



Evaluative Performance Framework

Forward Work Plan 2026-2027

MEETING NORTHERN IRELAND'S
ENERGY NEEDS TODAY, AND IN
THE FUTURE

SEPTEMBER 2026



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CEO Foreword

A secure, sustainable and affordable electricity system for Northern Ireland today and for generations to come.

At SONI, we operate Northern Ireland's electricity transmission system to ensure power flows safely, securely and reliably from where it is generated to where it is needed. Alongside our responsibility for the real-time operation of the power system, we play a critical role in planning for the future, identifying the investments, innovation and developments required to support Northern Ireland's changing energy needs.

Our Forward Work Plan for 2026/27 draws from our wider Business Plan and focuses on the projects and activities that go beyond our day-to-day operations. These projects support delivery of the outcomes established through the Utility Regulator's Evaluative Performance Framework (EPF), while contributing to the ambitions set out in SONI's Strategy 2025-2031 and Northern Ireland's wider energy transition.

The projects included within this plan represent some of the most significant challenges and opportunities facing Northern Ireland's electricity system. They cover areas such as network development, renewable integration, future market design, strategic infrastructure, stakeholder engagement and collaboration as well as long-term energy planning. Together, they will help shape the electricity system that Northern Ireland will rely on for decades to come.



“
Through this Forward Work Plan, we are setting out how we will deliver meaningful outcomes for consumers, stakeholders and Northern Ireland's electricity system.

Alan Campbell
Chief Executive Officer

Delivering On Our Commitments

Since publishing our 2025/26 Forward Work Plan, we have delivered and progressed many of our commitments. This includes submitting our SRP27 Business Plan to the Utility Regulator and successfully delivering the Northern Ireland Minimum Stability Trial and Negative Reserve Trial, helping support higher levels of renewable generation while maintaining system security.

We have also continued to advance strategic infrastructure projects, long-term network planning and stakeholder engagement. While many commitments have been completed, some form part of wider programmes that will continue to support a secure, sustainable and affordable energy future.

Building For The Future

Many projects in this year's plan build on work already underway and carried forward from previous Forward Work Plans, including transmission planning, market development, stakeholder engagement, system resilience and network investment activities. Alongside these ongoing programmes, we will progress new initiatives such as the Hybrid Connections programme and the development of a Flexibility Procurement Framework, helping prepare the electricity system for increasing levels of renewable generation and emerging technologies.

Together, these projects will help enable increased renewable generation, maintain security of supply and support Northern Ireland's economic and environmental ambitions. We will also continue to engage with the Utility Regulator as it considers our SRP27 Business Plan proposals, helping ensure we have the resources and investment needed to meet future challenges.

Understanding The Value We Deliver

In developing this year's plan, we have carefully considered feedback from the independent expert panel and stakeholders, including how we communicate the value delivered through our work. This year's plan includes enhanced information on the intended benefits of each project, helping stakeholders better understand why projects are being undertaken, who will benefit and how success will be measured.

We have also introduced Multi-Year Project Overviews to provide greater visibility of progress across longer-term programmes and included a high-level overview of the transmission connections journey to improve understanding of the process for customers seeking to connect to the transmission system. This approach will also be reflected in our annual Performance Report, with a greater focus on reporting outcomes and impacts alongside project progress.

Looking Ahead

The transition to a low-carbon electricity system continues to gather pace and will require innovation, investment, collaboration and long-term planning across the energy sector. The projects and activities outlined in this Forward Work Plan have been developed to support that journey. Through continued focus on delivery, transparency and accountability, we remain committed to providing value for consumers and helping deliver a more secure, sustainable and affordable electricity system for Northern Ireland.

I would like to thank our employees, stakeholders and partners for their continued support and collaboration. The progress made over the past year, and the ambitions set out in this plan, would not be possible without their expertise, engagement and dedication.

Our 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 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.

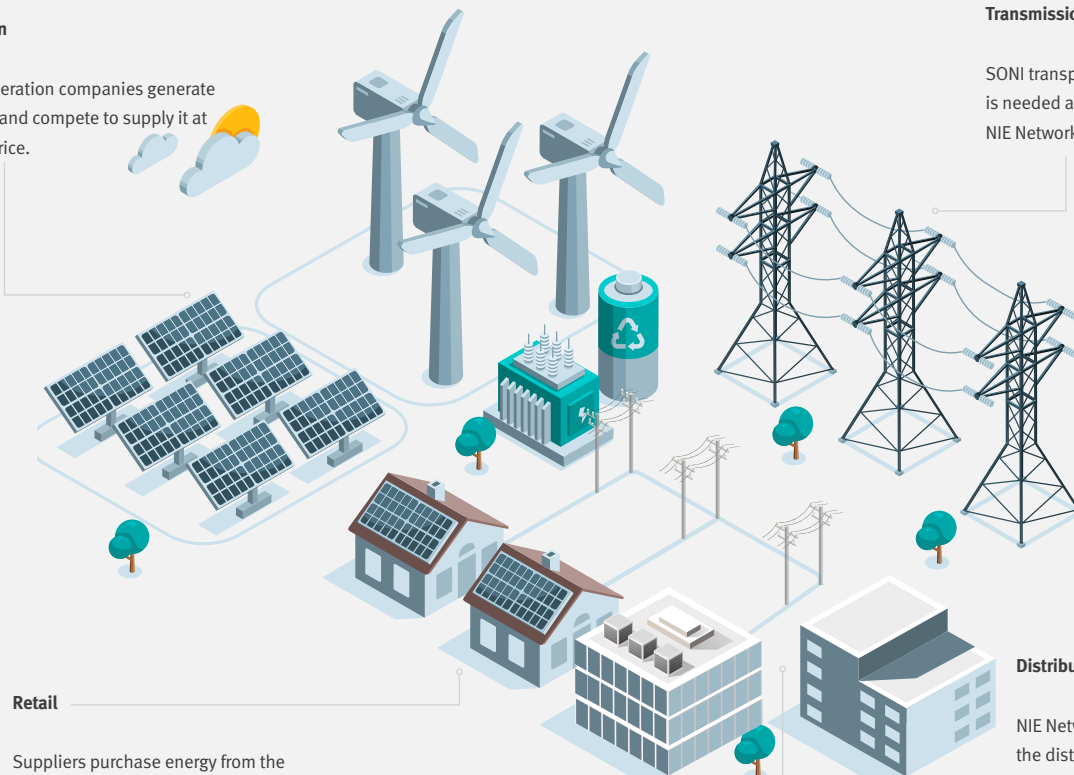
Embedded within each of these interrelated activities is a need to partner with statutory bodies, industry, and society to meet the energy needs of today and those in the future. Both NIE Networks and the Gas TSO are key partners in these activities.

Generation

Power generation companies generate electricity and compete to supply it at the best price.

Transmission

SONI transports electricity to where it is needed at the most economic cost. NIE Networks owns and maintains the



Retail

Suppliers purchase energy from the market and sell to consumers.

Distribution

NIE Networks owns and operates the distribution system and distributes the electricity from the grid to homes and businesses.

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

Key Responsibilities

01

OPERATING THE TRANSMISSION SYSTEM

To manage electricity flows and balance supply and demand in real time.

02

PLANNING FOR FUTURE NEEDS

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 SEMC.



Figure 2: SONI Board

SONI Governance

SONI has now completed the vast majority of activities required under our licence in relation to our governance, management and resources. This programme represented a significant body of work over the past few years. It required close agreement and coordination with our parent company, and we thank EirGrid for all their support throughout this major change programme.

We also liaised closely with the Utility Regulator through this programme of work and welcomed the transparent and pragmatic engagements throughout. With the support of the Utility Regulator and our Board, we have continued to invest significantly in the people, skills and capabilities required to meet the evolving needs of the electricity system. We will continue to develop as a ‘new’ business and embed our new colleagues and the new governance arrangements with EirGrid as well as enhancing our internal processes during 2026/27.

SONI Strategy Alignment

In February 2025, we launched our Strategy 2025-2031, setting out a clear long-term vision for Northern Ireland’s electricity system and our role in supporting the energy transition. The strategy is built around four strategic ambitions: Advise, Plan, Operate and Deliver, providing a framework for how we will contribute to a secure, sustainable and affordable energy future.

The projects included within this Forward Work Plan have been developed to support the delivery of that strategy. While each project has a specific purpose and set of objectives, collectively they contribute to our longer-term strategic ambitions and help address the challenges and opportunities facing Northern Ireland’s electricity system.

This alignment ensures that the activities included within our Forward Work Plan not only deliver annual commitments but also contribute to broader outcomes such as enabling renewable integration, strengthening security of supply, supporting economic growth, improving stakeholder engagement and preparing the electricity system for future demands.

To provide greater transparency, each project within this plan has been mapped to the relevant SONI Strategic Ambition, demonstrating how individual initiatives contribute to the successful delivery of our strategy and the long-term outcomes we are working to achieve.

Strategic Ambition		Forward Work Projects
	Advise Be an independent, trusted advisor on electricity systems and markets.	Stakeholder Strategy, SRP27 Engagement, Plan-Led Electricity System Development, Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG), Consumer Council Consumer Engagement Working Group, Annual Innovation Report
	Plan Plan the future design of the electricity network and the all-island electricity market.	Transmission Development Plan 2027, Transmission Cluster Policy, Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement (TYTFS), Hybrid Connections, FASS, Tomorrow’s Energy Scenarios 2027, Flexibility Procurement
	Deliver Support the transformation of the transmission system to deliver Northern Ireland’s energy and climate ambitions.	LCIS Phase II Procurement, Flexibility Procurement, Strategic Markets Programme (SMP), Roe Cluster, Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment, Kells 275kV Redevelopment , Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment
	Operate Operate the power system safely, reliably and economically on a continuous basis.	Frequency from Wind Trial, System Defence Plan, System Strength, LCIS Phase I Dynamic Stability Assessment

Figure 3: SONI Strategic Ambitions

How This Forward Work Plan Works

The Evaluative Performance Framework

The Utility Regulator’s Evaluative Performance Framework (EPF) provides the framework through which SONI’s performance is assessed. The EPF is designed to promote transparency, accountability and continuous improvement by evaluating both the activities SONI plans to undertake and the outcomes it subsequently delivers.

The framework focuses on work that goes beyond SONI’s day-to-day operational responsibilities and ensures that the organisation remains focused on delivering value for consumers, stakeholders and the wider electricity system.

An independent panel assesses SONI’s performance against a set of established criteria and makes recommendations to the Utility Regulator. The assessment process considers both stakeholder feedback and evidence provided by SONI throughout the year.



Role 1: System Operations and Adequacy

Operating the transmission system in real time to maintain security of supply, keep the lights on, and support the secure integration of renewable generation.



Role 2: Independent Expert

Providing independent expertise, stakeholder engagement and evidence-based advice to help shape future energy policy, market development and system planning.



Role 3: System Planning

Planning the future development of the transmission network through the three-part Grid Development Process, working with NIE Networks and stakeholders to deliver efficient network investment.



Role 4: Commercial Interface

Managing customer connections, transmission contracts, Transmission Use of System (TUoS) arrangements and the Moyle Interconnector to support a fair, efficient and reliable transmission system.

The Evaluative Performance Framework

The EPF Assessment Cycle

The framework supports a consistent and transparent approach to assessing our performance throughout the Evaluative Performance Cycle. The EPF operates in two stages:



Forward Work Plan Assessment

- Assesses SONI’s planned activities and initiatives.
- Considers ambition, stakeholder engagement, accountability and alignment with regulatory priorities.
- Evaluates whether proposed activities are likely to deliver meaningful benefits for consumers and stakeholders.



Performance Assessment

- Assesses delivery against commitments set out in the Forward Work Plan.
- Considers project outcomes, adaptability, stakeholder feedback and evidence of successful delivery.
- Evaluates the extent to which planned benefits and objectives have been achieved.

THE EPF CYCLE

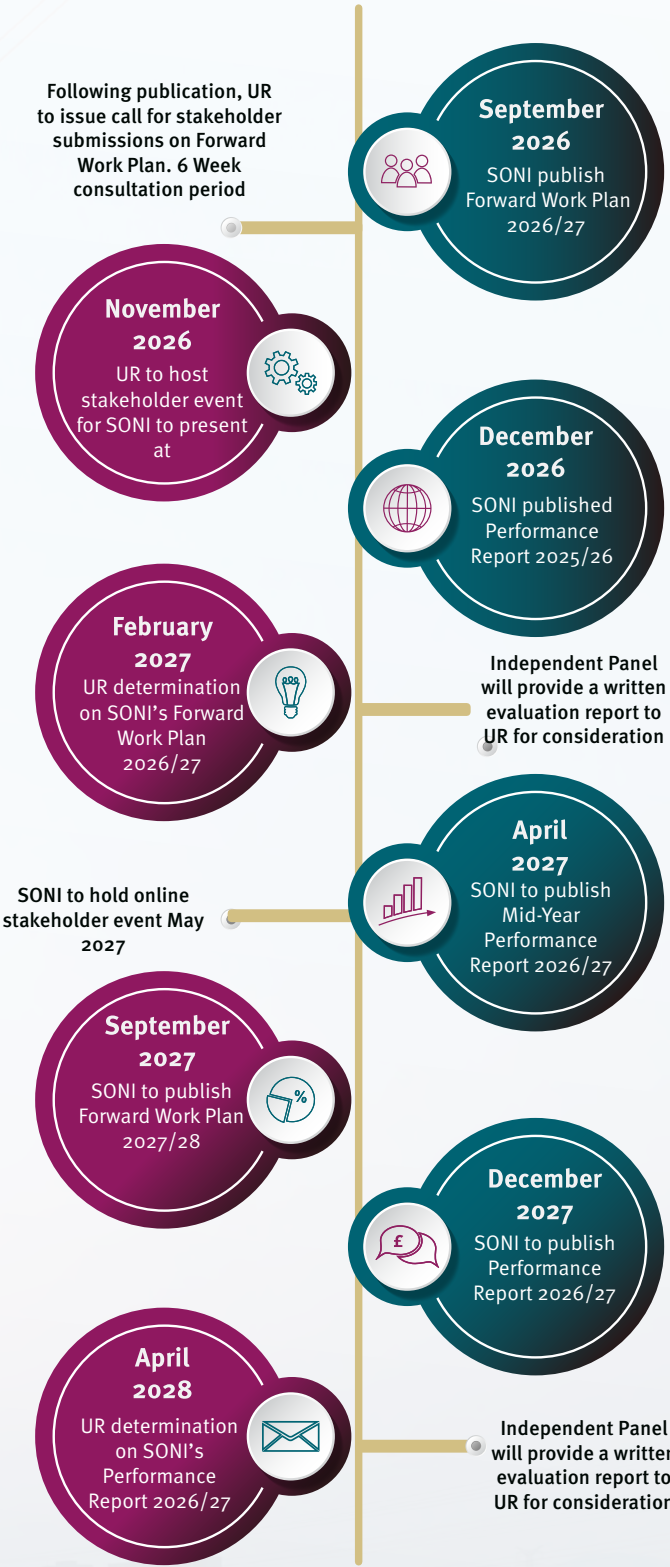
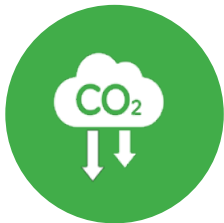


Figure 4: EPF Cycle

The Outcomes We Are Working Towards

Through the delivery of our Forward Work Plan, we aim to create value for our consumers and stakeholders. The projects within this plan are aligned to one or more of the four EPF outcomes, providing a clear line of sight between our activities, strategic objectives, and the benefits delivered to consumers, industry participants, and wider stakeholders.



DECARBONISATION

Supporting Northern Ireland’s transition to a low-carbon electricity system and enabling renewable energy targets.



GRID SECURITY

Maintaining a secure, resilient and reliable electricity system for consumers.



SYSTEM-WIDE COSTS

Ensuring efficient decision-making and delivering value for consumers through effective management of system costs.



SERVICE QUALITY

Providing high-quality services, engagement and support for customers and stakeholders.

Alignment With EPF Criteria

Each project has been developed and assessed against the criteria used within the EPF framework.



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 included a Cost Scale 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.

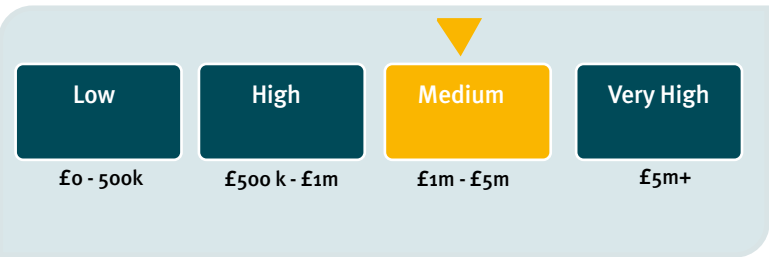


Figure 5: Cost Scale



What This Means

The Cost Scale is a relative indicator to help readers understand the comparative scale of each project. It reflects the estimated SONI costs only.

How We Developed This Forward Work Plan

15

1

Developing This Plan

The 2026/27 Forward Work Plan has been shaped by our wider business planning process, stakeholder engagement, lessons learned and insights from previous Evaluative Performance Framework (EPF) cycles. Throughout the year, we have refined our planning approach to ensure the plan remains transparent, deliverable and focused on areas where we can deliver the greatest value for consumers and stakeholders.

2

Learning and Continuous Improvement

Each year, we review our performance, project delivery experience and planning processes to identify opportunities for improvement. This includes considering project outcomes, stakeholder feedback, evolving organisational priorities and developments across the energy sector. Lessons learned from previous planning cycles have helped strengthen both this plan and the processes that support it.

3

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement remains central to our planning process. Throughout the year, we engaged with industry participants, government bodies, consumer representatives and other stakeholders to understand emerging priorities and challenges. Their feedback has shaped both the content and presentation of this year's plan, ensuring a clear focus on the issues most important to Northern Ireland's energy transition.

4

Strengthening Our Approach

The Forward Work Plan focuses on projects and initiatives that drive improvement, innovation and strategic progress beyond our day-to-day operational activities. Projects are prioritised through our wider business planning process, considering their strategic fit, expected consumer and system benefits, regulatory requirements, stakeholder feedback and deliverability.

Looking Ahead

The 2026/27 Forward Work Plan reflects our commitment to continuous improvement, learning and accountability. It builds on our progress made in previous years while recognising the scale of the challenges and opportunities ahead. Through the projects included within this plan, we aim to support a secure, sustainable and affordable electricity system for Northern Ireland while delivering lasting value for consumers, stakeholders and the wider economy.

How We Prioritise Projects

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As part of our wider business planning process, proposed projects are considered collectively to ensure that our Forward Work Plan remains ambitious, focused and deliverable. With finite resources, we consider the relative importance, value and deliverability of projects across a number of areas before determining the priorities for the year.



STAGE 1 Business Prioritisation

We prioritise our work by considering our obligations, ability to deliver and where we can create the greatest value.

1

What must we do?

We first consider the projects and activities that we must deliver.



Security & Operational Risk

Protecting the secure, reliable and resilient operation of the electricity system for consumers.



Compliance & Regulatory Obligations

Meeting our statutory, licence regulatory and industry obligations.

2

Can we deliver it?

We assess whether we have the capacity and funding to deliver.



Funding
Available funding



Resources
People, skills and internal capacity



Capability
Technical skills, tools and systems



Capacity
Ability to deliver within time and operational constraints

3

Where can we create the greatest value?

