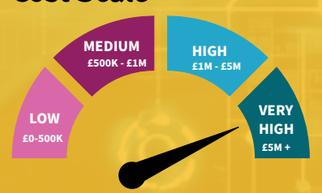
Decarbonisation - Supports increased load growth for NI's net zero ambitions.

Grid Security - Improves resilience and stability by addressing vulnerabilities in Belfast's transmission infrastructure.

System-Wide Costs - Will avoid costly constraint management through anticipatory investment in capacity and resilience.

Service Quality - Provides a clear transparent development process, engaging stakeholders to ensure solutions meeting local and regional needs.

Cost Scale



FWP034
Mid-Antrim Upgrade

Project Overview

The Mid Antrim Project is designed to relieve existing and future congestion on the Kells to Rasharking 110kV circuit, strengthening security of supply and enabling greater integration of renewable generation. Following approval of our TNPP submission in February 2022, the project has progressed through Part 2 of our Grid Development Process.

A proposed purchase area for the new Terrygowan substation, along with surrounding temporary licence area, was identified and formalised, with negotiations ongoing. In parallel, a preferred overhead line alignment has been proposed, supported by continuing landowner engagement and detailed design work. We have also engaged with local representatives and council planners on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening and project updates. Our project will now move into Part 2C consultation during this plan period, creating opportunities for further stakeholder and community feedback before the planning submission.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Delivery of Part 2c Stakeholder Engagement - **February 2026**
- Submission of Planning Application **– May 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Plan -** Identify and progress reinforcement to meet future system needs.
- **Deliver -** Drive forward major infrastructure projects on time.
- **Operate -** Support secure system operation by reducing congestion.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Improved security of supply by strengthening the North Antrim network, reducing the risk of outages.

Constraint cost reduction by easing congestion on the 110kV circuit, lowering system operation costs.

Facilitating renewable integration by enabling more renewable generation to connect and operate efficiently

Future-proofing the grid by providing capacity to meet increasing regional demand and support long-term decarbonisation targets.

Service Ambition

This project shows our ambition by tackling one of the heaviest constrained parts of the network, the Kells – Rasharkin 110kV circuit, to unlock renewable capacity that would otherwise remain unused. By progressing line alignment and design ahead of demand, we are taking a proactive approach to ensure the grid is ready when required. This forward-looking work will enable greater renewable integration, strengthen grid security and reduce constraint costs for consumers.

Stakeholder Engagement

We have completed Part 2a, and 2b engagement and will now commence Part 2c, which includes both virtual and in-person consultations across our project area. Our engagement has focused on the proposed Terrygowan substation site and surrounding areas, as well as the overhead line alignment, where landowner discussions and detailed designs are ongoing. Our key stakeholders include local landowners, communities, council planners, elected representatives, NIE Networks and the Utility Regulator. Our process ensures that views are meaningfully considered, balancing community input with system needs to deliver essential infrastructure for Northern Ireland's energy future.

Accountability

We ensure delivery is governed through the Grid Development Process with internal governance approval sought for each stage, deliverables within this period including Part 2c Stakeholder engagement and the planning submission. Our oversight is maintained through our regular updates to the Utility Regulator, and our collaboration with NIE Networks, ensuring that each step of the process is transparent, evidence-based and accountable.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of effective engagement and collaboration:
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- Whole system collaboration and coordination with 3rd parties, and NIE Networks across its various roles as a TO, DNO and DSO.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

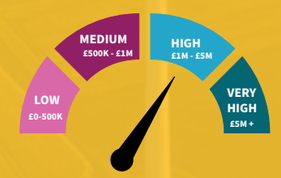
Decarbonisation - Will enable renewable generation to connect by relieving congestion.

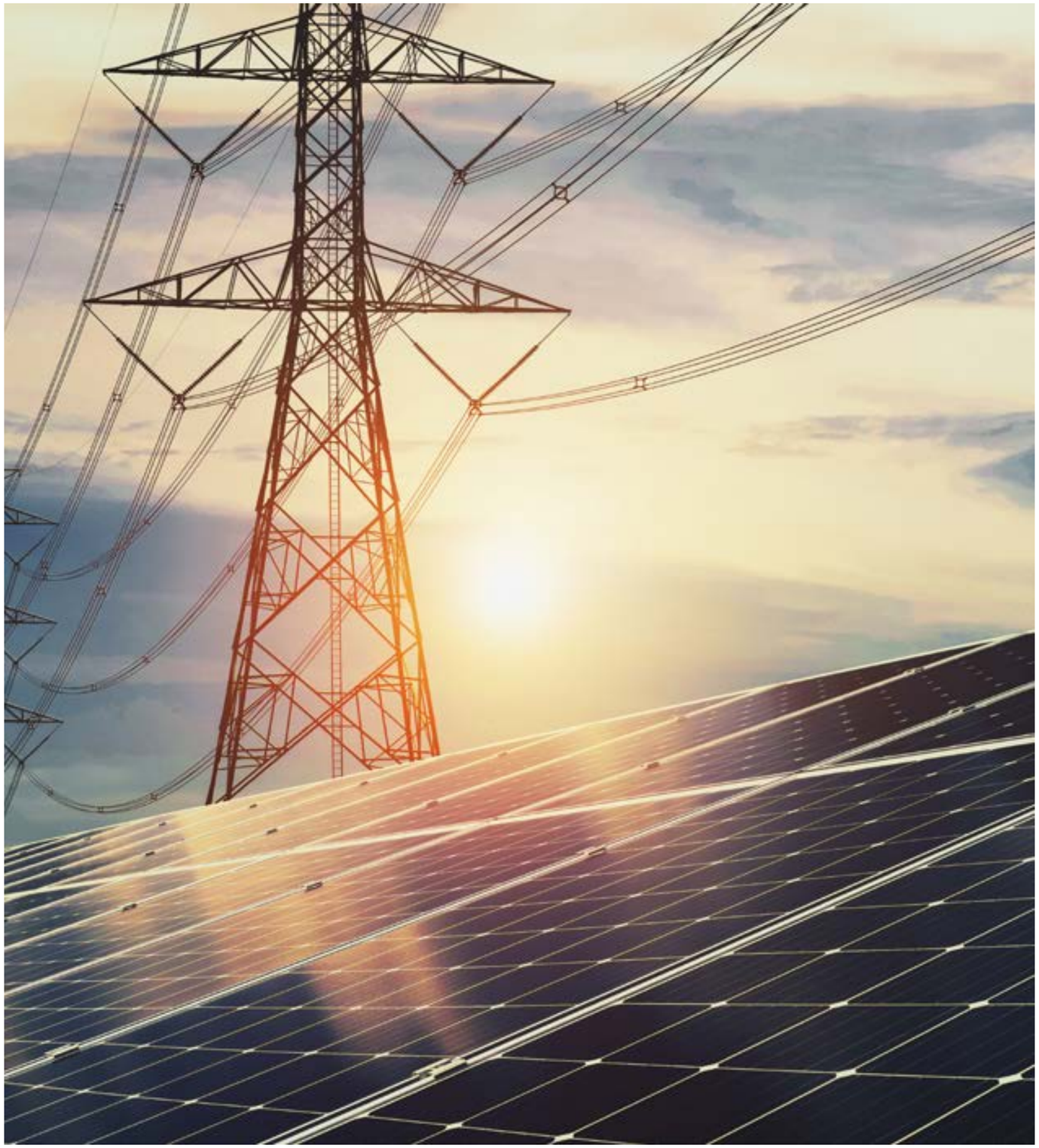
Grid Security - Strengthens resilience through upgraded circuits and a new switching substation.

System-Wide Costs - Reduces constraints and imperfections costs.

Service Quality - Ensures transparent planning and consultation with stakeholders and communities.

Cost Scale





Summary of SONI Outcomes for Role 3

Decarbonisation

Role 3 projects directly enable us to integrate large-scale renewable generation and support Northern Ireland's net zero targets. Our Transmission Cluster Policy and North Sperrin Cluster will ensure renewable connections are strategically planned, reducing bottlenecks and accelerating clean energy deployment. Our Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement (TYTFS) and Transmission Development Plan (TDPNI) provide visibility of future investment needs, creating a roadmap for the infrastructure required to decarbonise the energy system. Together, with these projects we are creating a long-term, future-proof network design to facilitate higher renewable penetration.

Grid Security

Our projects detailed within Role 3 strengthen grid security through robust planning standards and targeted investment. Our Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS) review will update design assumptions to reflect new technologies and ensure the system remains reliable under high-renewable conditions. This role contains our projects that are major reinforcements like the Connect West project. Our Joint Project Management Office (JPMO) will provide a clear path for the delivery of critical infrastructure projects, ensuring grid stability as demand and generation patterns evolve.

System-Wide Costs

One of our key projects within this plan is the Plan-Led Proposal. By moving to a plan-led approach and optimising investment signals, projects like the FAQ Methodology Review and Transmission Cluster Policy will reduce unnecessary reinforcements, minimise duplication, and deliver better value for consumers. Our JPMO will support cost efficiency by providing transparency and coordination across all transmission projects, helping to avoid delays and optimise delivery timelines.

Service Quality

As part of the system planning role, it is important that we ensure transparent, well-structured planning processes that will give confidence to developers, stakeholders and the Utility Regulator. Our TDPNI and TYTFS provide a clear path for system investment needs, timelines, and connection opportunities, while the FAQ Methodology Review will ensure developers are clear on access rights, which in turn will support investment certainty. We will engage early on these project with stakeholders and consultations to ensure that these projects are important for decision-making across the industry, which will enhance SONI's reputation as a credible, impartial system planner.

Role 4 Commercial Interface

Enabling fair, transparent access to the grid to support investment and innovation

This role covers our activities as the commercial interface for the transmission system. It includes managing customer interactions through our Connection Offer Process, working with NIE Networks on associated construction offers, and preparing Connection Agreements and Transmission Use of System (TUOS) agreements. Role 4 also encompasses our responsibility for the Moyle Interconnector, which connects Northern Ireland to Scotland, and the contractual arrangements we facilitate in support of its operation.

Summary of activities within Role 4

Connection & Access Rights And Contractual Interface

Initial Enquiries

We give developers and customers early visibility of connection options and system capacity.

Use of System

We establish contractual rights and obligations for transmission system use.

Connection Offers

We formalise connection arrangements, setting out technical, commercial and timing terms.

Contractual Interface (Moyle Interconnector)

We manage commercial arrangements to support secure and efficient interconnector operations.

Tariff Process

We determine transmission access charges in line with regulatory and market frameworks.