We compare and prioritise the remaining projects using the factors that drive the greatest benefit.



Consumer Benefit

Delivering clear value for consumers including reliability, affordability, and efficient system development



Strategic Fit

Demonstrating clear alignment with our strategic ambitions and supporting a secure, sustainable and future-ready electricity system



Stakeholder feedback

Reflecting the needs, evidence and insight gathered through engagement with stakeholders, industry, government and consumers.



STAGE 2 Forward Work Plan Selection

We ensure only the right projects are included in our Forward Work Plan.

4

Should it be included in the Forward Work Plan?

Projects must go beyond day-to-day operations and demonstrate:



Ambition

Goes beyond existing delivery or seeks a significant step forward.



Innovation

Develops or applies new approaches, capabilities or solutions.



Improvement/Transformation

Delivers identifiable change or enhanced outcomes for the energy system.



Beyond BAU

Distinct from routine operational or recurring business activity.



Clear Outcomes & Benefits

Has defined deliverables, benefits and measures of success.



2026/27 Forward Work Plan

Our plan brings together continuing and new projects that are ambitious, innovative and outcome-focused, going beyond day-to-day operations to deliver value for consumers and the energy system.

Response To Panel Feedback

Introduction

We welcome the feedback provided by the Independent Panel as part of the Evaluative Performance Framework. We view the process as an important opportunity to strengthen both our planning and reporting, ensuring our activities remain transparent, accountable and focused on delivering value for consumers and stakeholders.

The Independent Panel recognised the positive evolution of our Forward Work Plan, noting improvements in structure, accessibility, stakeholder engagement and the alignment between projects, outcomes and SONI’s Strategy 2025-2031. The Panel also acknowledged the progress made in developing SONI’s Stakeholder Engagement Framework, establishing a clearer strategic context and improving the overall presentation of the plan.

In developing our 2026/27 Forward Work Plan, we have considered the observations and suggestions contained within the Panel’s report, alongside feedback received from stakeholders and lessons learned through delivery of previous plans.

Enhancing Transparency and Understanding

The Panel highlighted the value of providing stakeholders with a clearer understanding of project outcomes, impacts and measures of success. In response, this year’s plan includes an enhanced focus on the intended benefits of each project, helping stakeholders understand:

- The challenge or opportunity being addressed
- The expected outcomes and benefits.
- Who is expected to benefit.
- How progress and success will be assessed.

This approach is intended to strengthen the connection between planned activities and the value they are expected to deliver.

Strengthening Strategic Alignment

Building on feedback from previous EPF cycles, we have continued to strengthen the relationship between individual projects, SONI’s Strategy 2025-2031, EPF Outcomes and Utility Regulator priorities. This helps demonstrate how individual activities contribute to wider organisational objectives and Northern Ireland’s energy ambitions.

Continuing To Improve

The development of our Forward Work Plan remains an iterative process. We will continue to use feedback from the Independent Panel, stakeholders and our own delivery experience to refine future plans and reports. This commitment to continuous improvement helps ensure our plans remain ambitious, transparent and focused on delivering meaningful outcomes for consumers, stakeholders and the wider electricity system.

Customer Journey

We support customers throughout the connections journey by providing network information, guidance and engagement to help them understand opportunities, navigate industry changes and make informed decisions. This infographic highlights the key stages, interactions and support available.



Figure 6: Customer Journey



Multi-Year Projects

Our multi-year projects have been grouped into four outcome areas to show how they collectively support a secure, low-carbon and future-ready electricity system while building stakeholder, consumer and community confidence. The visual provides a high-level overview of indicative project activity between 2025 and 2035. Some projects began before this period, while arrows indicate activity expected to continue beyond 2035. A more detailed overview and full information on each project, including planned activities, progress, dependencies and expected outcomes, is provided in the pages following the visual below.



Figure 7: Multi-Year Project Overview Table

Role 1 - System Operations & Adequacy

Project	Timeline	Where we Started	Progress to Date	What we will do	End Goal
FWP23-01 Future Arrangements System Services (FASS)	2025-2028	Existing System Services designed around historical system needs, with renewable growth creating new operational requirements.	High-Level Design completed and Detailed Design commenced, defining future requirements and market design.	Continue technical analysis, design and stakeholder engagement to develop future System Services arrangements.	Establish future System Services arrangements that support secure system operation, new technologies and decarbonisation.
<u>Current Stage</u> Detailed Design / Policy & Regulatory Development	<u>Key Dependencies</u> Regulatory and policy decisions; market design approvals; EirGrid alignment; stakeholder engagement.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Greater clarity on future programme direction and implementation.		
FWP26-04 System Strength	2025-2028	No agreed framework for System Strength; reliance on broad stability constraints.	SONI and EirGrid agreed a common definition and established a coordinated programme.	Develop strategy, metrics and implementation framework.	Implement a targeted System Strength framework that supports higher renewable penetration levels while maintaining system security.
<u>Current Stage</u> Framework Development	<u>Key Dependencies</u> Regulatory support; stakeholder engagement; technical studies.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Publication of System Strength Strategy		
FWP27-02 Frequency Response from Wind Trial	2025-2030	Renewable generators did not routinely provide reserve or frequency response services.	Delivered the initial Negative Reserve from Wind trial, enabling 11 wind farms to provide up to 30 MW negative and 19 MW positive reserve.	Expand negative reserve towards 50 MW, assess performance and develop the Operational Policy.	Establish enduring arrangements for renewable generators to routinely provide frequency response and reserve services.
<u>Current Stage</u> Trial Expansion, Assessment & Policy Development	<u>Key Dependencies</u> Wind farm technical modifications; generator participation; regulatory support; operational policy development; modelling.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Delivery of Reserve from Wind policy and expanded reserve capability from renewable generators.		
FWP27-09 Hybrid Connections	2026-2035	Existing arrangements require individual technologies to secure dedicated connection capacity.	Initial policy development and stakeholder engagement completed on hybrid connections and MEC sharing.	Develop policy, technical and commercial arrangements for Hybrid Connections.	Enable multiple technologies to share network capacity and improve utilisation of existing infrastructure.
<u>Current Stage</u> Framework Development	<u>Key Dependencies</u> Regulatory approval; industry acceptance; connection policy development.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Consultation on Hybrid Connections framework.		
FWP26-03 Multi-Year Market Development Plan	2025-2030	Need for a coordinated roadmap for future electricity market development across NI and the all-island system.	Supported development of the draft Multi-Year Market Development Plan through market expertise, analysis and stakeholder engagement.	Support finalisation, consultation and publication of the Multi-Year Market Development Plan.	Establish a clear, coordinated roadmap supporting renewable integration, security of supply and efficient market development.
<u>Current Stage</u> Plan Development & Stakeholder Engagement	<u>Key Dependencies</u> UR approval and timelines; stakeholder engagement; evolving policy and system needs.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Publication of the final Multi-Year Market Development Plan, subject to RA timelines and approval.		
FWP27-10 Strategic Markets Programme (SMP)	2024-2030	Current SEM and European market arrangements in place, with future integration requirements identified.	Programme design and readiness activities completed to support future market integration.	Support validation, testing and operational readiness for future market integration.	Enable operational readiness and successful integration with future European market arrangements.
<u>Current Stage</u> Market Integration & Readiness	<u>Key Dependencies</u> European programme timelines; Celtic Interconnector delivery; SEM approvals; regulatory decisions; Market Operator readiness.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Market validation and readiness underway for future integration.		

Role 2 - Independent Expert

Project	Timeline	Where we Started	Progress to Date	What we will do	End Goal
FWP27-03 Consumer Council Consumer Engagement	2025-2027	Need identified to improve consumer understanding of energy transition issues.	Ongoing collaboration established with the Consumer Council and consumer engagement activities underway.	Continue consumer engagement and insight gathering activities.	Improve consumer awareness and understanding of energy transition issues.
<u>Current Stage</u> Consumer Engagement	<u>Key Dependencies</u> Consumer Council research and participation.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Publication of updated consumer insights.		
FWP26-09 Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG)	2024-2030	No renewable electricity support scheme available for new projects in Northern Ireland.	Funding and licence updates secured for REPG, supporting policy development and implementation planning with DfE and Regulatory Authorities.	Support progression of the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill and implementation planning for the REPG framework.	Support implementation of a renewable support mechanism that provides investment certainty and accelerates renewable deployment.
<u>Current Stage</u> Legislative Development & Implementation Planning	<u>Key Dependencies</u> NI Assembly approval of legislation, DfE policy decisions, regulatory framework development and stakeholder engagement.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Legislative approval of the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill, enabling preparations for the first REPG auction.		
FWP27-04 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027-2032	2025-2032	Stakeholder Needs Assessment completed and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2024-2026 implemented.	Strategy Published in September 2026 ¹	Embed and roll out new approach across the organisation	Deliver a mature, evidence-based stakeholder engagement framework.
<u>Current Stage</u> Strategy Development	<u>Key Dependencies</u> Stakeholder participation; completion of evaluation activities.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Embed Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027-2032		
FWP27-09 SONI Public Engagement Programme	2026-2030	Need identified for enhanced community engagement and community benefit approaches to support future network development	Strategic case and pilot developed.	Ongoing engagement with DfE and UR to secure approval for pilot..	Strengthen community and stakeholder trust in SONI through coordinated communications and engagement on the energy transition.
<u>Current Stage</u> Stakeholder Engagement & Pilot Development	<u>Key Dependencies</u> Community participation; UR engagement; governance approvals; funding and delivery arrangements.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Establish approved Community Benefit Pilot Scheme.		
FWP27-06 SONI Role Awareness Campaign	2026-2028	Stakeholder feedback highlighted low awareness and understanding of SONI's role and responsibilities.	Project scope, objectives and delivery approach defined. Initial audience insights and messaging requirements identified.	Develop the phased multi-channel awareness campaign and prepare for launch.	Improve understanding of SONI's role and build stakeholder trust through effective communications and engagement.
<u>Current Stage</u> Campaign Development	<u>Key Dependencies</u> Sufficient resourcing; stakeholder participation; media and digital channel availability; audience insight and evaluation framework.		<u>Next Milestone</u> Development and roll out of phased multi-channel awareness campaign.		
FWP26-07 Plan-Led Electricity System Development	2024-2035	Existing electricity network development is predominantly application-led.	Engagement with the UR, industry and government informed development of a more strategic, plan-led approach.	Continue development of recommendations and supporting policy framework.	Support implementation of a renewable support mechanism that provides investment certainty and accelerates renewable deployment.
<u>Current Stage</u> Policy Development	<u>Key Dependencies</u> NI Assembly approval of legislation; DfE policy decisions; regulatory framework development; stakeholder engagement.		<u>Next Milestone</u> REPG approved, enabling operational readiness for the first auction.		

Role 3 - System Planning

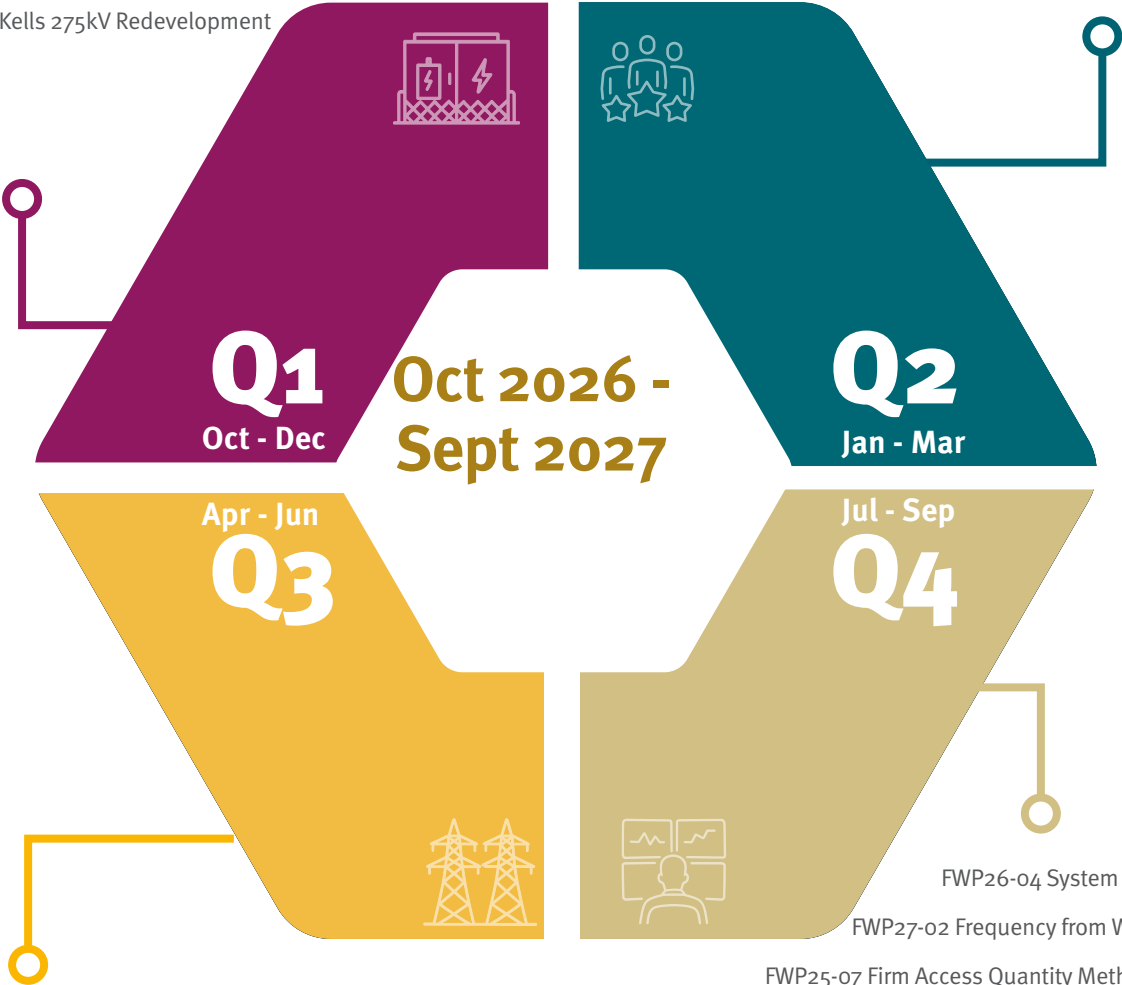
Project	Timeline	Where we Started	Progress to Date	What we will do	End Goal
FWP27-03 Kells 275kV Redevelopment	2026-2035	Asset condition and fault-level challenges identified through wider network studies.	Initial option appraisal and redevelopment activities progressed.	Progress planning, design and approval activities.	Renew ageing infrastructure and maintain network resilience.
Current Stage Development		Key Dependencies Funding approvals; planning and development processes.		Next Milestone Completion of preferred option development and approvals.	
FWP26-09 Roe Cluster	2026-2032	Transmission constraints identified in the north-west and limited ability to facilitate additional renewable generation connections.	Needs assessment completed and preferred options confirmed, enabling progression through the Grid Development Framework.	Progress land purchase TNPP and wider project TNPP.	Deliver shared transmission infrastructure enabling significant additional renewable generation connections.
Current Stage Grid Development Framework		Key Dependencies Regulatory approvals; planning and land acquisition processes.		Next Milestone Submission of TNPP applications.	
FWP27-04 Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment	2026-2036	Asset replacement requirements identified through wider network redevelopment activities.	Project progressed through development and preparatory stages.	Continue planning, approvals and project development activities.	Renew strategic transmission infrastructure supporting the Greater Belfast area.
Current Stage Development		Key Dependencies Planning approvals; funding; network development programme.		Next Milestone Completion of key development approvals.	
FWP26-03 Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment	2026-2036	Asset condition and fault-level requirements identified through network studies.	Included within the wider 275kV redevelopment programme and option development activities.	Progress option appraisal and project development activities.	Enable routine delivery of reserve and frequency response from renewables.
Current Stage Development		Key Dependencies Planning approvals; funding; network development programme.		Next Milestone Completion of preferred option appraisal.	

Role 4 - Commercial Interface

Project	Timeline	Where we Started	Progress to Date	What we will do	End Goal
FWP27-03 LCIS Phase 1 – Dynamic Stability Assessment	2024-2028	Need identified for low-carbon alternatives to conventional synchronous generation to provide system stability services in a high-renewable electricity system.	Technical studies and assessments commenced to evaluate the contribution of low-carbon technologies to system stability, inertia and renewable integration.	Complete dynamic stability assessments and establish the evidence base required to support future procurement decisions.	Establish an evidence-based pathway for low-carbon stability services that supports higher renewable penetration while maintaining system security.
Current Stage Dynamic Stability Assessment		Key Dependencies Technical study outcomes; stakeholder engagement; regulatory support.		Next Milestone Completion of Phase 1 assessment and publication of recommendations	
FWP26-09 LCIS Phase II – Procurement	2024-2027	Requirement identified to procure long-term low-carbon stability services to support future system operation.	Procurement framework commenced building on LCIS Phase I analysis, with engagement undertaken on future service requirements and delivery models.	Progress procurement design and tender-stage activities for low-carbon stability services.	Procure low-carbon stability services that reduce reliance on conventional generation while maintaining secure operation of the power system.
Current Stage Procurement Development & Tender Preparation		Key Dependencies Regulatory approvals; procurement governance; market participation.		Next Milestone Launch of procurement process and tender issuance.	
FWP27-04 Flexibility Procurement Framework	2024-2030	Recognition that increasing renewable generation will require additional flexibility resources, including storage and demand-side response, to support secure and efficient operation of the power system.	Initial engagement has been undertaken with DfE, the Utility Regulator and industry stakeholders to explore policy, regulatory and procurement approaches for flexibility and storage services. The programme remains at an early stage and is closely linked to wider policy development and flexibility needs assessment activities.	Support development of policy, regulatory and procurement frameworks for flexibility and storage services; contribute technical and operational expertise to flexibility needs assessments and future delivery model discussions.	Establish a framework that enables future procurement of flexibility and storage services, supporting renewable integration, system resilience and efficient system operation.
Current Stage Policy & Framework Development		Key Dependencies DfE policy decisions; Utility Regulator approvals; Flexibility Needs Assessment outcomes; funding arrangements; agreement on procurement and delivery model.		Next Milestone Agreement of future policy and regulatory direction for flexibility procurement and clarification of SONI's future delivery role.	