Settlement

We calculate and reconcile system charges accurately, ensuring fairness and transparency.

Summary of Quarterly Deliverables

Our infographic provides a high-level overview of all our projects across the year, mapped by quarter. It offers a simple snapshot of our delivery timelines, showing when projects are scheduled to progress through their key milestones.

QUARTER 1 2025-26

OCT

FWP001 LCIS Phase 2 - Procurement

TSO LCIS Phase II recommendations paper submission to SEMC C

DEC

QUARTER 2 2025-26

JAN

FWP001 LCIS Phase 2 - Procurement
SONI Start of Procurement

FWP26-15 LCIS Phase 1
Commence LCIS Phase 1 technical studies

MAR

QUARTER 3 2025-26

APR

FWP26-16 - LDES Flexibility Needs Assessment

Review Magnus/Entso-E methodologies and draft a Northern Ireland specific flexibility needs assessment approach

JUN

QUARTER 4 2025-26

JUL

FWP26-16 - LDES Flexibility Needs Assessment
Submit preliminary flexibility needs assessment and integrate methodology into NI flexibility target planning

FWP26-15 - LCIS Phase 1
Deliver comprehensive LCIS technical report

SEP

FWP001

Low Carbon Inertia Services (LCIS) Phase 2- Procurement process

Project Overview

LCIS is a critical enabler for delivering the Northern Ireland Government's renewable energy targets, supporting the secure integration of high levels of wind and solar generation. Building on Phase 1, which delivered procurement of synchronous inertia, reactive power support, and system strength in the 2026/2027 time horizon. Phase 2 focuses on expanding services to meet 2030 operational needs.

This phase will deliver additional system services to enable further relaxation of the Minimum Units On (MUON) constraint and address locational challenges in providing system stability. LCIS Phase 2 is central to transitioning Northern Ireland to a low-carbon, highly renewable electricity system, reducing reliance on conventional generation while maintaining system resilience.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- TSO LCIS Phase II recommendations paper submission to SEMC - **October 2025**
- SONI Start Procurement for LCIS Phase 2 (subject to SEMC approval)- **January 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Provides evidence and recommendations to SEMC and Regulatory Authorities on market design for system services.
- **Plan -** Embeds LCIS procurement into long-term planning for a renewable-led electricity system.
- **Deliver -** Executes procurement and contracts for advanced system services.
- **Operate -** Integrates new low-carbon services into operational practices for system stability.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Enables higher renewable integration by supporting secure operation of the power system with reduced reliance on fossil-fuel based generation.

Delivers strategic stability services by expanding on the provision of inertia, system strength, and reactive power services to meet 2030 needs.

Cost and efficiency gains by introducing competition and innovation in service provision, reducing long-term operational costs.

Supports energy targets which will directly contribute to meeting Northern Ireland's renewable energy ambitions.

Future-proofing by addressing locational stability challenges and preparing the system for 100% SNSP Operation.

Service Ambition

LCIS Phase 2 shows our ambition by scaling up competitive procurement of low-carbon stability services and enabling a fundamental shift in operational policy, including the relaxation of global constraints such as SNSP and MUON. This forward-looking approach places Northern Ireland at the forefront of system operation reform and supports the transition to a fully decarbonised power system.

Stakeholder Engagement

LCIS Phase 2 mirrors our strong engagement approach of Phase 1, with collaboration across technology providers, the DfE and the Utility Regulator. Governance is provided through the Shaping Our Electricity Future (SOEF) Operations Programme Board, ensuring coordinated oversight, with monthly updates to the Regulatory Authorities. Our structured engagement ensures alignment on policy, technical requirements, and delivery timelines, while supporting industry readiness for the next stage of LCIS implementation.

Accountability

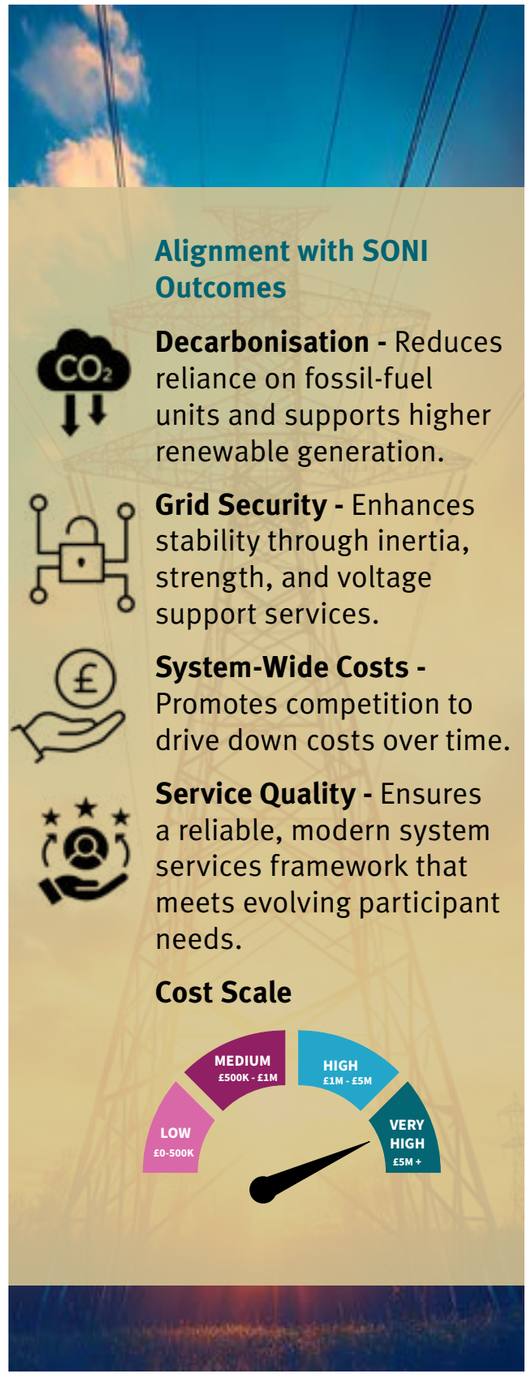
Our project is being delivered through a structured, transparent procurement process:

- We host monthly joint SONI and EirGrid SOEF operations programme board.
- We participate in monthly meetings with the Regulatory Authorities.
- Recommendations paper submitted to SEMC for approval.
- Procurement design, launch and contract award phases.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- Developing markets through competition and stakeholder engagement and collaboration



FWP26-15
Low Carbon Inertia Services (LCIS) Phase I - Voltage and Frequency Dynamic Studies

Project Overview

This project forms part of the wider LCIS (FWP001) project but it is presented as a standalone project due to its highly technical nature.

LCIS Phase 1 focuses on introducing low-carbon stability services to reduce reliance on carbon-intensive synchronous generation across the island of Ireland. Our first phase centers on dynamic stability assessment to enable the secure integration of renewable energy and support achievement of 2030 Renewable Energy Source (RES) targets.

EirGrid and SONI's joint Operational Policy Review Committee (OPRC) governs the process of operational policy changes. The OPRC comprises of members with extensive experience and expert knowledge of system operations. The members consider the proposed changes, review all related materials/reports, and approve or reject the proposed changes following an operational trial period and assessment. Operational policy in EirGrid and SONI is monitored, reviewed, and updated according to a five-stage continuous cycle process, Step 1 Ongoing Monitoring, Step 2 Information Gathering, Step 3 Analysis and System Studies, Step 4 Operational Trial and Step 5 Trial Review and Policy Update.

Our studies under Phase 1 will evaluate the current Transmission Constraint Group (Minimum Units ON [MUON]) in Northern Ireland, with the goal of further relaxing MUON requirements. Findings will support a smooth transition to a live operational trial and subsequent operational policy updates, laying the foundation for future procurement and deployment of LCIS solutions.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Commence LCIS Phase 1 technical studies (Step 3 in Operational Policy Change Process) - **January 2026**
- Deliver comprehensive LCIS technical report - **September 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Provides robust evidence to guide regulatory decisions and market development.
- **Plan -** Supports long-term planning for a secure, low-carbon electricity system.
- **Operate -** Incorporates new technologies into real-time operational stability management.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Higher Renewable Integration by unlocking system headroom by reducing dependence on synchronous units.

Decarbonisation by facilitating the transition to a low-carbon power system while meeting renewables targets.

Technical insight by providing detailed evidence on MUON requirements and system performance.

Foundation for Future Phases by establishing a pathway for LCIS procurement and enduring operational changes.

Service Ambition

LCIS Phase 1 reflects our ambition by replacing traditional fossil-fuel based inertia with advance low-carbon solution, tackling a long-standing operational constraint in a new way. This pioneering approach supports Northern Ireland's transition to a highly renewable power system, cutting costs and emissions while fostering innovation in how stability services are provided.

Stakeholder Engagement

For LCIS Phase 1, our engagement will be closely aligned with the Operational Policy Roadmap (2025-2035) and our Dispatch Down Action Plan, ensuring that this work is embedded within broader operational planning. Key stakeholders include the DfE, Utility Regulator, Renewables NI, and the Shaping Our Electricity Future Advisory Council, alongside industry participants such as conventional generators and new technology providers. SONI and EirGrid will oversee progress through the Operational Policy Review Committee (OPRC), ensuring strong governance, cross-jurisdictional collaboration and transparent reporting to industry forums, supporting the integration of new technologies and operational changes.