Quarterly Project Overview

- FWP25-04 Transmission Cluster Policy
- FWP26-10 Ten Year Transmission Forecast Statement
- FWP26-13 Roe Cluster
- FWP26-15 LCIS Phase 1 – Dynamic Stability Assessment
- FWP26-09 Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG)
- FWP27-06 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027 -2032
- FWP27-07 Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios
- FWP27-12 Kells 275kV Redevelopment
- FWP27-03 Hybrid Connections
- FWP27-04 Strategic Markets Programme (SMP)
- FWP26-07 Plan-Led Electricity System Development
- FWP27-08 SONI Role Awareness Campaign



- FWP26-03 Multi-Year Plan for Market Development
- FWP27-01 System Defence Plan
- FWP26-15 LCIS Phase II – Procurement Process
- FWP26-04 System Strength
- FWP27-02 Frequency from Wind Trial
- FWP25-07 Firm Access Quantity Methodology
- FWP26-12 Transmission Development Plan 2027
- FWP25-03 SRP27 Stakeholder Engagement
- FWP27-11 Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment
- FWP27-05 Consumer Council Consumer Engagement Working Group
- FWP27-09 SONI Public Engagement Programme
- FWP27-10 Annual Innovation Report
- FWP27-13 Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment
- FWP27-13 Flexibility Procurement

Deliverables

Summary

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



New Projects



Projects carried Forward

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.	35	 	  
FWP26-04 System Strength	Developing a System Strength Strategy to support secure operation of a low-carbon power system - Enabling greater renewable integration while maintaining system stability and resilience.	37	 	  
FWP27-01 System Defence Plan	Reviewing and updating the Northern Ireland System Defence Plan - Maintaining effective system protection arrangements and strengthening resilience against major disturbance.	39		 
FWP27-03 Hybrid Connections	Developing a framework for hybrid connections and MEC sharing - Maximising use of existing network capacity and supporting renewable and storage technologies.	41		  
FWP27-02 Frequency Response from Wind Trial	Progressing frequency response and reserve services from wind generation - Reducing reliance on conventional generation and supporting system security.	43		  
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.	45	 	   
FWP27-04 Strategic Markets Programme (SMP)	Delivering a coordinated approach to long-term market development and reform - improving market efficiency, transparency and investment certainty.	47		   

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
FWP27-03 Consumer Council Consumer Engagement	Supporting coordinated consumer engagement and evidence sharing - Improving understanding ... and informing future policy development.	53		 
FWP27-06 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027 -2032	Implementing a structured and measurable approach to stakeholder engagement - Strengthening relationships and improving how stakeholder insights inform decision-making.	55	 	   
FWP27-07 Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2027	Developing evidence-based future energy scenarios - Informing policy, network investment and long-term electricity system planning.	57		   
FWP27-08 SONI Role Awareness Campaign	Delivering a public awareness campaign - Improving understanding of SONI's role and building confidence in the development of Northern Ireland's electricity system.	59		  
FWP26-07 Plan-Led Electricity System Development	Delivering a coordinated approach to long-term network planning and investment - reducing the risk of reactive decision-making, avoiding infrastructure duplication, and supporting efficient development of the electricity system.	61	 	   
FWP25-03 SRP27 Stakeholder Engagement	Delivering a structured stakeholder engagement programme - Supporting the SRP27 price control process and ensuring stakeholder views inform future investment decisions.	63	 	   
FWP27-09 SONI Public Engagement Programme	Establishing a Community Benefit Pilot - Strengthening engagement with local communities and support the development of future transmission infrastructure.	65		   
FWP27-10 Annual Innovation Report	Reporting on SONI's innovation activities and outcomes - Demonstrating how innovation supports renewable integration, system resilience and consumer value	67		   
FWP26-09 Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG)	Supporting development of a renewable electricity support mechanism - Providing investment certainty and supporting increased renewable generation	69	 	 

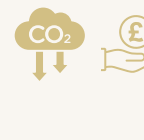
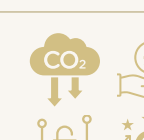
ROLE 3
System Planning

Covers our responsibility for planning the transmission 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 coordinated framework for renewable connections- Supporting anticipatory network investment and more efficient transmission development.	77		
FWP25-07 Firm Access Quantity Methodology	Modernising firm access arrangements - Reflecting future system needs, improve transparency and support efficient investment in low-carbon technologies.	79		
FWP26-10 Ten Year Transmission Forecast Statement 2026	Providing a long-term view of transmission opportunities and constraints- Supporting informed investment and connection decisions.	81		
FWP26-12 Transmission Development Plan 2027	Delivering a coordinated plan for future transmission network development - Supporting renewable integration, security of supply and efficient infrastructure investment.	83		
FWP27-12 Kells 275kV Redevelopment	Progressing the redevelopment of critical transmission infrastructure- Improving network resilience, maintain security of supply and support future electricity demand.	85		
FWP26-13 Roe Cluster	Developing a strategic transmission hub - Facilitating large-scale renewable generation, reducing infrastructure duplication and improving network efficiency.	87		
FWP27-13 Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment	Progressing the redevelopment of a key transmission substation - Strengthening network capability, improving resilien	89		
FWP27-11 Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment	Renewing ageing transmission infrastructure - Maintaining network reliability, improving operational flexibility	91		

ROLE 4
Commercial Interface

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

Deliverable	Scope	Page Reference	Project Symbol	SONI Outcome
FWP001 LCIS Phase 1 - Dynamic Stability Assessment	Assessing the contribution of low-carbon stability technologies to system security - Enabling greater renewable integration and reducing operational constraints.	103		
FWP26-15 Phase II - Procurement Process Tender Stage	Procuring low-carbon stability services - Supporting renewable integration, strengthening system resilience	105		
FWP27-13 Flexibility Procurement Framework	Developing a framework for procuring flexibility and storage services - Supporting renewable integration, strengthen system resilience and enable a more flexible, low-carbon electricity system.	107		

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



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

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



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

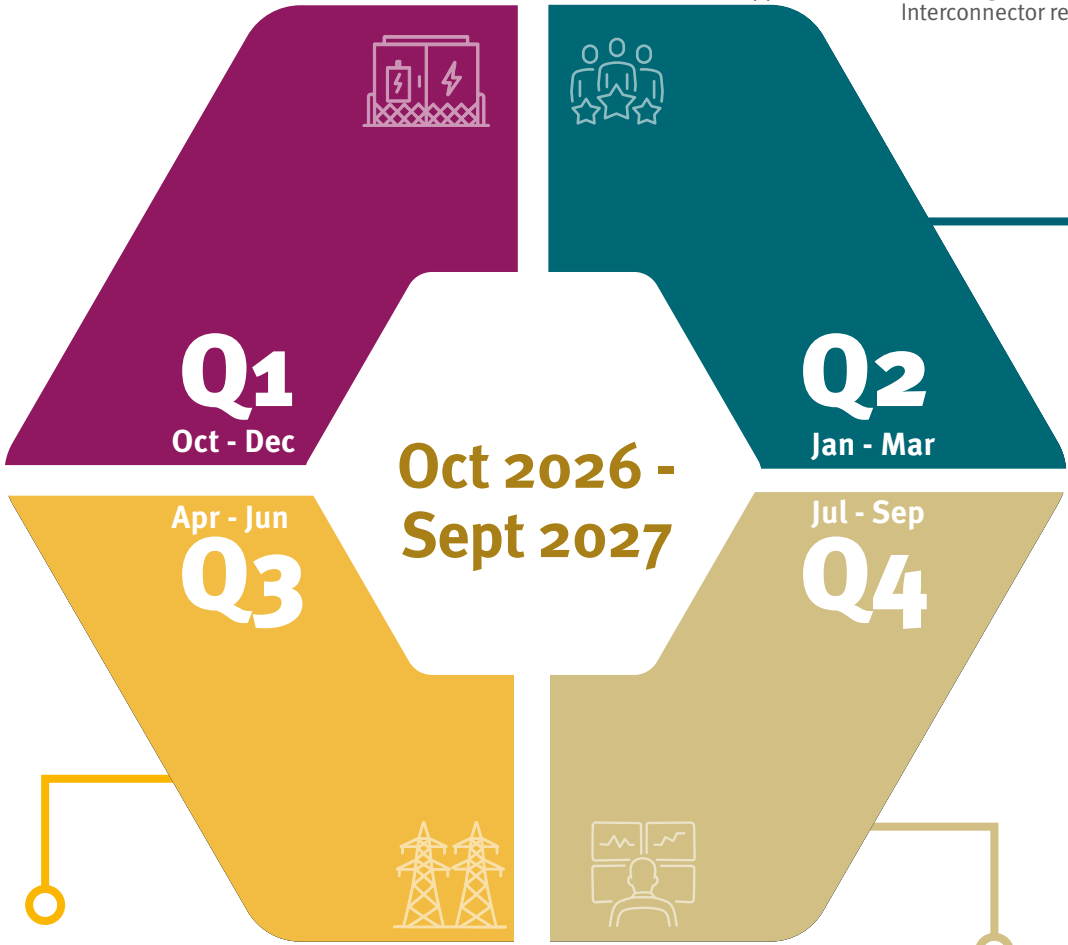
We manage planned network outages to support maintenance and development without compromising security of supply.



Emergency

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

Summary of Quarterly Deliverables



FWP27-04 Strategic Markets Programme (SMP)
Complete required system validation activities to support future market integration and Celtic Interconnector readiness -

- **FWP26-03 Multi-Year Plan for Market Development**
Support publication of the final multi-year market development plan, subject to RA timelines and approval
- **FWP27-01 System Defence Plan**
Enhance the Northern Ireland System Defence Plan to support secure and resilient operation of the evolving power system
- **FWP27-03 Hybrid Connections**
Establish Hybrid Connections Working Group and publish Hybrid Connections Roadmap
- **FWP27-04 Strategic Markets Programme (SMP)**
Complete market coupling testing required to support future market integration

- **FWP26-04 System Strength**
Develop a Draft System Strength Strategy
- **FWP27-02 Frequency from Wind Trial**
Enhance the Northern Ireland System Defence Plan to support secure and resilient operation of the evolving power system
- **FWP27-03 Hybrid Connections**
Complete Business Conceptual Overview for Energy Sharing Behind the Connection Point and an Integrated Hybrid Market Model



FWP23-01 Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS)

Milestone to be confirmed

Delivery milestones will be incorporated following confirmation of the programme schedule

Benefits Realisation Overview

While project milestones provide visibility of what will be delivered during the year, they do not always explain the value those activities are intended to create or how they contribute to wider strategic outcomes. To address this, each project includes a Benefits Realisation Overview, setting out the intended outcomes, measures of success, baseline position, target results and anticipated timing of benefit realisation.

This framework provides greater transparency on how project delivery translates into benefits for consumers, stakeholders and the wider electricity system, while demonstrating how individual projects contribute to our strategic ambitions, the Utility Regulator's priorities and Northern Ireland's energy transition. It also strengthens accountability by clearly linking planned activities to the outcomes they are expected to achieve and the value they are intended to deliver.

We recognise that not all benefits can be measured through quantitative metrics. Many projects relate to strategic planning, policy development, stakeholder engagement and future system readiness, where outcomes may be demonstrated through delivery of milestones, stakeholder feedback, regulatory progress or evidence of influence rather than numerical measures alone. Where meaningful quantitative measures are

available, we have included baselines, benefit measures and target outcomes to improve transparency and accountability. We will continue to develop and refine our approach to benefits measurement and reporting, particularly in relation to consumer value and system-wide cost impacts, and will seek to provide additional information in future plans as projects mature.

Benefits may be realised during the FWP period or over a longer timeframe as projects progress from policy development and design through to implementation and operational delivery.

Taken together, the Benefits Realisation Framework provides a clear line of sight between our activities, the outcomes delivered and the long-term value created for consumers and stakeholders. By establishing measurable indicators and transparent reporting arrangements, we aim to demonstrate not only that projects have been delivered, but that they have contributed to a secure, sustainable and affordable electricity system.

Role 1 - Benefits Realisation

Project	Intended Outcome	Benefit Measure	Baseline	Target Benefit	Benefit Realisation
01 FWP23-01 FASS	Develop enduring arrangements for reserve, non-reserve and future System Services that support secure low-carbon system operation and the transition from DS3 arrangements.	Progress future System Services arrangements through framework development, regulatory approval and implementation of new procurement arrangements.	Existing System Services arrangements continue to operate while future arrangements remain under development, subject to policy and design decisions.	Establish a competitive procurement framework for future System Services that supports low-carbon technologies and provides long-term investment certainty for service providers	3-5 years
02 FWP26-03 System Strength	Develop a targeted framework for managing system strength to support secure operation of a low-carbon power system.	System strength-related operational constraints (MW); implementation of new System Strength metrics and monitoring arrangements	Existing reliance on broad system-wide constraints and limited targeted system strength framework.	Reduces system strength-related constraints and reliance on conventional generation through targeted monitoring, metrics and policies that support operation at higher renewable penetration levels.	1-3 years
03 FWP26-04 Multi-Year Plan for Market Development	Establish a long-term roadmap for electricity market development, providing clarity on strategic priorities, decarbonisation, security of supply and future market reforms.	Supported regulatory authorities in plan development, completed stakeholder consultation, and incorporated stakeholder feedback and TSO recommendations into the final plan	Existing market development activity is progressed through individual initiatives without a consolidated long-term market development roadmap	Deliver a coordinated market development plan that guides market evolution, supports renewable integration and security of supply, and informs regulatory and industry priorities.	3-5 years
04 FWP27-01 System Defence Plan	Maintain effective defence arrangements that protect the power system against severe but credible disturbances.	Number of identified defence plan actions implemented; periodic compliance and effectiveness reviews.	Existing System Defence Plan and current defence arrangements.	Improved system resilience and operational readiness, reducing the risk and impact of major system incidents.	Within 1 year
05 FWP27-02 Frequency from Wind Trial	Enable renewable generators to provide frequency response and reserve services as part of normal system operation.	Volume of frequency response and reserve services available from renewable generation (MW)	30MW negative reserve and 19MW positive reserve capability currently available from wind.	Enable 50 MW of positive and negative frequency response capability from renewable generators, reducing reliance on conventional generation.	1-3 years
06 FWP27-03 Hybrid Connections	Enable multiple technologies to share network connections through Hybrid Connection arrangements and Maximum Export Capacity (MEC) sharing.	Additional connection capacity unlocked through hybrid arrangements (MW/MVA); number of hybrid projects connected	Existing arrangements require dedicated connection capacity for each technology.	Unlock additional connection capacity through hybrid connections and MEC sharing, improving utilisation of existing network assets.	3-5 years
07 FWP27-04 Strategic Markets Programme (SMP)	Enable future electricity market integration and efficient use of interconnection through readiness for evolving European market arrangements and the Celtic Interconnector	Complete SAT validation, MNA go-live, internal parallel-run and market-coupling testing, alongside key programme milestones required to support future market integration	Existing market arrangements are in place, with further developments required to support future European market integration and interconnector utilisation.	Improved market efficiency, greater access to cross-border trading opportunities and increased interconnector utilisation to support renewable integration and security of supply.	3-5 years

Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS)

Project Overview

The Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS) programme supports the evolution of System Services procurement arrangements to meet the needs of a transforming electricity system. As renewable generation levels increase and new technologies enter the market, system services arrangements must continue to evolve to maintain system security, support efficient operation and facilitate the transition to a low-carbon electricity system.

FASS seeks to establish future procurement arrangements for System Services that support secure and reliable power system operation while enabling participation from a broader range of technologies and service providers. The programme is intended to support innovation, facilitate the integration of low-carbon technologies and promote efficient outcomes for consumers.

Building on the progress achieved during 2025/26, we will continue to support ongoing programme development through technical analysis, design development and stakeholder engagement. Progression of future implementation activities remains dependent on direction from the Regulatory Authorities regarding policy, market design and implementation arrangements. Pending this direction, we will continue to provide technical expertise and evidence-based analysis to support future programme decisions and implementation planning.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- During 2026/27, we will continue to support the development of Future Arrangements for System Services through technical analysis, stakeholder engagement and collaboration with the Regulatory Authorities and EirGrid. As future programme direction remains subject to regulatory decisions, implementation arrangements and milestones will be updated through the Mid-Year Report.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Supporting Decarbonisation by facilitating future participation of low-carbon technologies in the provision of system services.



Enhancing Grid Security through the continued development of arrangements that support secure and reliable system operation.



Promoting Competition by encouraging participation from a broader range of service providers.



Enabling Innovation through future arrangements that facilitate emerging technologies.



Supporting Long-Term Market Evolution by preparing for future system services arrangements.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Plan - Provides technical expertise and market development input to support future procurement arrangements for system services.



Deliver - Supports future market and operational arrangements for a secure, low-carbon electricity system.



Operate - Supports the evolution of system services arrangements to maintain power system security as the generation mix changes.

Service Ambition

The programme reflects our ambition to ensure that the services required to operate the power system securely can continue to evolve in line with the changing needs of the electricity system. As renewable generation and inverter-based technologies form an increasing proportion of the generation mix, future arrangements will need to support new technologies while maintaining high standards of reliability, resilience and security of supply. Through FASS, we continue to work with EirGrid, the Regulatory Authorities and industry stakeholders to explore future procurement and market arrangements that can support these changing requirements. While implementation pathways remain subject to ongoing policy and regulatory discussions, the programme provides an important strategic framework for future market development. This work will help ensure that future system service arrangements can support decarbonisation objectives, encourage innovation and provide efficient outcomes for electricity consumers.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement remains central to the Future Arrangements for System Services programme. We will continue to work collaboratively with EirGrid, the Utility Regulator, SEM Committee, industry participants and other relevant stakeholders to support consideration of future system service arrangements. Through ongoing engagement activities, stakeholders will contribute expertise and perspectives on procurement frameworks, commercial arrangements, implementation approaches and evolving system needs. This collaborative approach will help support informed decision-making and ensure that future arrangements reflect both operational requirements and stakeholder interests.

Accountability

We are accountable for providing technical expertise and stakeholder engagement to support the development of future system services arrangements and ensure operational requirements are reflected in future frameworks. While we are not accountable for policy decisions, regulatory approvals or implementation timelines, we will continue to provide analysis and advice to support programme development. As the programme remains dependent on regulatory and policy decisions, progress during 2026/27 will be demonstrated through programme development and stakeholder engagement. Updates on future milestones will be provided through the Mid-Year Report as greater certainty becomes available.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Supports renewable and low-carbon technologies in delivering system services.



Grid Security - Supports the ongoing development of arrangements that help ensure the secure and reliable operation of the electricity network.



System-Wide Costs - Supports consideration of competitive procurement approaches that can deliver efficient service provision and value for consumers.



Service Quality - Contributes to the development of transparent, effective and future-focused arrangements for procuring critical system services.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs.

Low

£0 - 500k

High

£500 k - £1m

Medium

£1m - £5m

Very High

£5m+

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

Develop a Draft System Strength Strategy - **September 2027**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Advise** - Provides evidence-based recommendations to inform future system strength policies, operational frameworks and regulatory decision-making.
-  **Plan** - Develops a long-term framework for system strength management that supports future network and generation development.
-  **Operate** - Enhances operational understanding and monitoring of system strength to support secure and reliable system operation.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Enabling higher inverter-based renewable generation** through targeted system strength measures, supporting relaxation of SNSP and MUON constraints.
-  **Improving operational decision-making** through location-specific system strength metrics and enhanced assessment tools.
-  **Establishes a System Strength policy framework** to support operational decisions and reduce reliance on system-wide constraints.
-  **Strengthening system resilience** through improved understanding of system behaviour under normal and disturbed conditions.
-  **Supporting long-term efficiency** by optimising network and generation resources for a high-renewable electricity system.

Service Ambition

This project represents a significant step forward in how system stability is assessed and managed in Northern Ireland. As the power system evolves towards higher levels of inverter-based renewable generation, our approach to managing stability must evolve with it. Through the System Strength Strategy, we will establish a more sophisticated, evidence-based framework for understanding and managing system strength. This will support greater renewable integration measures that support a secure system while maintaining the security and resilience required for consumers and the wider economy. Drawing on international best practice and tailored to Northern Ireland’s evolving needs, the project will support the delivery of a secure, sustainable and low-carbon power system.

Stakeholder Engagement

The development of the System Strength Strategy will require close collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including NIE Networks, EirGrid, generation owners, Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), regulatory authorities and industry experts. Stakeholder engagement will be used to validate technical studies, share operational experience, assess emerging industry practices and ensure that proposed approaches are practical and deliverable. Through ongoing collaboration, stakeholders will help shape the policy framework, support the development of implementation plans and provide valuable challenge and insight to ensure the strategy reflects the needs of a modern, low-carbon electricity system.

Accountability

We are accountable for developing a robust System Strength Strategy and supporting framework to enable the secure and efficient operation of an increasingly inverter-based power system. This includes technical analysis, stakeholder engagement, assessment of future system strength options and recommendations to support evolving operational practices. Progress will be demonstrated through technical studies, stakeholder engagement, governance approvals and publication of the Draft System Strength Strategy by September 2027. Success will be measured through delivery of a clear, evidence-based framework that supports renewable integration while maintaining system security and resilience, and provides a foundation for future policy and implementation planning.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Supports greater integration of renewable and inverter-based generation by reducing system strength constraints.
-  **Grid Security** - Enhances system resilience and stability through improved management of system strength requirements.
-  **System-Wide Costs** - Supports more efficient operation of the electricity system by enabling targeted solutions and reducing reliance on broad operational constraints.
-  **Service Quality** - Improves reliability and resilience by maintaining secure operation of the power system as generation technologies evolve.
-  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs.

Low	High	Medium	Very High
£0 - 500k	£500 k - £1m	£1m - £5m	£5m+

System Defence Plan

Project Overview

We are responsible for maintaining a System Defence Plan that sets out the measures used to protect the Northern Ireland power system during severe but credible disturbances, helping to prevent widespread outages and support system restoration where necessary. The plan forms an important part of the framework used to maintain power system security and resilience.

This project will undertake a comprehensive review of the System Defence Plan to assess operational experience, changes in generation technologies, increasing levels of renewable generation, inverter-based resources, emerging system security risks and lessons learned from system events. It will also consider developments in industry standards and evolving operational requirements across the electricity sector.

The transition to a lower-carbon power system is changing the way the electricity system responds during both normal and disturbed operating conditions. As traditional sources of inertia and system strength reduce and the contribution from inverter-based technologies increases, defence arrangements must evolve to remain effective.

This project will therefore go beyond a routine review by assessing whether existing defence arrangements remain appropriate for the future characteristics of the power system and identifying enhancements where necessary. Enhancements to the System Defence Plan will be developed and implemented to address emerging risks, strengthen system resilience and support effective management and restoration of the system following major disturbances.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Enhance the Northern Ireland System Defence Plan to support secure and resilient operation of the evolving power system - **June 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Strengthening System Resilience by ensuring system defence arrangements remain effective as the power system evolves.



Enhancing Grid Security by maintaining robust measures to protect the system during severe but credible disturbances.



Protecting Consumers by reducing the risk and impact of widespread outages and major system incidents.



Supporting Operational Readiness by incorporating operational experience, lessons learned and industry best practice into defence arrangements.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Plan - Ensures emergency and resilience arrangements evolve alongside changes in technology and system characteristics.



Deliver - Implements updated defence measures and operational arrangements where improvements are identified.



Operate - Maintains robust defence measures that support secure operation of the power system during major disturbances.

Service Ambition

As the electricity system evolves, we will enhance our System Defence Plan to ensure defence arrangements remain effective in responding to severe but credible disturbances. Through this project, we will assess emerging system characteristics, operational experience and new technologies to strengthen resilience, support increasing levels of renewable generation and maintain high standards of system security.

Our ambition is to ensure defence arrangements evolve alongside changes in the power system and remain fit for purpose within an increasingly renewable and inverter-based electricity system. By identifying opportunities for enhancement and addressing emerging risks, we will strengthen the power system's ability to withstand and recover from major disturbances, supporting secure, resilient and reliable electricity supplies for consumers.

Stakeholder Engagement

The review will be undertaken in collaboration with key stakeholders, including NIE Networks, EirGrid and Regulatory Authorities. Through technical engagement and consultation, stakeholders will provide input on operational experience, emerging risks, future system requirements and lessons learned from operational events. This engagement will support the identification of potential improvements to existing defence measures and help ensure that any enhancements to defence arrangements are practical, coordinated and aligned with wider industry developments. Through established governance and consultation processes, we will work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of future system challenges and ensure defence arrangements remain effective and appropriate for the evolving needs of the power system.

Accountability

We are accountable for ensuring the Northern Ireland System Defence Plan remains effective for an evolving power system. This includes completing the review, engaging with stakeholders and implementing any required enhancements. We are also responsible for ensuring defence arrangements reflect changes in system operation, generation technologies and industry developments by assessing existing measures, identifying improvement opportunities and completing the necessary governance processes. Progress will be demonstrated through technical assessment, stakeholder engagement, governance approvals and implementation of any required updates. Success will be measured through delivery of an enhanced System Defence Plan that reflects changing system characteristics and provides an effective framework for maintaining system resilience and supporting system restoration in an increasingly low-carbon electricity system.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Supports secure operation of a power system with increasing levels of renewable and inverter-based generation.



Grid Security - Maintains effective defence arrangements that protect the electricity system during severe disturbances.



System-Wide Costs - Reduces the risk of costly system incidents and widespread outages.



Service Quality - Supports continuity and reliability of electricity supply for consumers.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs

Low
£0 - 500k

High
£500 k - £1m

Medium
£1m - £5m

Very High
£5m+

Hybrid Connections

Project Overview

Hybrid connections allow two or more technologies to share a single connection to the electricity network, such as a wind or solar farm co-located with a battery energy storage system. Interest in hybrid connections is increasing as they can maximise use of existing network capacity, reduce connection costs and improve asset utilisation. For example, batteries can store excess renewable generation and export it at a later time, allowing multiple technologies to share the same Maximum Export Capacity (MEC).

Currently, connection arrangements require sufficient network capacity to accommodate the maximum export capability of all connected technologies, which can limit efficient network utilisation and create barriers to innovation. This project will explore the changes required to facilitate MEC sharing in Northern Ireland, enabling multiple technologies to share an agreed export limit while operating securely within system constraints.

The project will assess the technical, operational, commercial and market arrangements required to support hybrid developments, including energy sharing behind the connection point, market participation arrangements and any necessary changes to operational processes, governance frameworks and IT systems. Through engagement with NIE Networks, EirGrid, regulatory authorities and industry stakeholders, we will develop an implementation pathway for hybrid connections and MEC sharing. This will support more efficient use of network infrastructure, facilitate investment in renewable generation and storage, and enable a more flexible, efficient and low-carbon electricity system.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Establish Hybrid Connections Working Group and publish Hybrid Connections Roadmap - **June 2027**
- Complete Business Conceptual Overview for Energy Sharing Behind the Connection Point - **September 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Supporting decarbonisation by enabling greater integration of renewable generation and storage.



Improving network utilisation by enabling more efficient use of existing connection assets.



Facilitating innovation by enabling new hybrid connection and integrated energy-sharing solutions.



Enabling New Route-to-Market Opportunities by supporting participation by integrated hybrid assets.



Supporting Consumer Value by enabling lower-cost connection options and reducing unnecessary network investment.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Advise - Provides expertise on future connection policy, market participation and network access arrangements.



Plan - Develops future connection and market frameworks that enable more efficient use of network capacity and support renewable generation growth.



Deliver - Progresses planning, market design and stakeholder engagement for MEC sharing and hybrid arrangements.



Operate - Maximises use of existing network infrastructure while supporting secure system operation and hybrid technology participation in electricity markets.

Service Ambition

This project represents an important step in modernising network access arrangements and supporting a more flexible and efficient electricity system. By developing the framework for MEC sharing, we will unlock greater value from existing network infrastructure and enable increased integration of renewable generation and energy storage. Alongside the technical framework, we will explore how integrated hybrid assets can participate efficiently in electricity markets and system services. By considering connection policy and market design together, we aim to maximise the value of hybrid assets while maintaining secure system operation. In the longer term, hybrid connections can improve network utilisation, reduce barriers to investment and provide customers with greater flexibility. The project will establish the foundations for future arrangements that support innovation, decarbonisation and practical routes to market for hybrid developments.

Stakeholder Engagement

Delivery of this project will require close collaboration with NIE Networks, EirGrid, regulatory authorities, renewable and storage developers, market participants and customer representatives. Engagement will gather input on the technical, operational, commercial, regulatory and market-design considerations associated with MEC sharing and integrated hybrid developments. This will help identify practical implementation options, assess route-to-market requirements and ensure future arrangements are transparent, efficient and aligned with wider market developments. Collaboration will also build a shared understanding of energy sharing behind the connection point and support an integrated framework for connection and market participation that enables innovation while maintaining system security and operational effectiveness.

Accountability

We are accountable for assessing the changes required to enable MEC sharing and hybrid connections and developing an implementation pathway for future delivery. This includes evaluating technical, commercial, operational, regulatory and market requirements, engaging with stakeholders and identifying the framework changes needed to support hybrid arrangements. Progress will be demonstrated through stakeholder engagement, development of the Business Conceptual Overview for Energy Sharing Behind the Connection Point and publication of the Hybrid Connections Project Roadmap. Success will be measured through delivery of an evidence-based pathway that enables innovation, supports efficient use of network capacity and maintains secure system operation.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Supports integration of renewable generation and storage technologies and enables more efficient deployment of low-carbon energy resources.



Grid Security - Ensures new connection and market arrangements are developed in a way that maintains secure system operation and system resilience.



System-Wide Costs - Reduces infrastructure and reinforcement requirements through more efficient use of existing assets and network capacity.



Service Quality - Provides more flexible connection and market participation options while supporting evolving system needs.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs

Low

£0 - 500k

High

£500 k - £1m

Medium

£1m - £5m

Very High

£5m+

Frequency Response from Wind Trial

Project Overview

As the Northern Ireland power system transitions to higher levels of renewable generation, new technologies must increasingly provide the services needed to maintain system security and stability. Historically, frequency response and reserve services have been delivered by conventional synchronous generators, but increasing wind generation creates opportunities for renewable sources to play a greater role.

Building on the negative reserve from wind trial delivered through the 2025/26 Forward Work Programme, this project will support the development of enduring arrangements for frequency response and reserve services from wind generation. It will build on the operational experience, technical learning and EMS enhancements from the initial trial, with the objective of expanding capability towards the full 50 MW negative reserve requirement and increasing the contribution of wind generation to reserve services. Success depends on participating wind farms implementing the technical modifications required to provide reserve services. Currently, 11 sites can provide up to 30 MW of negative reserve and 19 MW of positive reserve capability, with further engagement planned to increase participation. The programme will also develop representative models for real-time security and stability assessment tools, establish operational policies for enduring implementation, and assess performance, supporting greater use of renewable generation for system services while maintaining secure and reliable system operation.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Deliver the next phase of the Frequency Response from Wind Programme, including expansion of the negative reserve trial, representative system modelling, and development of a Reserve from Wind Operational Policy - **September 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Increasing the contribution of renewable generation** for essential system services such as frequency response and reserve.
-  **Reducing reliance on conventional generation** for system stability and frequency management.
-  **Improving operational flexibility** through expanded availability of reserve services from wind generation.
-  **Supporting the secure integration** with higher levels of renewable generation on the power system.
-  **Developing the operational policies** by modelling capabilities and processes required for enduring implementation.

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Advise** - Provides operational and technical evidence to inform future policies and frameworks for system services from renewable generation.
-  **Plan** - Supports the transition towards a future power system where renewable generators can provide a wider range of essential system services.
-  **Operate** - Enhances operational flexibility by enabling wind generation to contribute to frequency response and reserve requirements while maintaining system security.

Service Ambition

This project supports our ambition to unlock the full capability of renewable generation and enable inverter-based technologies to play an increasing role in maintaining power system security. As Northern Ireland transitions to a low-carbon electricity system, renewable generators will need to provide services traditionally delivered by conventional generation. Through the Frequency Response from Wind Programme, we will demonstrate how wind generation can securely and reliably contribute to frequency management and reserve requirements. The project will establish the operational, technical and policy foundations needed to move from trial activities to enduring implementation, supporting a more sustainable and flexible electricity system.

Stakeholder Engagement

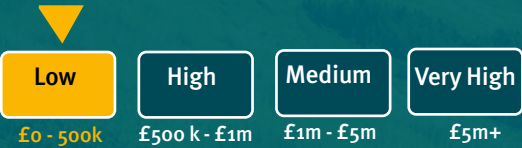
Delivery of this programme requires close collaboration with wind farm operators, EirGrid, NIE Networks and regulatory stakeholders. Engagement will support generators to implement the technical modifications required to provide reserve services, validate operational performance, develop representative models for operational tools, and inform enduring operational policies. We will continue working with existing and potential participants to increase reserve capability and progress towards the full 50 MW negative reserve requirement. Wider industry collaboration will help ensure solutions are practical, scalable and aligned with industry developments, supporting the long-term provision of reserve services from renewable generation.

Accountability

We are accountable for progressing the Frequency Response from Wind Programme and establishing the technical, operational and policy foundations for enduring reserve provision from wind generation. This includes supporting participating sites to implement technical modifications, expanding reserve capability, developing representative models within operational tools, and establishing the Operational Policy for Reserve from Wind. Progress will be demonstrated through increased reserve capability, modelling enhancements, stakeholder engagement and completion of the operational policy framework. Success will be measured by expanding provision beyond the current 30 MW of negative and 19 MW of positive reserve capability, successful operation of the trial at scale, and establishing enduring arrangements that enable wind generation to provide frequency response and reserve services as part of normal system operations.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Enables greater renewable integration by allowing wind generators to provide essential system services traditionally supplied by conventional generation.
-  **Grid Security** - Enhances system resilience by broadening the range of technologies capable of delivering frequency response and reserve services.
-  **System-Wide Costs** - Supports more efficient utilisation of existing renewable resources and has the potential to reduce reliance on conventional generation for reserve provision.
-  **Service Quality** - Maintains secure and reliable system operation by enabling frequency response from a wider range of technologies.
-  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs



Multi-Year Market Development Plan

Project Overview

The Multi-Year Market Development Plan supports the Utility Regulator in establishing a coordinated roadmap for the future development of electricity markets across Northern Ireland and the all-island power system. The plan will define strategic market priorities for the period 2026-2030 and provide a framework to support the transition to a secure, sustainable and increasingly decarbonised electricity system.

We play a key role in supporting the development of the plan through the provision of market expertise, technical analysis and stakeholder engagement. The plan will identify the market developments required to facilitate increasing levels of renewable generation, support efficient system operation, encourage investment and ensure consumers continue to benefit from well-functioning electricity markets.

During 2026/27, we will support the Utility Regulator in developing the draft Multi-Year Market Development Plan, contribute to stakeholder consultation activities and support publication of the final plan. This work will help establish a clear, transparent and coordinated direction for future market development across the electricity sector.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Support publication of the final multi-year market development plan, subject to RA timelines and approval - **June 2027**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

Plan - Supports a long-term roadmap for electricity market evolution aligned with decarbonisation, security of supply and consumer value.

Deliver - Provides market expertise, analysis and stakeholder engagement to support future market development and implementation.

Operate - Supports market evolution to enable efficient system operation, increased renewable integration and effective use of power system resources

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

- Supporting Decarbonisation** by identifying market changes required to facilitate higher levels of renewable generation.
- Providing Strategic Market Direction** through a coordinated and transparent roadmap for future market development.
- Supporting Efficient Investment** by identifying market frameworks that encourage innovation and efficient allocation of resources.
- Enhancing Stakeholder Collaboration** through consultation and engagement with industry participants, policymakers and regulators.
- Improving Consumer Outcomes** by supporting efficient, competitive and well-functioning electricity markets.



Service Ambition

The Multi-Year Market Development Plan reflects our ambition to help shape the future evolution of electricity markets to support Northern Ireland’s energy transition. As the power system continues to decarbonise and increasing volumes of renewable generation connect to the network, market arrangements must evolve to ensure they continue to deliver efficient outcomes for consumers while maintaining security of supply.

Through this project, we will support the development of a clear market development roadmap that identifies future priorities and establishes a coordinated approach to market evolution. The plan will help ensure that market design develops in line with changing system needs, technological innovation and evolving policy objectives. By contributing our operational and market expertise, we will help create a strategic framework that supports renewable integration, investment certainty and efficient market outcomes over the coming years.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is central to the development of the Multi-Year Market Development Plan. We will support the Utility Regulator’s consultation process by providing market expertise, technical insights and evidence-based analysis to inform discussions with industry participants and other stakeholders. Engagement will involve collaboration with the Utility Regulator, EirGrid, market participants, generators, suppliers, policymakers and consumer representatives. Through consultation activities, stakeholders will have opportunities to provide feedback on proposed market development priorities and contribute to the identification of future market challenges and opportunities. This collaborative approach will help ensure the final plan reflects a broad range of perspectives and provides a clear and credible roadmap for future market development.

Accountability

We are accountable for providing market, operational and technical expertise to support development of the Multi-Year Market Development Plan and ensure SONI’s strategic insights are reflected throughout the process. This includes supporting plan development, providing evidence-based recommendations, participating in stakeholder engagement, and contributing to consultation and publication activities. Progress will be demonstrated through delivery of plan inputs, consultation support and stakeholder engagement activities, helping to establish a clear strategic direction for future electricity market development in support of decarbonisation, security of supply and consumer value.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

- Decarbonisation** - Supports market developments needed to enable increased renewable generation and progress climate and energy targets.
- Grid Security** - Supports market arrangements that maintain secure and reliable system operation as technologies and system needs evolve
- System-Wide Costs** - Encourages efficient market design and investment signals that support the delivery of long-term value for consumers.
- Service Quality** - Promotes transparency, stakeholder engagement and effective market governance, building confidence in future market arrangements.
- Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs

Low	High	Medium	Very High
£0 - 500k	£500 k - £1m	£1m - £5m	£5m+

Strategic Markets Programme (SMP)

Project Overview

The Strategic Markets Programme (SMP) is a key enabler of the transition to an integrated and efficient all-island and European electricity market. The programme supports the delivery of actions identified through the Shaping Our Electricity Future Strategy and seeks to transform the arrangements for trading electricity and balancing services to meet the requirements of a decarbonised power system.

The project includes the implementation of new market arrangements required to support the future Single Day-Ahead Coupling (SDAC) and Single Intraday Coupling (SIDC) models, as well as preparations for enhanced market integration through the Celtic Interconnector. Through coordinated design, testing and implementation activities, the programme will ensure that market frameworks continue to support efficient cross-border trading, security of supply and the integration of increasing levels of renewable generation.

The outcomes of the programme will facilitate more efficient electricity trading across interconnected markets, improve access to European energy markets and support the delivery of lower-cost and more sustainable electricity systems for consumers.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Complete required system validation activities to support future market integration and Celtic Interconnector readiness - **March 2027**
- Complete market coupling testing required to support future market integration - **June 2027**

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Plan - Supports future market arrangements for renewable integration and interconnection



Deliver - Provides the systems and operational readiness for efficient market coupling and trading.



Operate - Supports secure and efficient market operation through access to wider electricity markets and interconnection capacity.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Supporting Decarbonisation through market arrangements that enable renewable participation and efficient cross-border trading.



Enhancing Market Efficiency through access to larger and more liquid European electricity markets.



Improving Security of Supply through greater use of interconnection and access to wider generation resources.



Reducing System-Wide Costs by improving competition and market efficiency.



Supporting Future Energy System Development through readiness for the Celtic Interconnector.

Service Ambition

This Programme reflects our ambition to deliver modern electricity market arrangements capable of supporting a highly renewable, interconnected and consumer-focused power system. As the energy transition accelerates and increasing levels of renewable generation connect to the network, it is essential that market arrangements evolve to maximise efficiency, flexibility and access to wider electricity markets.