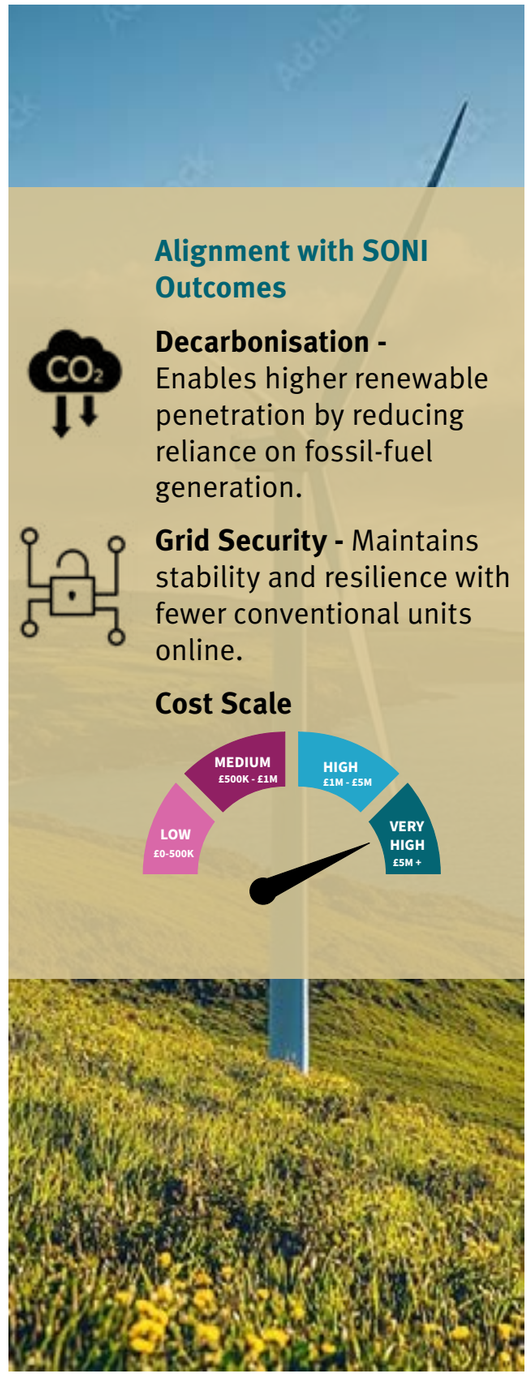
Accountability

Our initiative is governed by clear milestones and structured oversight, including detailed technical assessments integration studies and consultation with the SEMC and Regulatory Authorities. Findings will directly inform policy decisions on MUON requirements, ensuring transparency, measurable outcomes, and strong stakeholder confidence.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development
- Whole system collaboration and coordination with 3rd parties, and NIE Networks across its various roles as a TO, DNO and DSO.



FWP26-16
LDES Flexibility Needs Assessment

Project Overview

This project focuses on implementing the EU-wide Flexibility Needs Assessment methodology, developed by ENTSO-E and the EU DSO Entity, to evaluate future flexibility requirements in Northern Ireland. Our assessment will analyse system scenarios, flexibility gaps, and the role of Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES) in enabling higher renewable integration and maintaining system stability.

Our findings will inform indicative flexibility targets ahead of the 2027 EU deadline and provide evidence-based recommendations to DfE, Regulatory Authorities and system operators. Our work is a critical foundation for future system planning, investment signals, and potential support schemes for LDES.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Review Magnus/ENTSO-E methodologies and draft a Northern Ireland specific Flexibility Needs Assessment approach - **June 2026**
- Submit preliminary Flexibility Needs Assessment and integrate methodology into NI flexibility target planning - **September 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- **Advise -** Provides policymakers and Regulatory Authorities with a clear view of flexibility requirements and future technology needs.
- **Plan -** Integrates LDES and flexibility planning into SONI's long-term grid and market development strategies.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

Supports the energy transition by identifying the role of LDES in integrating high levels of renewable generation.

Informs Policy and investment by creating a robust evidence base for future support mechanism and grid investment decisions.

Aligns with EU standards which will ensure NI meets European Energy Market Design Reform (EMDR) requirements.

Strategic planning insight by providing a clear, evidence-based understanding of future flexibility needs in NI.

Service Ambition

The LDES project reflects our ambition by delivering Northern Ireland's first system-wide flexibility needs assessment, aligned with European best practice. It moves beyond incremental studies to provide a comprehensive, forward-looking view that will guide future flexibility investment and drive innovation to support a low-carbon, secure power system.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our engagement for the Flexibility Needs Assessment is focused on providing strategic advice to DfE, ensuring that outputs directly inform broader system planning and the development of future support mechanism for Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES). By working closely with policymakers, the Utility Regulator, and industry stakeholders, we are embedding our assessment into wider energy strategy discussions, strengthening alignment across planning, investment and decarbonisation priorities.

Accountability

Our assessment is being delivered through a structured milestone-driven plan, including adoption of the EU methodology, scenario modelling, publications of indicative targets, and recommendations to policymakers. Oversight is provided through coordination with EirGrid, NIE Networks, ACER, and Regulatory Authorities, ensuring full transparency and alignment with EU reporting timelines.

UR Priorities

We consider this project to be fully aligned with and supportive of the UR's strategic and energy transition priorities as outlined below:

- A culture of organisational learning, accountability and planning that supports SONI agility and responsiveness in meeting policy, regulatory and market development
- A culture of open and collaborative innovation
- Whole system collaboration and coordination with 3rd parties, and NIE Net-works across its various roles as a TO, DNO and DSO
- Developing markets through competition and stakeholder engagement and col-laboration.

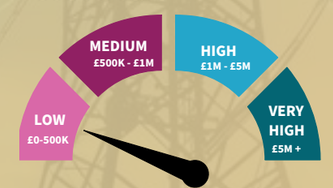
Alignment with SONI Outcomes

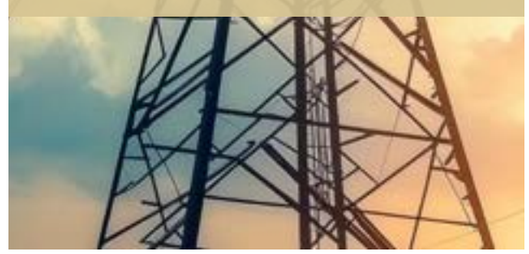
Decarbonisation - Identifies flexible solutions to enable secure operation with very high renewable penetration.