Through this programme, we will deliver the market readiness, testing and validation activities required to facilitate future market integration, support enhanced cross-border electricity trading and enable more effective utilisation of interconnection assets. The programme will ensure that SONI can continue to operate within evolving European market frameworks while supporting competition, innovation and efficient market outcomes.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Programme will be delivered through close collaboration with EirGrid, market participants, regulatory authorities, European market operators and other key industry stakeholders. Engagement will also involve internal expertise across market development, operations, system planning, legal, regulatory and technology functions. Throughout the programme, stakeholders will contribute to the development, testing and implementation of future market arrangements, ensuring that solutions are practical, compliant with regulatory requirements and aligned with wider industry objectives. This engagement will support coordinated delivery across multiple organisations and jurisdictions, reflecting the interconnected nature of future electricity markets. We will maintain ongoing engagement with regulatory and industry governance forums to ensure transparency, effective decision-making and alignment with European market integration initiatives.

Accountability

We are accountable for delivering the readiness, testing and implementation activities required to support future market integration and enhanced interconnection arrangements. This includes programme delivery, market testing, governance activities and operational readiness to support future market coupling arrangements. Progress will be demonstrated through the completion of testing, approvals and readiness activities associated with future market integration and the Celtic Interconnector programme.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Supports renewable energy targets through market arrangements that increase renewable participation and optimise low-carbon energy use.



Grid Security - Strengthens security of supply through improved market access and more effective use of interconnection.



System-Wide Costs - Improves market efficiency and competition while optimising use of transmission infrastructure and reducing system costs.



Service Quality - Supports reliable and resilient electricity services by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of market operations.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs

Low

£0 - 500k

High

£500 k - £1m

Medium

£1m - £5m

Very High

£5m+

Summary of SONI Outcomes for Role 1

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Decarbonisation

Role 1 is supporting Northern Ireland's transition to a low-carbon electricity system by developing the operational capabilities, market arrangements and technical frameworks required to integrate higher levels of renewable generation. Projects including System Strength, Frequency Response from Wind, Hybrid Connections and Future Arrangements for System Services (FASS) are focused on removing barriers to renewable integration and enabling new technologies to play a greater role in system operation. The Multi-Year Market Development Plan and Strategic Markets Programme also support the evolution of market arrangements required for increasing renewable generation and future market integration. Through ongoing collaboration with industry participants, regulators, network companies and technology providers, these projects will support increased renewable utilisation, reduce reliance on conventional generation and contribute to Northern Ireland's renewable electricity and net zero ambitions.



Grid Security

Maintaining a secure and resilient electricity system remains at the heart of Role 1. Through projects such as the System Defence Plan, System Strength, Frequency Response from Wind and FASS, we are ensuring the power system can continue to operate securely as technologies and generation sources evolve. These projects strengthen system resilience, improve understanding of system behaviour and develop the operational arrangements and services required for a system with increasing renewable and inverter-based generation. Delivery is supported by engagement with EirGrid, NIE Networks, regulators, market participants and industry stakeholders to ensure future arrangements remain practical, evidence-based and aligned with the needs of the evolving electricity system.



System-Wide Costs

Role 1 is helping to deliver better value for consumers by developing more efficient approaches to operating the electricity system and enabling greater participation of low-carbon technologies. Hybrid Connections seeks to maximise utilisation of existing network infrastructure, reducing infrastructure and reinforcement requirements through more efficient use of existing capacity. System Strength and Frequency Response from Wind support more efficient use of system and renewable resources, while FASS, the Multi-Year Market Development Plan and Strategic Markets Programme support competitive procurement, efficient market development and more effective use of wider system resources. Collectively, these projects support more efficient system operation and long-term value for consumers.



Service Quality

Role 1 continues to improve service quality by combining technical innovation with transparent stakeholder engagement, collaboration and evidence-based decision-making. Through initiatives such as the Multi-Year Market Development Plan, Hybrid Connections, FASS, System Strength and Strategic Markets Programme, stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to future operational, market and connection arrangements. Consultation, industry working groups, technical engagement and collaboration with regulators, market participants and customers help ensure that proposed changes are practical, transparent and responsive to evolving system needs. Alongside the System Defence Plan and Frequency Response from Wind, these projects strengthen operational capability and resilience, helping maintain a secure and reliable electricity system throughout the energy transition.



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



NI Voice in Europe

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



Grid Code Management

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



Transparency

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



EU Network Code Implementations

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



Regulatory Engagement

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



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

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- **FWP26-09 Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG)**
SONI response to the NI Assembly consultation on the Renewable Energy Generation Bill submitted
- **FWP27-06 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027 -2032**
Implement Stakeholder Relationship KPI, appoint Stakeholder Champions across the business, develop and launch the Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit, and deliver the Stakeholder Engagement Workshop.
- **FWP27-07 Tomorrows Energy Scenarios (TES) 2027**
Publish and consult on the draft TES 2027 Scenarios, seeking stakeholder feedback on the range of future electricity system pathways

- **FWP26-07 Plan-Led Electricity System Development**
Submit recommendations to the Utility Regulator on plan-led electricity system development, required reforms, and future implementation actions

- **FWP27-08 SONI Role Awareness Campaign**
Develop the phased multi-channel awareness campaign



- **FWP26-07 Plan-Led Electricity System Development**
Development of a Net Zero Transmission Plan informed by TES scenarios and stakeholder engagement
- **FWP27-07 Tomorrows Energy Scenarios (TES) 2027** Complete modelling and analysis of TES 2027 scenarios, taking account of consultation responses and stakeholder feedback.
- **FWP25-03 SRP27 Stakeholder Engagement**
Deliver stakeholder engagement to support the Utility Regulator's consultation on its draft determination
- **FWP26-09 Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG)**
SONI input provided to support the development and implementation of primary and secondary REPG legislation.
- **FWP27-05 Consumer Council Consumer Engagement**
Deliver SONI's agreed contribution to the group
- **FWP27-06 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027 -2036**
Deliver Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan 2026 - 27
- **FWP27-08 SONI Role Awareness Campaign**
Launch and deliver the phased multi-channel awareness campaign
- **FWP27-09 SONI Public Engagement Programme**
Transmission Network Community Engagement Programme
- **FWP27-10 Annual Innovation Report**
Publication of SONI's first Annual Innovation Report

Role 2 - Benefits Realisation

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	Project	Intended Outcome	Benefit Measure	Baseline	Target Benefit	Benefit Realisation
01	FWP25-03 SRP27 Stakeholder Engagement	Ensure the Business Plan reflects stakeholder priorities and benefits from meaningful scrutiny through the UR's draft determination consultation.	Number and breadth of stakeholder organisations participating in consultations, workshops and challenge processes.	Previous Price Control engagement included 6 Expert Challenge Group meetings and 3 webinars with utilities, industry experts and energy users	Broaden SRP27 participation across the SACG, consultation and wider engagement, increasing representation across relevant	Within 1 year
02	FWP26-07 Plan-Led Electricity System Development	Establish the evidence base and framework for a more coordinated approach to electricity system development and network investment.	Net Zero Transmission Plan adopted; renewable capacity supported through planned development approach (GW)	Predominantly application-led development approach	Enable coordinated, efficient network development to support Northern Ireland's transition to net zero.	3-5 years
03	FWP26-09 Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee	Support development of a renewable generation support mechanism that encourages investment and contributes to Northern Ireland's renewable electricity targets.	Renewable generation capacity supported by REPG framework (MW/GW); 500mw wind. In 1st auction.	No REPG framework currently exists and implementation remains dependent on progression of primary and secondary legislation.	Support legislative development and organisational readiness for the REPG platform, enabling renewable investment and route-to-market certainty.	3-5 years
04	FWP27-05 Consumer Council Consumer Engagement	Improve consumer, awareness, understanding and education on the energy transition. Publish an annual 'Voice of the Consumer' Report.	Consumer awareness/ understanding analysis from Consumer Council research	Current awareness level	Measurable improvement in consumer awareness and understanding of energy transition issues	1-3 years
05	FWP27-06 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027 -2032	Improve stakeholder relationships and engagement effectiveness	Stakeholder Satisfaction KPI score	Baseline KPI established in Year 1	Maintain or exceed KPI with annual review to benchmark KPI against industry standards and ensure target remains stretching and ambitious.	1-3 years
06	FWP27-07 Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios (TES)	Provide an evidence-based view of future energy pathways to inform policy, investment and system planning decisions.	Percentage of major planning, policy and investment decisions referencing TES assumptions	Existing TES scenarios and assumptions	TES adopted as the evidence base for 100% of major network planning and policy development activities.	1-3 years
07	FWP27-08 SONI Role Awareness Campaign	Increase public understanding of SONI's role and importance of its work and grid transmission projects to NI plc.	Website and digital analytics, media reach and sentiment, surveys and research.	Baseline – website and digital analytics, media reach and sentiment levels in Sept 2024.	Increase LinkedIn followers to 10,000, maintain a media score of 80+ and 25% Prime Positive coverage, and increase media reach by 5% year on year.	1-3 years
08	FWP27-09 SONI Public Engagement Programme	Build trust, improve community relationships and demonstrate tangible benefits for communities hosting transmission infrastructure.	Measured through fund applications, community participation, stakeholder trust and satisfaction, and documented project benefits.	Existing engagement arrangements and no dedicated Community Benefit Pilot.	Increase community participation, deliver projects with measurable local impact, and establish a trusted, enduring Community Benefit Scheme.	3-5 years
09	FWP27-09 Annual Innovation Report	Improve transparency and understanding of innovation activity supporting the future electricity system. Improve transparency and understanding of innovation	Number of innovation projects reported; quantified benefits realised (£m)	Innovation activity reported through individual initiatives	Demonstrate innovation projects delivering £1m to £10m of consumer, operational or system benefits	1-3 years

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Consumer Council Consumer Engagement

Project Overview

We will participate in the Consumer Engagement Working Group (CEWG), chaired by the Consumer Council, to support implementation of the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy through more connected and coordinated consumer engagement.

The CEWG will focus on improving consumer awareness, understanding and education; identifying current and emerging issues affecting domestic, micro and small business energy consumers; and sharing evidence and advice on how these issues can be addressed. The group will also support an annual Voice of the Consumer report from December 2027 and the establishment of an Energy Transition Expert Panel. CEWG membership brings together consumer and community representatives, regulators and the energy industry, with meetings held quarterly.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Deliver SONI’s agreed contribution to the Consumer Engagement Working Group, supporting coordinated consumer engagement, evidence-sharing and best practice - **September 2027**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Advise** - Contributes consumer evidence and insight to inform energy policy, communications and delivery.
-  **Plan** - Ensures consumer perspectives are considered in planning for the energy transition and future infrastructure.
-  **Deliver** - Supports coordinated engagement that builds understanding of the changes required.
-  **Operate** - Uses emerging consumer insight to inform how system changes are communicated and implemented.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Improving consumer understanding** through coordinated information and education on the energy transition.
-  **Strengthening consumer insight** by identifying emerging issues affecting domestic, micro and small business consumers.
-  **Supporting collaboration** by sharing evidence, learning and good practice across consumer, community, regulatory and industry organisations.
-  **Building informed support** by helping consumers understand the need for grid investment and wider energy system change

Service Ambition

Through our participation in the Consumer Engagement Working Group, we will support a more coordinated, informed and consumer-focused approach to the energy transition. By contributing evidence, insight and communications expertise, we will help improve consumer understanding of energy system change, strengthen the use of consumer perspectives in policy and delivery, and support more consistent engagement across the energy sector. This collaborative approach will help build confidence in the changes required to deliver a lower-carbon electricity system, while ensuring consumer needs and concerns are better understood and reflected in future decision-making.

Stakeholder Engagement

We will work collaboratively with the Consumer Council and other CEWG members through quarterly meetings, coordinated engagement activities and evidence-sharing. We will contribute relevant stakeholder and consumer insight, support good practice in communications and engagement, and participate in the development of the annual Voice of the Consumer report.

Consumer perspectives and emerging issues identified through the CEWG will help inform our engagement, communications and planning activities, ensuring that consumer needs and concerns are better understood and reflected in the delivery of the energy transition.

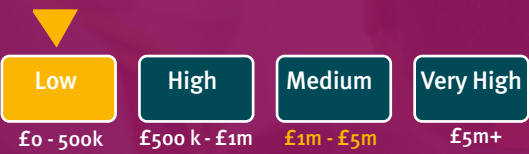
The work will be supported by an Energy Transition Expert Panel, providing independent best-practice advice and challenge. Delivery of the wider CEWG objectives is shared across the membership and is not solely within our control.

Accountability

We are accountable for delivering our agreed contribution to the CEWG, including participation in coordinated engagement activities, sharing relevant evidence and insight, and contributing to shared outputs. Progress will be demonstrated through active participation in the work programme, contribution to the annual Voice of the Consumer report and other agreed outputs, and evidence that consumer insights have informed our engagement, communications and decision-making activities. The CEWG’s collective governance and reporting arrangements will provide wider oversight of delivery.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Improves understanding of the energy transition and the changes needed to support it.
-  **Grid Security** - Helps explain the need for investment in a secure and reliable electricity system.
-  **System-Wide Costs** - Supports more coordinated engagement and shared learning across participating organisations.
-  **Service Quality** - Promotes clearer, more consistent and consumer-focused communication and engagement.
-  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs



Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027-2032

Project Overview

We will embed and deliver the first year of our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027-2032. The multi-year strategy sets out how we will engage throughout the next price control period and introduces a continuous improvement framework for more purposeful, transparent and measurable engagement.

Delivery will be supported by a year-one implementation plan, clear governance, engagement planning, internal training, stakeholder insight processes and annual reporting. Key actions include implementing a Stakeholder Relationship KPI, appointing Stakeholder Champions, developing an internal toolkit, delivering a workshop, maintaining a central engagement tracker and continuing development of an internal Stakeholder Relationship Dashboard.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Implement Stakeholder Relationship KPI, appoint Stakeholder Champions across the business, develop and launch the Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit, and deliver the Stakeholder Engagement Workshop - **December 2026**
- Deliver Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan 2026 – 27 - **September 2027**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Advise** - Strengthens our ability to use stakeholder insight when providing advice and shaping decisions.
-  **Plan** - Ensures stakeholder needs and expectations are considered consistently in business and system planning.
-  **Deliver** - Provides clear tools, governance and action planning to support effective engagement across SONI.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Strengthening relationships** through more purposeful, consistent and coordinated engagement.
-  **Building internal capability** through clear tools, training, governance and Stakeholder Champions.
-  **Increasing transparency** through forward-looking action plans, central tracking and annual evaluation reporting.
-  **Demonstrating impact** through agreed KPIs and evidence of how engagement has influenced our work.

Service Ambition

This strategy will embed a more structured, measurable and evidence-based approach to stakeholder engagement across SONI. Through the introduction of new governance arrangements, performance measures, stakeholder relationship management tools and internal capability development, we will strengthen how stakeholder insight is captured, shared and applied in decision-making.

Over time, this will improve the quality, consistency and transparency of engagement, provide clearer evidence of impact, and support better decision-making across SONI. By ensuring stakeholder perspectives are more effectively integrated into planning, operational and strategic activities, the strategy will contribute to improved service quality, more informed delivery of the energy transition, and stronger outcomes for customers and stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement

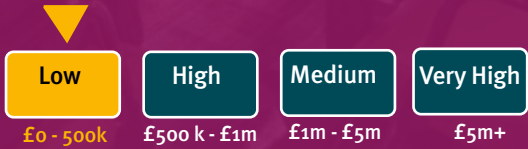
The strategy has been co-developed through stakeholder feedback gathered via one-to-one consultation sessions, consultation roundtables, a Call for Views, the independent stakeholder engagement audit and EPF panel feedback. During delivery, annual action planning will provide advance visibility of key engagement activities, target audiences, lead owners and timelines. Internally, a central tracker will record engagement activity, actions and stakeholder insights, while the Stakeholder Relationship Dashboard will support ongoing monitoring of relationship trends and follow-up. The Annual Engagement Evaluation Dashboard will provide a published view of engagement performance against agreed success measures.

Accountability

Accountability will be embedded through clear governance arrangements, named lead owners, the Stakeholder Relationship KPI, central tracking and annual evaluation reporting. Progress will be demonstrated through delivery of the implementation plan, performance against agreed KPIs, evidence of how stakeholder insight has influenced decisions, and transparent reporting through the Stakeholder Relationship Dashboard and Annual Engagement Evaluation Dashboard.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Supports earlier and more informed engagement on the changes required for the energy transition.
-  **Grid Security** - Helps ensure stakeholder insight informs planning and delivery of a secure, reliable system.
-  **System-Wide Costs** - Supports more efficient and effective engagement by improving coordination, tracking and shared learning.
-  **Service Quality** - Improves the consistency, transparency and responsiveness of stakeholders' experience of engaging with SONI.
-  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs



Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2027

Project Overview

Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios (TES) 2027 is our strategic energy futures programme that explores possible pathways for Northern Ireland's energy system through to 2050. Building on previous TES publications, this project will develop a range of credible scenarios that reflect changing energy policy, increasing electrification, decarbonisation objectives, low carbon technology adoption, and evolving generation technologies.

The project will utilise whole energy system modelling and extensive stakeholder engagement to assess how electricity demand, generation, storage, and wider energy sector developments may evolve. The resulting scenarios will provide an evidence-based foundation for transmission planning, investment decision-making, and energy policy development, supporting Northern Ireland's transition to a net-zero energy system. The scenarios will also inform assessment of future system needs and enable least worst regret evaluation of potential network and system development options.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Publish and consult on the draft TES 2027 Scenarios, seeking stakeholder feedback on the range of future electricity system pathways - **October 2026**
- Complete modelling and analysis of TES 2027 scenarios, taking account of consultation responses and stakeholder feedback - **June 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Support Decarbonisation by mapping pathways to net-zero electricity by 2050.



Enable Network Planning through future-focused energy and demand forecasts.



Inform Policy & Investment with evidence-based scenario analysis.



Strengthen Collaboration across government, regulators, industry and network operators.



Deliver Consumer Value by supporting efficient investment and reducing unnecessary costs.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Plan - Develop future energy scenarios to support Northern Ireland's energy transition.



Deliver - Provide evidence-based insights to inform investment, policy and network planning.



Operate - Identify future system needs, risks and opportunities to support a secure, efficient electricity system.

Service Ambition

TES 2027 will be developed through extensive engagement with key stakeholders, including the Utility Regulator, Department for the Economy, DAERA, NIE Networks, the Gas Market Operator, industry participants, academia and wider energy sector stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement will inform scenario assumptions, modelling inputs and future pathway development, ensuring the scenarios reflect a broad range of perspectives, emerging trends and policy considerations. Public consultation will play a key role in refining and validating the final scenarios and improving confidence in the resulting evidence base.

Stakeholder Engagement

TES 2027 will be developed through extensive engagement with key stakeholders, including the Utility Regulator, Department for the Economy, DAERA, NIE Networks, the Gas Market Operator, industry participants, academia and wider energy sector stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement will inform scenario assumptions, modelling inputs and future pathway development, ensuring the scenarios reflect a broad range of perspectives, emerging trends and policy considerations. Public consultation will play a key role in refining and validating the final scenarios and improving confidence in the resulting evidence base.

Accountability

We are accountable for delivering the TES 2027 programme, including completion of whole-energy-system modelling, stakeholder engagement activities, consultation processes and publication of the final report. Progress will be demonstrated through publication and consultation on the draft TES 2027 scenarios, completion of modelling and scenario analysis, consideration of stakeholder feedback, governance approvals and publication of the final TES 2027 report. Success will be measured through delivery of these milestones and the provision of a robust evidence base to support future planning and investment decisions.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Identifies credible pathways to achieve a net-zero electricity system and maximise renewable integration.



Grid Security - Identifies future system security requirements arising from changes in demand, generation and technology adoption.



System-Wide Costs - Enables more efficient long-term investment decisions helping to minimise overall system costs.



Service Quality - Supports a resilient and reliable electricity system that meets future customer needs.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs

Low

£0 - 500k

High

£500 k - £1m

Medium

£1m - £5m

Very High

£5m+

SONI Role Awareness Campaign

Project Overview

As Northern Ireland’s Transmission System Operator, we have a central role in planning and operating the electricity system and supporting the transition to a cleaner energy future. However, our role and responsibilities are not always widely understood. With significant changes required across the electricity system, consumers, communities and stakeholders need clear, accessible information about our work, why it is needed and how it contributes to Northern Ireland’s energy future.

We will therefore develop and deliver a phased, multi-channel public engagement and communications campaign to increase awareness and understanding of SONI’s role and its contribution to the energy transition.

The campaign will use media relations, digital communications, thought leadership, marketing and advocacy activity, supported by clear and consistent messaging. It will explain SONI’s purpose, responsibilities and work, helping to build public and stakeholder understanding, trust and informed support for SONI and the changes required across the electricity system.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Develop the phased multi-channel awareness campaign - **January 2027**
- Launch and deliver the phased multi-channel awareness campaign - **September 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Increasing awareness** by clearly explaining our purpose, responsibilities and role in Northern Ireland’s energy future.
-  **Building trust and confidence** through consistent, accessible and evidence-based communication.
-  **Improving message consistency** by coordinating communications across media, digital, marketing, thought leadership and advocacy channels.
-  **Supporting informed engagement** by giving public and stakeholder audiences a clearer understanding of our work and why it matters.

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Advise** - Explains SONI’s independent role and provides accessible information on the electricity system and energy transition.
-  **Plan** - Builds understanding of why long-term system planning and grid investment are required.
-  **Deliver** - Supports informed public and stakeholder engagement on SONI’s work and infrastructure delivery.
-  **Operate** - Improves understanding of SONI’s responsibility for operating a secure and reliable transmission system delivery.

Service Ambition

This project will improve awareness and understanding of our role, responsibilities and contribution to Northern Ireland’s energy future through a coordinated and proactive programme of public engagement and communications. By adopting a more structured, multi-channel approach to communications, we will provide clearer, more accessible and more consistent information about the operation of the electricity system and the changes required to support the energy transition.

Over time, this will support more informed stakeholder and public engagement, strengthen understanding of the need for system and network development, and build greater trust and confidence in SONI’s role in delivering a secure, reliable and sustainable electricity system.

Stakeholder Engagement

The campaign has been informed by feedback from non-industry stakeholders gathered through the brand refresh project, which identified a need for greater awareness and understanding of SONI’s role, responsibilities and contribution to Northern Ireland’s energy future.

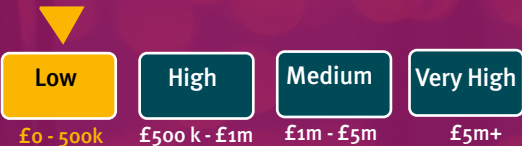
Delivery will use a coordinated mix of earned, owned and paid communications channels, including media, digital content, thought leadership, marketing and advocacy activities. Stakeholder feedback and audience insights will continue to inform campaign development, messaging and evaluation throughout delivery.

Accountability

Delivery will be managed through a phased campaign plan with defined development and launch milestones. Performance will be assessed through delivery of the campaign, social media and digital engagement metrics, media sentiment analysis, and evidence of reach and engagement across target audiences. These measures will be used to assess improvements in awareness, understanding and engagement over the lifetime of the campaign.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Builds understanding of SONI’s role in enabling Northern Ireland’s energy transition.
-  **Grid Security** - Explains SONI’s responsibility for maintaining a secure and reliable transmission system.
-  **System-Wide Costs** - Supports clearer public understanding of the need for efficient, coordinated grid investment.
-  **Service Quality** - Provides clearer, more consistent and accessible information across communications channels.
-  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs



Plan-Led Electricity System Development

Project Overview

In 2025/26, we began exploring how a more plan-led approach to electricity system development could support Northern Ireland’s energy policy objectives, decarbonisation ambitions and future system needs. The current framework can be described as “developer led”, with investment and capacity allocation driven by individual connection applications and the order in which projects come forward. While this approach has enabled the connection of a significant volume of projects, it can lead to reactive investment and reinforcement of the transmission system – primarily driven by the commercial decisions of developers with regard to project scale, location and technology which often don’t align with longer-term strategic needs for NI consumers.

A more plan-led approach would align network development and customer access arrangements with anticipated future system requirements and energy policy objectives. Under this model, strategic planning would identify future generation, demand, flexibility and security needs, enabling network investment and capacity allocation decisions to support these outcomes. The connection process would therefore evolve from primarily responding to applications toward becoming a key enabler of policy delivery and an efficient transition to a net zero energy system.

Building on the work that was delivered in 2025/26, this project will focus on developing a recommendations paper identifying the policy, regulatory, licence, legislative and connection process reforms that may be required to support a more strategic and coordinated approach to network development and customer access arrangements. In parallel, we will develop a Net Zero Transmission Plan, informed by Tomorrow’s Energy Scenarios (TES), which will identify the strategic transmission network developments that may be required to support Northern Ireland’s transition to net zero. Together, these outputs will provide policymakers, regulators and industry stakeholders with an evidence-based assessment of future network requirements and potential enabling reforms.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

- 

Supports the transition towards a more coordinated and strategic approach to electricity system development.
- 

Improves understanding of the transmission network required to deliver Northern Ireland’s net zero ambition.
- 

Identifies the policy, regulatory, legislative, licensing and connection reforms needed to support implementation.
- 

Provides greater certainty and transparency for customers, developers and investors.
- 

Helps optimise long-term system investment and deliver value for consumers.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Submit recommendations to the Utility Regulator on plan-led electricity system development, required reforms, and future implementation actions. - **January 2027**
- Development of a Net Zero Transmission Plan informed by TES scenarios and stakeholder engagement - **September 2027**

Service Ambition

Our ambition is to support the transition from a predominantly application-led approach to a more strategic and coordinated framework for electricity system development. Through the development of a recommendations paper and Net Zero Transmission Plan, the project will provide a clearer view of future transmission network requirements and identify potential reforms to support their efficient delivery, helping to align infrastructure development with Northern Ireland’s long-term energy objectives.

Stakeholder Engagement

Regulatory engagement will support the development of recommendations relating to customer access arrangements and the policy, licence and regulatory changes that may be required to enable a more plan-led approach. This project will be informed through the Tomorrows Energy Scenarios (TES) process and targeted engagement with the Utility Regulator and other key stakeholders. TES engagement with government, network companies, industry participants, academia and the wider energy sector will inform the assumptions and evidence underpinning the Net Zero Transmission Plan. Regulatory engagement will support the development of recommendations relating to customer access arrangements and the policy, licence and regulatory changes that may be required to enable a more plan-led approach.

Accountability

We are responsible for planning and operating the transmission system in a safe, secure, efficient and economic manner. This project supports those responsibilities by identifying future transmission network requirements and evaluating opportunities for a more strategic, coordinated and plan-led approach to electricity system development. Successful delivery of the project will provide a robust evidence base to inform future network investment decisions, support consideration of policy and regulatory reforms, and help facilitate a more coordinated and efficient pathway to achieving Northern Ireland’s energy transition objectives.

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- 

Advise - Provides recommendations to policymakers and regulators on reforms needed to support a more plan-led electricity system.
- 

Plan - Develops a long-term view of transmission network needs and customer access arrangements.
- 

Deliver - Supports coordinated infrastructure development through strategic network investments and enabling reforms.
- 

Operate - Ensures future planning arrangements support system operability, resilience and security.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

- 

Decarbonisation - Supports transmission infrastructure and enabling frameworks required to achieve net zero.
- 

Grid Security - Identifies network developments required to maintain a secure and resilient electricity system.
- 

System-Wide Costs - Supports efficient long-term network investment and reduces unnecessary infrastructure development.
- 

Service Quality - Provides a strategic framework to support timely network development and improve visibility of future network requirements.
- 

Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs



SONI SRP27 Stakeholder Engagement Programme

Project Overview

Stakeholder engagement is central to the development and assessment of our Business Plan for the 2027-2032 price control period. Our aim is to ensure the plan is informed by a broad range of stakeholder perspectives and reflects the needs of consumers, industry, government, the Utility Regulator and the wider energy sector.

The engagement programme began early in the development of the Business Plan and has included consumer research, strategic workshops, bilateral meetings, formal consultation and scrutiny through the Stakeholder Advisory and Challenge Group. This created opportunities for stakeholders to help shape our priorities, challenge our proposals and provide feedback as the plan developed.

Following submission of our Business Plan to the Utility Regulator in August 2026, the programme has moved into its next phase. While awaiting the Utility Regulator's draft determination, we will continue to respond to regulatory queries, provide supporting information and engage with stakeholders on the Business Plan and the wider price control process. Following publication of the draft determination, we will support stakeholder participation in the Utility Regulator's consultation and provide clear information on the determination and its potential implications.

Through this ongoing, transparent and iterative approach, stakeholder insight will continue to inform our response to the price control process and the future delivery of our Business Plan.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Deliver stakeholder engagement to support the Utility Regulator's consultation on its draft determination - **September 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Strengthening stakeholder influence through meaningful engagement and challenge across the price control process.



Supporting transparency through clear communication on the regulatory process and its implications.



Improving accountability by demonstrating how stakeholder feedback shapes decisions and responses.



Enabling informed participation through accessible information and consultation support.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Advise - Uses stakeholder evidence, consumer research and sector insight to inform our regulatory proposals and our responses to the Utility Regulator.



Plan - Ensures stakeholder needs and priorities are considered in the assessment and future delivery of the 2027-2032 Business Plan.



Deliver - Supports transparent delivery by maintaining stakeholder involvement and clearly communicating how feedback and regulatory decisions affect the final plan.

Service Ambition

This programme builds on the enhanced stakeholder engagement undertaken during development of the SRP27 Business Plan, embedding participation throughout the wider price control process. Stakeholders will continue to have opportunities to challenge, influence and shape understanding of proposals and regulatory decisions through ongoing dialogue, independent scrutiny and engagement in the draft determination process. By strengthening transparency, stakeholder influence and independent challenge, the programme will support informed decisions, greater accountability and confidence in the plans and investments needed to deliver our long-term outcomes.

Stakeholder Engagement

The programme is built around early, structured and ongoing engagement, with stakeholder input shaping the Business Plan through research, workshops, bilateral engagement, formal consultation and the Stakeholder Advisory and Challenge Group. During 2026/27, we will continue independent scrutiny, regulatory engagement and stakeholder participation throughout the price control process, including the draft determination consultation. We will demonstrate how stakeholder feedback and regulatory decisions influence the final plan and its delivery, strengthening transparency, accountability and stakeholder influence.

Accountability

We submitted our Business Plan to the Utility Regulator in August 2026 following an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement. We remain accountable for supporting the assessment and determination process through timely responses to regulatory queries, supporting evidence and continued stakeholder engagement. Progress will be demonstrated through engagement on the draft determination, continued independent challenge through the Stakeholder Advisory and Challenge Group, and clear evidence of how stakeholder feedback and regulatory decisions influence the final Business Plan and its delivery. Success will be measured through stakeholder participation, delivery of planned engagement activities and a transparent audit trail demonstrating how stakeholder views have informed our approach.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Supports planning for the investment and activity needed to enable Northern Ireland's renewable energy and net zero targets.



Grid Security - Builds confidence in plans designed to maintain a secure and reliable electricity system.



System-Wide Costs - Uses stakeholder insight to help shape efficient proposals and deliver value for consumers.



Service Quality - Strengthens trust, transparency and accountability through meaningful engagement and clear communication.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs



Low	High	Medium	Very High
£0 - 500k	£500 k - £1m	£1m - £5m	£5m+

SONI Public Engagement Programme

Project Overview

The SONI Public Engagement Programme will establish a pilot Community Benefit Scheme, with UR approval, for communities hosting electricity transmission infrastructure. The programme will develop the framework for a future Community Benefit Scheme for communities hosting electricity transmission infrastructure. During 2026/27, the programme will focus on developing the governance, engagement and delivery arrangements required to support future implementation, while strengthening engagement with affected communities.

Measure & Timescales

- Transmission Network Community Engagement Programme: Establish structures and governance for delivery of the Community Benefit Pilot - **September 2027**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Advise** - Applies learning from development of the pilot scheme to inform regulatory discussions and the design of an enduring Community Benefit model.
-  **Plan** - Supports the development of future community engagement and benefit approaches for transmission infrastructure investments.
-  **Deliver** - Establishes governance structures and operational arrangements to successfully launch and manage the Community Benefit Pilot.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Supporting stronger community relationships** through engagement and benefits linked to transmission infrastructure investment.
-  **Improving understanding** of how transmission infrastructure supports Northern Ireland’s energy transition.
-  **Creating an evidence base** to inform future community benefit arrangements and regulatory decisions.
-  **Building trust** between SONI, UR and local communities through open engagement and collaborative working.

Service Ambition

This programme seeks to establish a new approach for engaging with communities affected by transmission infrastructure by developing a Pilot Community Benefit Scheme.

Through development of the pilot, working with DfE and the UR, we will gain experience and insight into how community benefits can be structured, governed and administered. The lessons learned from development of the pilot will support consideration of a future enduring model that delivers value to communities while supporting the development of critical electricity infrastructure. The programme aims to create a transparent, effective and community-focused framework that strengthens trust and supports constructive engagement on future network developments

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement will be fundamental to the successful design of the Community Benefit Pilot. Throughout the programme, we will work closely with the Utility Regulator and other key stakeholders to ensure the pilot is developed in a transparent and collaborative manner. Engagement activities will focus on establishing appropriate governance arrangements, securing the necessary regulatory approvals and communicating clearly on the objectives, scope and operation of the pilot scheme. Feedback and insights gathered during the design of the pilot will be used to identify lessons learned and inform recommendations for a potential enduring Community Benefit model.

Accountability

The SONI Public Engagement Programme is accountable for establishing the governance structures, stakeholder engagement arrangements, governance approvals and delivery framework required to successfully implement the Community Benefit Pilot once it secures approval from the UR.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Supports renewable integration through enhanced community engagement for transmission development.
 -  **Grid Security** - Helps facilitate the development and acceptance of infrastructure required to maintain a secure and reliable electricity system.
 -  **System-Wide Costs** - Tests community benefit approaches to inform future customer and community value.
 -  **Service Quality** - Strengthens stakeholder and community relationships through transparent engagement and equitable benefit delivery.
 -  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs
- ▼

Low	High	Medium	Very High
£0 - 500k	£500 k - £1m	£1m - £5m	£5m+

Annual Innovation Report

Project Overview

Innovation plays a critical role in delivering a secure, affordable and decarbonised electricity system. Through our Technology Enablement function, SONI is progressing a programme of innovation activities focused on renewable integration, system flexibility, security of supply and consumer value. This project will deliver SONI's first Annual Innovation Report, providing a transparent overview of innovation activities across the organisation and demonstrating how innovation is supporting strategic objectives and the energy transition. Drawing on projects, research and emerging technology initiatives, the report will showcase progress, outcomes, lessons learned and future opportunities. The report will increase visibility of innovation activity, strengthen knowledge sharing and provide stakeholders with greater insight into how innovation is contributing to renewable integration, system resilience and the efficient operation of the electricity system. Through this work, we will establish a structured approach to innovation reporting and support informed discussion on future innovation priorities for Northern Ireland's electricity sector.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Publication of SONI's first Annual Innovation Report - **September 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Increasing transparency by reporting on SONI's innovation activities, outcomes and future opportunities.



Accelerating innovation adoption by sharing research insights and emerging technology developments.



Strengthening stakeholder collaboration by engaging industry partners to shape innovation priorities.



Supporting informed decision-making by demonstrating innovation's contribution to decarbonisation, grid security and consumer value.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Advise - Provides insight on innovative technologies and future opportunities across the electricity sector.



Plan - Supports the development of future system solutions required to facilitate the energy transition.



Deliver - Demonstrates progress against our innovation activities and associated projects.



Operate - Identifies new technologies and approaches that can improve system operation and performance.

Service Ambition

This project will establish a transparent and structured approach to reporting on innovation across SONI, providing greater visibility of how research, technology and innovation activities contribute to strategic objectives and the delivery of a secure, affordable and decarbonised electricity system. Through the publication of our first Annual Innovation Report, we will showcase innovation activities, outcomes, lessons learned and future opportunities across the organisation. The report will support knowledge sharing, highlight innovation's contribution to renewable integration, system resilience and operational efficiency, and help inform future innovation priorities.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Annual Innovation Report will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, including EirGrid, NIE Networks, Regulatory Authorities, industry participants, technology providers, academic institutions and consumer representatives. Stakeholder engagement will help identify innovation opportunities, share learning and best practice, and gather insights on emerging technologies and solutions. Stakeholder input will help ensure the report reflects industry priorities, captures a broad range of perspectives and highlights innovation activities that support the evolving electricity system. The report will provide a transparent overview of innovation activities and create opportunities to share outcomes, lessons learned and future opportunities across the wider energy sector.

Accountability

We are accountable for establishing the governance, reporting arrangements and stakeholder engagement required to support the development and publication of our first Annual Innovation Report. Progress will be demonstrated through stakeholder engagement activities, governance oversight, the collection and assessment of innovation activities across the organisation, and publication of the report. Success will be measured through the delivery of a transparent and evidence-based report that showcases innovation outcomes, lessons learned and future opportunities that support a secure, sustainable and efficient electricity system.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Accelerates adoption of innovative technologies that support renewable integration and decarbonisation.



Grid Security - Strengthens power system resilience through development and sharing of innovative operational solutions.



System-Wide Costs - Supports more efficient use of existing assets and identifies opportunities to reduce future system costs.



Service Quality - Increases transparency, stakeholder collaboration and customer value through publication of innovation outcomes and learning.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs

Low

£0 - 500k

High

£500 k - £1m

Medium

£1m - £5m

Very High

£5m+

Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG)

Project Overview

The Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG) programme supports the development of Northern Ireland’s first renewable electricity support scheme and remains a key enabler of the transition to a low-carbon electricity system. The programme was established in response to Northern Ireland’s commitment to achieve at least 80% renewable electricity consumption by 2030 and is intended to provide a route-to-market for renewable electricity generators, increasing investor confidence and supporting the deployment of new renewable generation.

Progress towards implementation during 2025/26 was dependent on the development and progression of primary and secondary legislation led by the Department for the Economy (DfE). As the legislative framework required to establish the scheme was not finalised, planned implementation activities, including auction platform development and preparations for auction delivery, could not proceed.