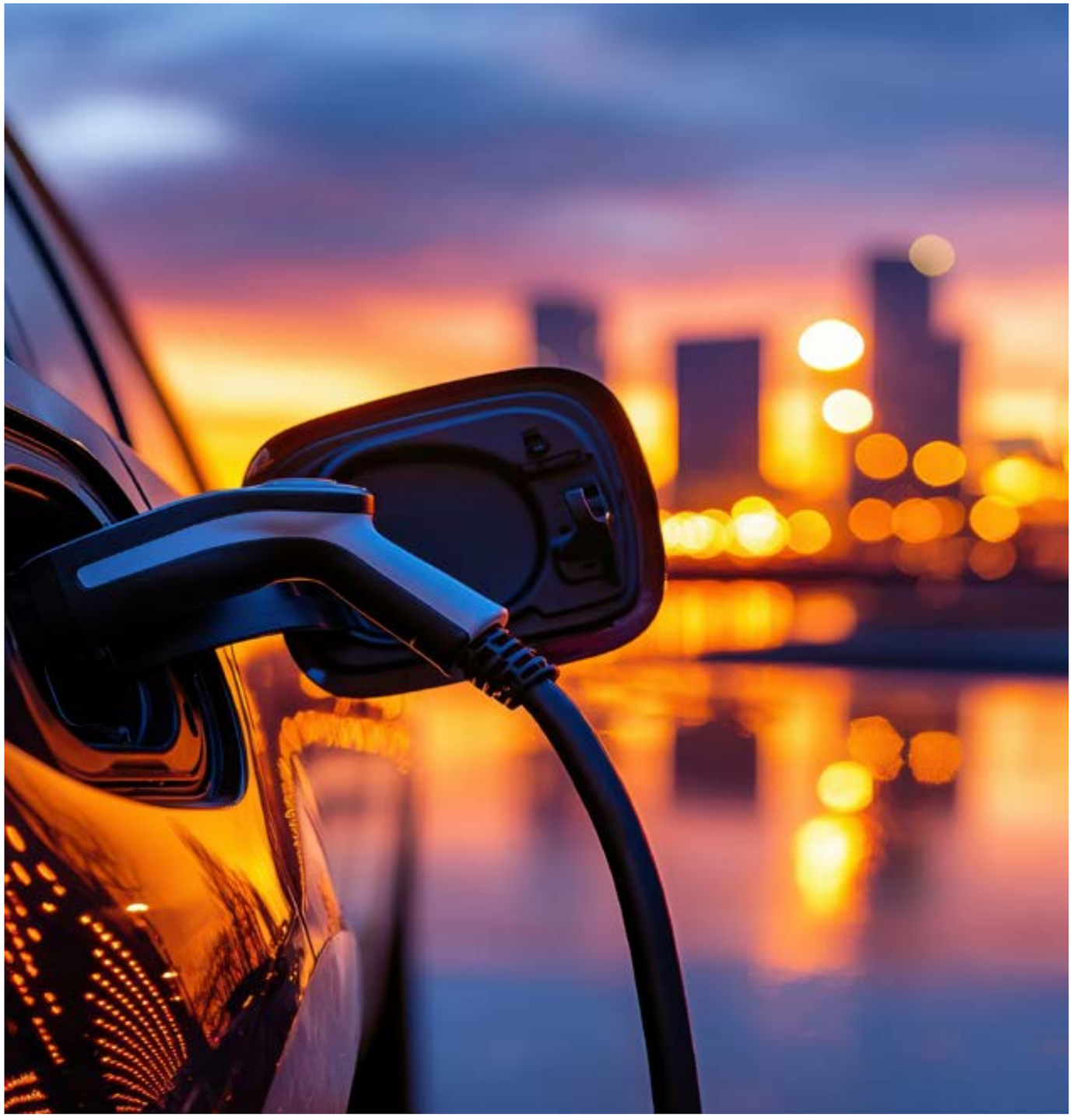
Grid Security - Supports a resilient and adaptable power system through evidence-led investment planning.

System-Wide Costs - Helps optimise future investment decision and avoid unnecessary infrastructure spending.

Cost Scale







Summary of SONI Outcomes for Role 4

Decarbonisation

The projects included in Role 4 are helping SONI achieve decarbonisation by designing and delivering the frameworks that will enable low-carbon technologies to participate fully in the energy system. Our Low Carbon Inertia Services (LCIS) project is being delivered in phases to replace the role of fossil fuel generators with cleaner alternatives. By providing a clear pathway for LCIS procurement, we are encouraging investment in innovative solutions that allow for higher renewable generation. Similarly, the Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES) Flexibility Needs Assessment identifies the scale of storage required to manage renewable variability and reduce reliance on carbon-intensive back-up generation, supporting Northern Ireland's pathway to net zero.

Grid Security

SONI is strengthening grid security by ensuring there are frameworks in place that actively support system stability and resilience. LCIS Phase 1 focuses on establishing technical and operational baselines for inertia and stability services, while Phase 2 expands delivery to meet long-term system needs. Together these projects will ensure that we have the tools to securely operate the grid as fossil-fuel generation declines. The LDES Flexibility Needs Assessment is providing critical analysis on how long-duration storage will support grid balancing and resilience during periods of low renewable output, ensuring the system remains robust and reliable as renewable generation grows.

System-Wide Costs

We are aiming to reduce future costs by creating transparent and competitive procurement models for essential services. The phased approach to LCIS introduces competition, delivering value while building confidence for investors in emerging technologies. Our assessment ensures Northern Ireland's future storage needs are strategically planned, avoiding costly last-minute investments or overbuild. Our measures will ensure that stability, flexibility, and security are delivered at the lowest reasonable cost to consumers.

Service Quality

We are improving service quality by providing clarity, transparency, and forward planning for developers, investors and market participants. LCIS Phase 1 and 2 clearly set out technical standards and procurement timelines for new stability services, building confidence in our ability to deliver a fair and reliable framework for participation. The assessment feeds into longer-term system planning and ensures that future flexibility solutions are well-understood and accessible to the market. Together, our initiatives demonstrate our role in facilitating a high-quality service environment where innovation is encouraged, stakeholders are engaged, and operational excellence is maintained.

Appendix A:

Further information on Performance Measures and Alignment with SONI Outcomes

Decarbonisation

KPI	Purpose	Approach	Target for 2025/26
SNSP	SNSP measures the percentage of electricity demand met by non-synchronous sources, such as wind generation and HVDC interconnector imports, relative to total system demand. It is a key enabler for decarbonisation, reflecting our ability to operate the power system securely with high levels of renewable generation. Increasing SNSP is essential to achieving 80% renewable electricity (RES-E) by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050. SNSP reflects the proportion of renewable and other non-synchronous sources the grid can securely accommodate at any given time, so increasing this figure directly enables more renewable generation on the system.	This metric has been established through our DS3 Programme studies, with limits progressively raised from 50% to 75%. SNSP is a real-time operational metric, published weekly on SONI's website via the Operational Constraints update. Our current operational policy is set at 75% SNSP following the successful completion of previous trials. The Operational Policy Review Committee has determined that the system inertia floor be maintained above what was previously planned, and that our plan to trial an increase in the SNSP limit from 75% to 80% be put on hold pending further consideration of the Large Demand Facility Fault Ride-Through issue.	Maintain 75% SNSP operational policy while continuing work to enable a future increase to 80%. This KPI will be monitored and revised as system conditions evolve.

Grid Security

KPI	Purpose	Approach	Target for 2025/26
System Frequency	The Grid Code requires that system frequency is maintained within 50 Hz± 0.1 Hz to protect equipment and ensure a reliable, high-quality electricity supply for consumers. Measuring the percentage of time SONI maintains frequency within this range is a strong indicator of operational performance. Events outside our control, such as unexpected generator trips, can cause frequency to deviate. Increasing levels of non-synchronous generation also make frequency management more challenging.	We will track system frequency performance monthly, measuring the percentage of time the grid operates within the statutory range of 50 Hz ± 0.1 Hz. Data will be reported in the Annual Performance Report, with trends used to assess operational stability and identify areas for improvement. This approach balances reliability and cost.	Maintain frequency within 50 Hz ± 0.1 Hz for the percentage of time set in the Grid Code.

System-Wide Costs

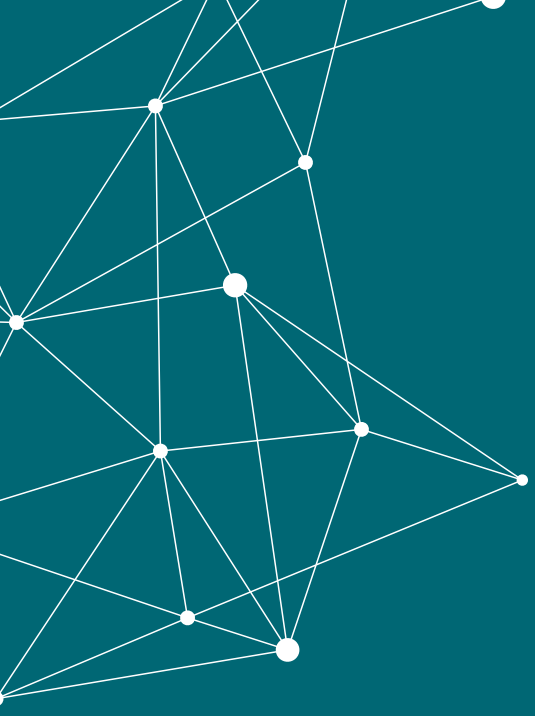
KPI	Purpose	Approach	Target for 2025/26
Imperfections Costs	The imperfections cost metric measures the additional costs of operating the all-island electricity system, including actions taken to manage constraints, reserve requirements, and balance the system. It provides insight into the operational costs of maintaining system security, but it does not fully reflect the long-term value delivered to consumers. For example, major infrastructure projects such as the Greenlink Interconnector involve significant upfront costs but will ultimately reduce consumer bills by enabling access to lower-cost, low-carbon energy. Imperfections are included as a performance measure in line with EPF guidance; however, we do not consider this a fully reflective measure of overall system efficiency or consumer value.	Imperfections costs are determined ex post on an annual basis across the Single Electricity Market (SEM) and allocated 75/25 between EirGrid and SONI, as set out in the Market Operator Agreements. As these costs are influenced by many factors outside of our control, we cannot set forecast figures or fixed annual targets. Instead, this KPI is used to track trends, assess operational efficiency and demonstrate how we balance cost management with decarbonisation objectives. To provide transparency, we uses the PLEXOS-based backcast model (incorporating actual system data) rather than the forward forecast model, which relies on assumptions made six months in advance of the tariff year. We publish quarterly imperfections cost reports on the SEM-O website, alongside a mid-year report, giving visibility of constraint reduction actions, progress, and future improvements to lower costs.	Given the ex-post nature of this measure and its dependence on all-island factors, we cannot provide a fixed target. As indicated in previous performance reports, we recognise that the timing of our reporting and information provided in guidance around dispatch balancing costs is not in line with the EPF guidance. From our lessons learned, we consider that the guidance itself needs to be updated. We welcome further engagement with the Utility Regulator on this.