During 2026/27, we will continue to support DfE and other stakeholders through the legislative development process, providing technical and operational expertise to help shape the scheme and support future implementation. Subject to legislative progression, we will contribute to implementation planning and readiness activities required to enable the efficient delivery of the scheme. The successful introduction of REPG will support renewable investment, accelerate decarbonisation and help create the conditions necessary to achieve Northern Ireland’s renewable electricity targets while delivering long-term benefits for consumers.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- SONI response to the consultation on the Renewable Energy Generation Bill submitted - **October 2026**
- SONI input provided to support the development and implementation of primary and secondary REPG legislation - **September 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Supporting Decarbonisation by developing a renewable support mechanism that encourages



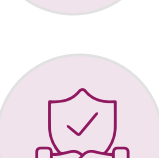
Providing Investor Confidence through a stable and transparent framework



Supporting Energy Strategy Targets by creating the conditions needed to achieve Northern Ireland’s renewable electricity ambitions.



Reducing Long-Term Consumer Costs by increasing renewable generation and reducing reliance on volatile fossil fuel markets.



Preparing for Implementation through technical support, legislative engagement and readiness planning.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Advise - Supports renewable support arrangements through technical, operational and market expertise.



Plan - Supports strategic planning for the market and operational arrangements needed to enable large-scale renewable deployment.



Deliver - Supports readiness for and future implementation of the REPG scheme, subject to legislative approval.



Operate - Enables renewable investment and prepares the electricity system for future market and operational needs.

Service Ambition

The REPG programme supports Northern Ireland’s energy transition by helping develop market mechanisms that encourage renewable investment and accelerate decarbonisation. By providing technical and operational expertise, we are helping prepare a practical and effective scheme that can attract investment, enable renewable deployment, and support a secure, affordable and sustainable electricity system, subject to legislative approval.

Stakeholder Engagement

The REPG programme will be delivered through close collaboration with the Department for the Economy, the Utility Regulator, Northern Ireland Assembly representatives and wider industry stakeholders. We will support the legislative and policy development process by providing technical expertise, operational insight and market experience to help ensure that emerging arrangements are practical, deliverable and aligned with power system requirements. Engagement activities will include consultation responses, participation in governance and working groups, legislative discussions and collaboration with stakeholders involved in scheme development. This collaborative approach will help ensure that the REPG framework reflects stakeholder needs, supports renewable investment and can be implemented effectively once the required legislative framework is established.

Accountability

We are accountable for providing the technical expertise, market knowledge and operational support required from SONI to support development of the Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG) scheme. While we are not responsible for progressing or approving legislation, we support the Department for the Economy through consultation responses, technical advice, implementation planning and readiness activities. We are also responsible for ensuring we are prepared to undertake future scheme responsibilities once the legislative and regulatory framework is established. Progress will be demonstrated through consultation responses, legislative support, programme governance participation, technical advice and readiness activities. These outputs will provide assurance that we remain prepared to support implementation of the scheme and contribute to Northern Ireland’s renewable energy ambitions

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Supports increased deployment of renewable generation through development of a renewable electricity support mechanism.



Grid Security - Supports security of supply through investment in indigenous renewable generation.



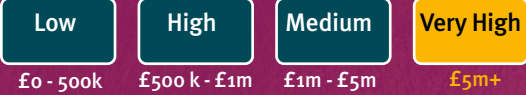
System-Wide Costs - Supports competitive renewable generation to reduce long-term system costs and exposure to fuel price volatility.



Service Quality - Supports long-term security of supply by enabling development of generation resources required to meet future demand.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs





Summary of SONI Outcomes for Role 2



Decarbonisation

Supporting Northern Ireland's transition to a net-zero electricity system requires robust evidence, effective stakeholder engagement and informed policy development. Through projects such as Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios (TES) 2027, Plan-Led Electricity System Development, Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG), the Annual Innovation Report and the Consumer Council Consumer Engagement Working Group, we are helping to identify future system requirements, support investment in renewable generation, inform policy and market development, and build understanding of the changes required to achieve decarbonisation. Together, these activities provide the evidence base, stakeholder input and strategic insight needed to accelerate renewable integration and support delivery of Northern Ireland's energy transition ambitions.



Grid Security

Maintaining a secure and resilient electricity system throughout the energy transition depends on long-term planning, evidence-based decision-making and stakeholder understanding. Through TES 2027, Plan-Led Electricity System Development and REPG, future demand, generation, transmission infrastructure and market requirements are being assessed to help ensure the electricity system remains reliable and adaptable as renewable penetration increases. Supported by stakeholder engagement, consumer engagement and public awareness initiatives, this work also helps build understanding of the investment, infrastructure and policy decisions required to maintain security of supply in a changing energy landscape.



System-Wide Costs

Delivering value for consumers requires coordinated planning, informed investment decisions and effective collaboration across the energy sector. Projects such as TES 2027, Plan-Led Electricity System Development and REPG provide the analysis and strategic insight needed to guide efficient network development, market design and future investment decisions, reducing the risk of reactive or inefficient expenditure. Through the Annual Innovation Report, stakeholder engagement programmes and consumer-focused initiatives, we are also improving transparency, promoting collaboration and supporting more informed decision-making. Collectively, these activities help create a more efficient electricity system and deliver better long-term value for consumers.



Service Quality

Improving transparency, engagement and public understanding is a core theme across the Role 2 portfolio. Projects including the SRP27 Business Plan Stakeholder Engagement Programme, Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027-2032, SONI Role Awareness Campaign, SONI Public Engagement Programme, Consumer Council Consumer Engagement Working Group and the Annual Innovation Report strengthen how we engage with stakeholders, communicate complex energy issues and demonstrate the value delivered through our activities. Together, these projects support stronger stakeholder and community relationships, improved public understanding, greater transparency and increased confidence in our role in planning and enabling Northern Ireland's future electricity system.



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 are responsible for planning the development 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 coordination with NIE Networks, the Transmission Asset Owner who is responsible for building, maintaining, 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, local planning authorities and government departments.

Summary of activities within Role 3



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 to NIE Networks for delivery, ensuring readiness for construction and operation.

Summary of Quarterly Deliverables

FWP25-04 Transmission Cluster Policy

Publication of the revised TCCMS for stakeholder consultation, incorporating the Proposed Transmission Cluster Policy

FWP26-10 Ten Year Transmission Forecast Statement 2026

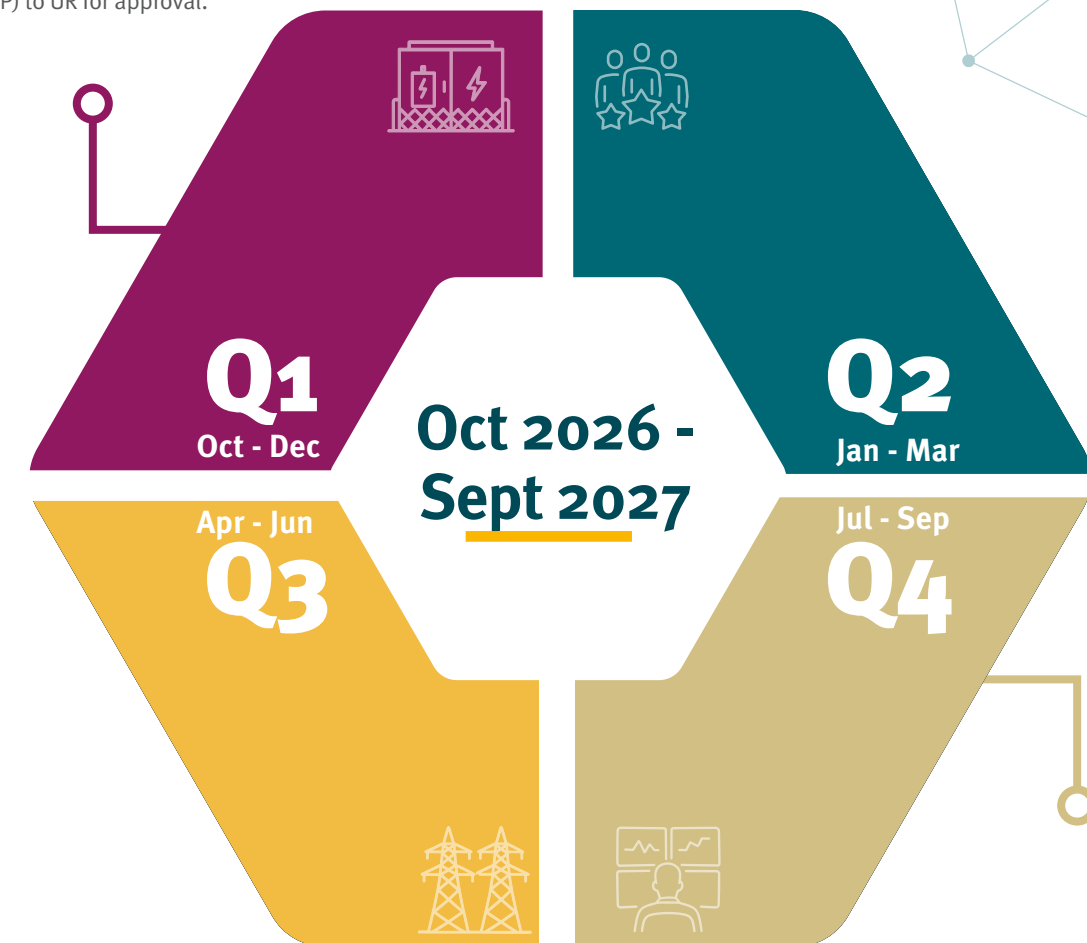
Submit redesigned Ten Year Transmission Forecast Statement to the UR for review and approval.

FWP26-13 Roe Cluster

Submit Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) to UR for approval.

FWP27-12 Kells 275kV Redevelopment

Submit Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) to UR for approval.



FWP25-07 Firm Access Quantity Methodology D

Publication of the Firm Access Quantity Calculation Methodology Decision Paper, setting out the final methodology and decision.

FWP26-12 Transmission Development Plan

Issue Transmission Development Plan 2027 for consultation

FWP27-11 Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment

Submit TNPP to UR for approval.

FWP27-13 Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment

Submit TNPP to UR for approval.

Role 3 - Benefits Realisation

	Project	Intended Outcome	Benefit Measure	Baseline	Target Benefit	Benefit Realisation
01	FWP25-04 Transmission Cluster Policy	Enable more coordinated connection of renewable generation through a cluster-based anticipatory development approach	Reduced dispatch down for new connections compared to the baseline	Existing developer-led connection approach with new connections into existing network	Enable cluster-based connections supporting 480MW of renewable generation, with scope for further clusters to follow.	5+ years
02	FWP25-07 Firm Access Quantity Methodology	Balance incentives for new generation with consumer protection from excessive constraint costs, while modernising firm access arrangements.	Stakeholder satisfaction with access arrangements; methodology implementation; reduction in methodology-related disputes	Methodology developed in 2013	Increased investment certainty and transparency through implementation of a modernised Firm Access framework.	1-3 years
03	FWP26-10 Ten Year Transmission Forecast	Provide significant increase in information on opportunities across the transmission network.	Stakeholder utilisation of TYTFS information	Existing TYTFS format	Provide a ten-year forecast of transmission opportunities and constraints, helping stakeholders identify locations for new projects.	Within 1 year
04	FWP26-10 Transmission Development Plan	Provide a coordinated long-term plan for transmission network development.	Publication and use of TDPNI; stakeholder confidence in planned network investments.	Existing transmission development plan.	Provide a coordinated transmission development plan to support secure system operation and delivery of the 80% RES-E target.	1-3 years
05	FWP26-13 Roe Cluster	Develop a strategic transmission hub to facilitate large-scale renewable generation connections.	New capacity for renewable generation provided (MVA); renewable energy delivered (GWh/year)	Already congested north-west transmission network with no spare transmission bays available	Deliver 480 MVA of capacity for new renewable generation, enabling over 1,000 GWh of additional renewable electricity annually when fully utilised.	5+ years
06	FWP27-11 Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment	Renew ageing transmission infrastructure and maintain long-term network resilience.	Asset health index; network availability; asset-related outage rate	Existing assets approaching end of operational life	Renew critical infrastructure and maintain secure operation of the transmission network for the next 40 years.	5+ years
07	FWP27-12 Kells 275kV Redevelopment	Renew ageing transmission infrastructure and maintain long-term network resilience.	Asset health index; network availability; asset-related outage rate	Existing assets approaching end of operational life	Renew critical infrastructure and maintain secure operation of the transmission network for the next 40 years.	5+ years
08	FWP27-13 Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment	Renew ageing transmission infrastructure and maintain long-term network resilience.	Asset health index; network availability; asset-related outage rate	Existing assets approaching end of operational life	Renew critical infrastructure and maintain secure operation of the transmission network for the next 40 years.	5+ years



Transmission Cluster Policy

Project Overview

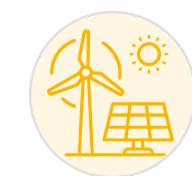
Our Transmission Cluster Policy is a Northern Ireland specific initiative designed to manage the significant increase in renewable connection applications expected in the coming years. Unlike the current developer-led approach, which can create inefficiencies where network capacity is constrained, the policy establishes a structured, localised framework tailored to Northern Ireland’s unique energy landscape. By enabling anticipatory investment, it supports more coordinated and cost-effective delivery of transmission infrastructure while ensuring alignment with Northern Ireland’s Energy Strategy, climate legislation and net zero ambitions. Delivery of the final policy proposal and decision paper has taken longer than originally anticipated due to the scale, complexity and strategic importance of the policy development required. Significant progress has nevertheless been made, including publication of a Position Paper in February 2026, which has since informed the development of related changes to the Transmission Connection Charging Methodology Statement (TCCMS). The revised timeline allows for further policy refinement and stakeholder engagement to ensure a robust and enduring framework is established.

During 2026/27, we will finalise the proposed policy, incorporate the required changes into the TCCMS, consult on the TCCMS and, subject to consultation outcomes, submit the final proposal for regulatory consideration and approval. This will provide a clear and efficient pathway for connecting large volumes of renewable generation and supporting the achievement of Northern Ireland’s renewable electricity and net zero targets.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Publication of the revised TCCMS for stakeholder consultation, incorporating the Proposed Transmission Cluster Policy – **December 2026**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Facilitating efficient integration of large volumes of renewable generation in areas where transmission capacity is constrained.



Supporting Northern Ireland’s decarbonisation objectives through a framework that enables timely connection of renewable projects.



Providing greater certainty and transparency for developers regarding future connection opportunities.



Supporting more coordinated transmission investment and long-term network planning.



Delivering value for consumers through a more efficient approach to infrastructure development.

Alignment to SONI Strategy

- 

Advise - Provides evidence-based guidance to the Utility Regulator, Department for the Economy and industry stakeholders on efficient approaches to renewable generation connections and transmission investment.
- 

Plan - Introduces a coordinated, plan-led approach to network development that anticipates future renewable connection requirements and supports long-term system needs.
- 

Deliver - Establishes the policy and charging framework required to facilitate efficient renewable connections and support delivery of strategic transmission infrastructure.

Service Ambition

This project demonstrates our ambition to transform how renewable generation is connected to Northern Ireland’s transmission system. By replacing a reactive, developer-led approach with a coordinated framework for network and connection planning, the Transmission Cluster Policy will enable anticipatory investment and more efficient infrastructure development. This innovative approach supports the large-scale growth in renewable generation needed to achieve Northern Ireland’s energy and climate objectives, while delivering a more transparent, efficient and future-focused network for consumers.

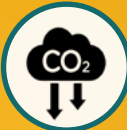
Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement has been integral to the development of the Transmission Cluster Policy. Feedback from the June 2025 consultation informed the February 2026 Position Paper, shaping the proposed policy design and response to stakeholder views. Ongoing engagement with the Utility Regulator, Department for the Economy, NIE Networks, developers and industry stakeholders has helped ensure the policy reflects sector needs. The proposals will now be incorporated into the revised TCCMS, which will be subject to further public consultation before submission to the Utility Regulator, ensuring continued transparency and stakeholder input.

Accountability

We are accountable for developing and implementing a transparent and efficient Transmission Cluster Policy that supports the connection of large volumes of renewable generation. This includes embedding the policy within the TCCMS, undertaking stakeholder consultation, assessing feedback and supporting regulatory approval. Accountability is demonstrated through ongoing engagement with the Utility Regulator, Department for the Economy, NIE Networks, developers and other stakeholders, ensuring decisions are transparent, evidence-based and clearly justified. Progress will be evidenced through publication of the revised TCCMS, stakeholder engagement activities and completion of the consultation process. Success will be measured by delivery of a robust policy framework that supports coordinated transmission investment, facilitates renewable integration, provides greater certainty for stakeholders and delivers long-term value for consumers.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

- 

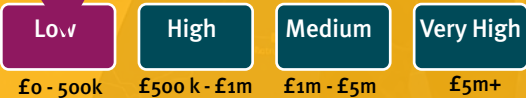
Decarbonisation - Enables efficient connection of renewable generation and supports delivery of Northern Ireland’s net zero and renewable energy ambitions.
- 

Grid Security - Supports coordinated transmission investment to maintain a secure and resilient power system.
- 

System-Wide Costs - Reduces inefficient network investment, delivering greater value for consumers.
- 

Service Quality - Provides greater transparency and certainty for stakeholders seeking to connect to the transmission system.
- 

Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs



Firm Access Quantity (FAQ) Methodology

Project Overview

Firm Access Quantity (FAQ) plays an important role in determining the extent to which generation can access the transmission system without being subject to dispatch down for network constraints. The current FAQ methodology has been in place since 2013 and was developed for a power system with significantly different generation technologies, market arrangements and policy objectives than those that exist today.

Building on the milestones delivered through the previous Forward Work Programme, including stakeholder consultation on the proposed changes to the FAQ Calculation Methodology, this project will progress the review to its next stage through publication of the final decision on the updated methodology. The revised methodology will incorporate more realistic dispatch modelling, consider the growing contribution of technologies such as solar PV and battery storage, and better reflect how different technologies interact across the power system.

The project includes updates to both the calculation methodology and supporting software tools to ensure the framework remains fit for purpose as the electricity system evolves. The revised approach will support investment in renewable and low-carbon generation, provide greater transparency regarding pathways to firm access and help balance the efficient use of the transmission system with the need to protect consumers from excessive constraint costs.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Publication of the Firm Access Quantity Calculation Methodology Decision Paper, setting out the final methodology and decision - **January 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Modernising the FAQ methodology** to reflect current technologies, market arrangements and policy objectives.
-  **Providing greater clarity** for developers on pathways and timelines for achieving firm access.
-  **Supporting investment** in renewable and low-carbon generation through transparent and predictable access arrangements.
-  **Improving the representation of dispatch outcomes** by incorporating a broader range of generation technologies and operating scenarios.
-  **Protecting consumers** by ensuring firm access arrangements appropriately consider network capability and constraint costs.

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Advise** - Provides evidence-based recommendations to the Utility Regulator and SEM Committee on the future design of firm access arrangements.
-  **Plan** - Aligns firm access arrangements with long-term transmission development requirements and the changing generation mix.
-  **Deliver** - Supports efficient investment through clearer, more transparent access arrangements.
-  **Operate** - Incorporates realistic dispatch modelling to support practical implementation.

Service Ambition

This project demonstrates our ambition to ensure that critical transmission access methodologies evolve alongside the changing needs of the electricity system. As renewable generation, battery storage and other low-carbon technologies become an increasingly significant part of the generation mix, existing approaches must be updated to remain fit for purpose. Through the FAQ Methodology Review, we will develop a modern framework that better reflects how the power system operates today and is expected to operate in the future. The revised methodology will provide stronger investment signals, improve transparency and support efficient network utilisation while maintaining an appropriate balance between facilitating renewable investment and protecting consumers from unnecessary costs.