SONI Service Quality

KPI	Purpose	Approach	Target for 2025/26
Stakeholder Satisfaction	Feedback has been identified by stakeholders, the UR and the Independent Panel as a key area for assessing SONI's performance. This KPI focuses on measuring the quality and effectiveness of our engagement with stakeholders, ensuring their views are meaningfully incorporated into our plans and activities.	In 2023/24 SONI delivered the Stakeholder Needs Assessment, which informed the publication of SONI's first Stakeholder Engagement Strategy in June 2024. This strategy is underpinned by a new Engagement Evaluation Framework, designed to capture a complete picture of engagement performance. The framework combines: • Metrics from planned engagement activities. • Quantitative data from post-engagement and annual pulse surveys. • Qualitative insights from focus groups and case studies. As this framework was introduced in mid-2024 there is limited historical data, but a baseline dashboard will be published in the 2024/25 Performance Report. This KPI will evolve as data becomes available, supporting continuous improvement in engagement.	Maintain or exceed a baseline score of 3/5(60%) for stakeholder satisfaction, measured through surveys and qualitative assessments.
Timely Delivery of Publications	This KPI measures SONI's ability to publish documents, reports, and materials on the dates committed to in the Forward Work Plan. Stakeholder feedback on the 2021-2022 FWP highlighted a need for clarity on how date changes are treated; this KPI provides that clarity and reinforces our commitment to transparency and accountability.	Performance will be measured against specific publication dates or date ranges set out in the FWP. Dates are fixed unless explicitly advised other due to external dependencies e.g. regulatory processes or third-party requirements Any deviations will be explained in SONI's Annual Performance Report 2025-26, including reasons for the change, external influences and mitigation actions.	SONI aims to meet expectations by delivering all publications on or before the planned dates. Where unavoidable deviations occur, full context and justification will be provided to maintain transparency and trust.

Glossary:
Key Acronyms and Technical Terms

Term/Acronym	Explanation
DfE	Department for the Economy: Government department responsible for energy policy in Northern Ireland.
DS3	Delivering a Secure Sustainable Electricity System: A programme that developed services and tools to keep the grid stable as renewable generation increased.
EPF	Evaluative Performance Framework: Process used by the UR to assess SONI's performance on its Forward Work Plan and Performance Report.
ESPS	Energy Storage Power Station: Energy storage facility that can absorb and release electricity to support grid balance, frequency control, and integration of renewables.
FAQ	Firm Access Quantity: The amount of grid capacity a generator is guaranteed access to.
FASS	Future Arrangements for System Services: A programme to modernise how services needed to keep the grid stable are procured.
FWP	Forward Work Plan: SONI's annual plan of key projects and initiatives beyond day-to-day operations.
GFM	Grid Forming Technology: Advanced inverter-based technology that can stabilise the grid without traditional fossil-fuel generator.
IBR	Inverter-Based Resources: Renewable technologies (like wind, solar, batteries) that connect to the grid using electronic inverters.
Imperfection Costs	Additional system operation costs due to constraints and balancing actions, compared to an unconstrained scenario.
JPMO	Joint Project Management Office: Shared office between SONI and NIE Networks to coordinate delivery of transmission projects.
LCIS	Low-Carbon Inertia Services: Services that provide system stability traditionally supplied by large rotating fossil-fuel generators
LDES	Long-Duration Energy Storage: Storage technologies that can provide power over long periods, supporting renewable integration
MUON	Minimum Units on: A requirement for a minimum number of conventional generators to run for system stability
NIE Networks	Northern Ireland Electricity: Owns and maintains the physical transmission and distribution network.
NPDR	Non-Priority Dispatch Renewables: Renewable generators that do not have priority rights to be dispatched ahead of other generation
OPRC	Operational Policy Review Committee: Industry group that oversees operational policy and trials
REPG	Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee: A support scheme encouraging investment in renewables
SDP	Scheduling & Dispatch Project: Programme to modernise how generation and storage are scheduled and dispatched in real time.
SEM	Single Electricity Market: The wholesale electricity market covering both Northern Ireland and Ireland
SEMC	Single Electricity Market Committee: Regulatory body overseeing the all-island electricity market
SNSP	System Non-Synchronous Penetration: A measure of how much renewable (wind and solar) generation is on the system at any time.
SONI	System Operator for Northern Ireland. Manages the electricity transmission system and plans future grid needs
TDPNI	Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland: A statutory plan setting out future grid investments
TSO	Transmission System Operator: Responsible for operating the high-voltage electricity grid
TSSPS	Transmission System Security and Planning Standards: Standards for designing and operating a secure grid
UR	Utility Regulator: Independent regulator overseeing SONI and other energy market participants



SONI

Delivering a cleaner energy future

12 Manse Road, Belfast,
Co. Antrim. BT6 9RT.

T: +44 (0)28 907 94336
W: soni.ltd.uk