Stakeholder Engagement

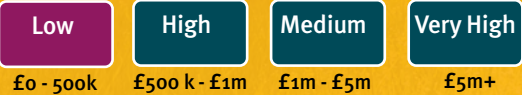
Stakeholder engagement has been central to the development of the revised FAQ Calculation Methodology. We have engaged closely with RenewableNI, the Utility Regulator, NIE Networks and other industry participants to discuss key issues and priorities and help shape the proposed approach. A public consultation on the proposed methodology changes was launched in August 2026, with stakeholder feedback informing the final design. Engagement with the Utility Regulator will continue throughout the process to support alignment on timelines and next steps. A decision paper will then be published to confirm the revised calculation methodology, ensuring transparency and meaningful stakeholder input at every stage.

Accountability

We are accountable for delivering a robust and evidence-based Firm Access Quantity methodology that reflects the evolving characteristics of the Northern Ireland electricity system. This includes assessing stakeholder feedback, finalising the revised methodology, implementing the required modelling and software updates, and publishing the Decision Paper setting out the final approach. Progress will be demonstrated through completion of the methodology review, stakeholder engagement activities, governance approvals and publication of the FAQ January 2027. Success will be measured through delivery of a transparent and modernised methodology that provides greater clarity for developers, supports efficient investment decisions and aligns firm access arrangements with the future needs of the electricity system.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Supports investment in renewable and low-carbon generation through transparent and robust access arrangements.
-  **Grid Security** - Supports secure system operation by aligning firm access arrangements with transmission system capabilities.
-  **System-Wide Costs** - Supports efficient network utilisation and helps manage constraint costs through improved modelling and access arrangements.
-  **Service Quality** - Provides greater transparency, certainty for developers, regulators and industry participants through a modernised methodology.
-  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs



Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement (TYTFS)

Project Overview

The 2026 Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement (TYTFS), produced under Condition 33 of the TSO Licence, is a key statutory publication providing developers, policymakers and network stakeholders with information on future transmission network capability, connection opportunities and system development. Following extensive stakeholder engagement, the 2026 TYTFS introduces significant enhancements to improve transparency, accessibility and the usefulness of planning information. Stakeholders highlighted the need for clearer investment signals, greater visibility of connection opportunities and network constraints, and a more user-focused publication. In response, we are redesigning the TYTFS and we will publish a dedicated Northern Ireland statement. Covering the period 2026-2035, it will provide a more granular view of substation-level connection opportunities alongside relevant network limitations and system considerations. These enhancements will improve planning and investment decision-making, support more efficient network and generation development, and establish the TYTFS as a more valuable tool for Northern Ireland’s energy sector.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Submit redesigned Ten Year Transmission Forecast Statement to the UR for review and approval. - **December 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Advise** - Provides enhanced insights to industry, policymakers and regulators, supporting investment decisions, system development and Northern Ireland’s energy transition.
-  **Plan** - Uses technical analysis to identify and signal connection opportunities across the transmission system.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Supporting decarbonisation** by providing clear, forward-looking information to support climate and renewable energy targets
-  **Strengthens investment signals** through clear, NI-focused information on transmission opportunities and constraints.
-  **Enabling a more plan-led approach** by supporting proactive, efficient grid development and better-informed investment decisions.
-  **Delivering consumer value** by helping to avoid inefficient investment and unnecessary reinforcement, supporting lower long-term system costs.

Service Ambition

The 2026 Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement (TYTFS) reflects SONI’s commitment to improving the information available to stakeholders as Northern Ireland’s energy system evolves. Developed in response to stakeholder feedback, the redesigned publication provides a more detailed Northern Ireland-focused assessment of future transmission network capability, connection opportunities and constraints. By offering clearer visibility of how the network is expected to develop over the next decade, the TYTFS will support more informed planning and investment decisions. Improved transparency, stronger investment signals and enhanced understanding of future network needs will help facilitate coordinated network development, support decarbonisation and contribute to the efficient delivery of Northern Ireland’s long-term energy objectives. The 2026 publication establishes a new foundation for future editions and ongoing enhancement as stakeholder needs evolve.

Stakeholder Engagement

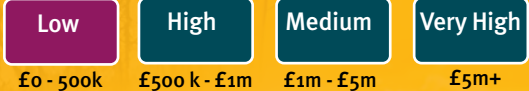
The development of the 2026 TYTFS will be undertaken in collaboration with key stakeholders, including EirGrid, NIE Networks, the Utility Regulator, developers and industry participants. Through ongoing engagement, stakeholders will provide input into the assumptions, methodologies and future network considerations that underpin the publication. This engagement will help ensure that the TYTFS reflects a broad range of perspectives and remains relevant to the needs of those planning, investing in and operating within the electricity sector. Stakeholder feedback will be used to inform the continued development of the statement, helping to improve transparency, enhance understanding of future network challenges and opportunities, and support a coordinated approach to network and generation development across Northern Ireland.

Accountability

We are accountable for delivering the 2026 Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement (TYTFS) in line with our licence obligations, ensuring the publication is robust, transparent and evidence-based. This includes developing the supporting methodologies, assessing future transmission requirements, and incorporating stakeholder and regulatory feedback throughout its development. Success will be demonstrated through the publication of the TYTFS, stakeholder engagement during its development, and delivery of a forecast that provides clear insight into future network capability and constraints. Regulatory oversight and governance processes will provide assurance that the publication supports informed decision-making and meets the evolving needs of Northern Ireland’s electricity system.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Provides clearer information on connection opportunities to support renewable generation and demand development.
-  **Grid Security** - Uses improved methodologies to identify opportunities while reflecting network limitations, resilience and system stability.
-  **System-Wide Costs** - Supports more efficient investment decisions and helps reduce the risk of unnecessary reinforcement costs.
-  **Service Quality** - Provides clearer, more consistent and more useful information to support stakeholder decision-making.
-  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs



Transmission Development Plan Northern Ireland

Project Overview

This project represents an important step in providing a clear, coordinated and transparent view of how Northern Ireland’s transmission network will develop over the next decade. Through the publication of the 2027 Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland (TDPNI), we will set out the transmission reinforcements, new connections and asset replacement programmes required to support the evolving needs of the electricity system and facilitate the transition to a low-carbon future.

By incorporating information from the SONI and NIE Networks’ Joint Project Management Office (JPMO), the plan will provide greater confidence in project timelines, costs and delivery milestones. Over time, this will support informed decision-making by policymakers, regulators, network companies, developers and consumers, helping to ensure that investment in transmission infrastructure is delivered in a coordinated, efficient and transparent manner.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Issue Transmission Development Plan 2027 for consultation - September 2027

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Advise** - Provides evidence-based information to policymakers and the Utility Regulator on future grid investment needs
-  **Plan** - Sets out SONI’s long-term transmission planning requirements and a clear view of future system development.
-  **Deliver** - Supports efficient network and generation investment by providing clearer and more transparent access arrangements.
-  **Operate** - Considers operational feasibility through realistic system modelling and network constraints.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Supporting decarbonisation** by providing clear, forward-looking information to support climate and renewable energy targets.
-  **Enabling a more plan-led approach** by supporting proactive, efficient grid development and better-informed investment decisions.
-  **Strengthens investment signals** through clear, NI-focused transmission information.
-  **Delivering consumer value** by helping to avoid inefficient investment and unnecessary reinforcement, supporting lower long-term system costs.

Service Ambition

As Northern Ireland’s electricity system continues to evolve, we will enhance the transparency, consistency and quality of long-term transmission planning through the development of the 2027 Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland (TDPNI). By incorporating updated project information, delivery assumptions and timelines through the Joint Project Management Office (JPMO), we will provide stakeholders with a clearer view of future transmission network developments and investment requirements. TDPNI will support informed decision-making by identifying the reinforcements, asset replacement programmes and new infrastructure required to facilitate decarbonisation, maintain system security and support future electricity demand. Through this work, we will strengthen confidence in transmission planning and help ensure the network evolves in a coordinated and efficient manner.

Stakeholder Engagement

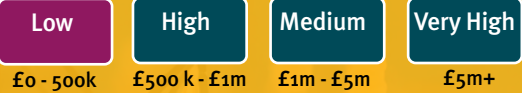
The development of the 2027 TDPNI will be undertaken in collaboration with key stakeholders, including NIE Networks, the Utility Regulator, government departments, developers and industry participants. Through consultation and engagement activities, stakeholders will have opportunities to provide feedback on proposed network developments, delivery assumptions, timelines and future investment priorities. This engagement will help ensure the TDPNI reflects a broad range of perspectives and provides stakeholders with a comprehensive view of future transmission network requirements. Working closely with NIE Networks will also help improve the consistency and accuracy of project information, supporting coordinated planning and delivery of future transmission infrastructure.

Accountability

We are accountable for developing and publishing the TDPNI in accordance with our licence obligations and for ensuring that the plan provides an accurate and transparent view of future transmission network development. This includes assessing future network requirements, incorporating updated project information, engaging with stakeholders and consulting on proposed developments and investment priorities. Progress will be demonstrated through the publication of the draft TDPNI for consultation, stakeholder engagement activities, incorporation of JPMO delivery information and completion of the final plan. Through regulatory oversight, public consultation and established governance processes, we will ensure the TDPNI remains a robust and credible framework for the future development of Northern Ireland’s transmission network.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Identifies future network requirements that support the efficient integration of renewable energy.
-  **Grid Security** - Supports a secure and reliable electricity system through coordinated, long-term infrastructure planning.
-  **System-Wide Costs** - Provides greater clarity and certainty to support efficient, cost-effective investment decisions.
-  **Service Quality** - Offers stakeholders accurate, detailed information to support engagement and decision-making.
-  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs



Kells 275kV Redevelopment

Project Overview

The Kells 275kV Redevelopment project will replace the existing 275kV substation at Kells, which was constructed in the 1970s and is approaching the end of its operational life. The project will replace ageing switchgear, transformers, support structures and associated infrastructure while converting the existing mesh configuration to a modern breaker-and-a-half arrangement. The redevelopment will improve network resilience, maintain security of supply and support future transmission network requirements in Northern Ireland. Kells is a strategically important 275/110kV transmission node within the Northern Ireland transmission network, facilitating power transfers across the system. The redevelopment will also preserve flexibility for a future third 275/110kV transformer should additional network capacity be required in the future.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Submission of the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) to the Utility Regulator for approval - **October 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Plan** - Identifies and progresses network investment required to maintain a secure and resilient transmission system.
-  **Deliver** - Progresses a major strategic infrastructure investment project.
-  **Operate** - Supports continued secure and reliable operation of the transmission network through asset replacement and system resilience improvements.

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Improved network reliability and resilience** by replacing ageing assets, reducing failure risk and supporting a secure electricity network.
-  **Enhanced security of supply** through the continued operation of a critical transmission hub.
-  **Future-proofing the network** by maintaining flexibility to accommodate future system needs and additional transformer capacity.
-  **Asset renewal and modernisation** by replacing ageing infrastructure with modern, reliable technology.

Service Ambition

The Kells 275kV Redevelopment project demonstrates our commitment to maintaining a secure, resilient and future-ready transmission network. Kells is one of the most strategically important transmission substations in Northern Ireland, facilitating power transfers across the network and supporting the reliable operation of the electricity system. By proactively replacing critical infrastructure before it reaches the end of its operational life, we are reducing the risk of future asset failures while modernising a key network hub to meet evolving system requirements. The project will strengthen network resilience, improve operational flexibility and ensure the transmission system remains capable of supporting growing electricity demand, increasing electrification and the continued integration of renewable generation. The redevelopment also preserves flexibility for future network expansion through the potential installation of a third 275/110kV transformer, ensuring that today’s investment can support Northern Ireland’s future energy needs and net zero ambitions.

Stakeholder Engagement

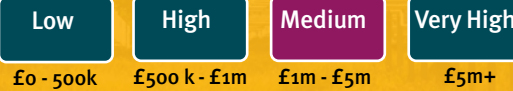
Stakeholder engagement will be undertaken throughout project development in line with our Grid Development Process and regulatory approval processes. We will engage with the Utility Regulator, NIE Networks, local authorities, landowners where relevant, and other stakeholders to ensure project requirements, potential impacts and delivery considerations are identified and addressed. This engagement will support transparent decision-making and help inform project development.

Accountability

Delivery of the Kells 275kV Redevelopment project will be governed through our Grid Development Framework, with key milestones subject to internal governance and regulatory oversight. During this Forward Work Plan period, accountability will focus on progressing project development and submitting the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) to the Utility Regulator for approval. Progress will be monitored through established reporting and governance arrangements to ensure effective project delivery.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Maintains transmission infrastructure required to support renewable integration.
-  **Grid Security** - Strengthens network resilience through replacement of ageing transmission infrastructure.
-  **System-Wide Costs** - Avoids costs associated with asset failure and emergency replacement works.
-  **Service Quality** - Supports a reliable electricity supply through investment in critical network assets.
-  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs



Roe Cluster (formerly North Sperrin Cluster)

Project Overview

The Roe Cluster project will establish a new high-capacity transmission substation in the north-west of Northern Ireland to support significant renewable generation. Developed under the Transmission Cluster Policy, it promotes a strategic cluster-based approach to connections, improving network efficiency and reducing infrastructure requirements. During 2025/26, we committed to progressing the North Sperrin Cluster project through option identification and assessment. Technical, environmental and stakeholder assessments are being carried out to determine the preferred option. During this period, we will progress the preferred solution through governance, land acquisition and regulatory approval processes.

The Roe Cluster will provide a coordinated connection solution through a shared transmission node capable of accommodating substantial renewable generation capacity. By consolidating infrastructure into a single strategic development, the project will reduce the need for multiple transmission assets, minimise environmental impacts and provide greater certainty for future network access. The project represents a significant evolution in transmission planning in Northern Ireland, supporting renewable integration through a coordinated and cost-effective approach to network development. We will continue to engage with local authorities, elected representatives, landowners, industry participants and regulators as the project progresses through the Grid Development Framework and approval processes.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Submit Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) for the wider Roe Cluster development to the Utility Regulator for approval. - **November 2026**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Supporting large-scale renewable integration through transmission infrastructure that accommodates significant renewable generation.



Reducing infrastructure requirements by replacing multiple individual connection solutions with a coordinated cluster approach.



Future-proofing the network by maintaining transmission capability to support future system needs and the energy transition.



Improving investment certainty for developers by providing a strategic and coordinated network access solution.



Delivering consumer value through efficient network development and reduced infrastructure duplication.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Advise - Provides evidence-based advice on renewable connections and transmission development in the north-west region.



Plan - Develops a coordinated network solution that supports efficient renewable integration and long-term system needs.



Deliver - Progresses development and regulatory approval of key transmission infrastructure supporting decarbonisation.



Operate - Supports secure and reliable system operation by providing transmission capacity for growing renewable generation.

Service Ambition

The Roe Cluster project represents a significant shift in how transmission infrastructure is developed to support renewable generation in Northern Ireland. Moving beyond traditional developer-led connections, it introduces a strategic cluster-based approach that improves network efficiency, reduces infrastructure requirements and accelerates renewable integration. The project will establish a new transmission hub to accommodate significant renewable generation capacity, supporting Northern Ireland's energy and climate objectives. By coordinating network development at a regional level, it will optimise investment, reduce environmental impacts and provide a more efficient pathway for future renewable connections. The project demonstrates an innovative approach to network planning that supports future system needs while delivering benefits for consumers, developers and society, helping to establish a model for future cluster developments across Northern Ireland.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder feedback has helped shape the project from the outset, with early engagement with local authorities and elected representatives informing project development and site assessment activities. We will continue engaging with regulators, government bodies, network operators, developers, landowners, local communities and environmental consultees to ensure stakeholders remain informed and can contribute to project development. Engagement will continue through the Grid Development Process and regulatory processes, supporting informed decision-making, transparency and meaningful stakeholder participation throughout the project lifecycle.

Accountability

We are accountable for progressing the Roe Cluster project through the Grid Development Process and associated governance processes, ensuring development aligns with regulatory requirements and approved decision-making pathways. Progress will be demonstrated through the preparation and submission of the TNPP alongside ongoing stakeholder engagement and consideration of feedback received. Performance will be measured through delivery of these milestones and the timely progression of the project through governance and regulatory stages, providing transparent evidence of our contribution while recognising that some approvals remain outside our direct control.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Supports renewable integration and progress towards Northern Ireland's net-zero ambitions.



Grid Security - Strengthens the transmission network to maintain secure operation as renewable generation increases.



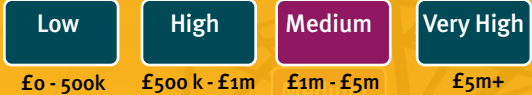
System-Wide Costs - Reduces infrastructure duplication through coordinated network investment, delivering consumer value.



Service Quality - Provides greater transparency and certainty for developers through a coordinated connection framework.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs



Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment

Project Overview

The Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment project will replace ageing transmission infrastructure at a strategically important transmission node. Much of the existing equipment has been in operation since the 1970s and is approaching the end of its operational life. The redevelopment is required to maintain a secure, reliable and resilient transmission network while supporting future network requirements. Castlereagh plays a key role in maintaining security of supply and facilitating power transfers across the network. The redevelopment will replace ageing equipment, introduce modern design standards and create additional capacity to accommodate future network and customer-driven developments.

The project will improve operational flexibility, reduce asset-related risks and strengthen long-term network resilience. It will also maintain the capability needed to support future reinforcement projects, additional transformation capacity and the continued growth of renewable generation and electrification across Northern Ireland. During 2026/27, we will continue progressing the project through the Grid Development Framework and prepare the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) for submission to the Utility Regulator.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Submission of the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) to the Utility Regulator for approval- **September 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Improved network resilience through the replacement of ageing transmission infrastructure.



Enhanced security of supply through investment in a strategically important transmission substation.



Reduced operational and maintenance risks associated with assets approaching end of life.



Support for future renewable generation connections and wider electrification ambitions.



Delivery of long-term value for consumers through a more reliable and resilient transmission network.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Plan - Identifies and assesses the investment required to maintain a resilient and future-ready transmission network and support future system needs.



Deliver - Advances a major transmission infrastructure redevelopment project through the Grid Development Framework and supports progression towards construction and delivery.



Operate - Supports the safe, secure and reliable operation of the transmission system through asset renewal and improved network resilience.

Service Ambition

The Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment project reflects our ambition to maintain a secure, resilient and future-ready transmission network. By proactively renewing and modernising critical infrastructure, we will improve operational flexibility, reduce risks associated with ageing assets and support the continued reliable operation of the electricity system. This investment will strengthen the network’s ability to support future development, renewable integration and increasing electrification, while maintaining security of supply and delivering long-term value for consumers.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement will continue throughout the development of the Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment project in accordance with the Grid Development Process and regulatory approval processes. We will engage with the Utility Regulator, NIE Networks, local authorities, landowners where relevant and other key stakeholders to ensure project requirements, potential impacts and delivery considerations are understood and considered throughout project development. This engagement will support transparency, effective coordination and informed decision-making as the project progresses through key development stages. Feedback received through engagement activities will help inform project assessment and development, ensuring technical, environmental and stakeholder considerations are appropriately balanced throughout the design and approval process.

Accountability

The Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopment project will be governed through our Grid Development Process, supported by established governance arrangements and regulatory oversight. During this Forward Work Plan period, accountability will focus on progressing feasibility and option assessment activities, selecting a preferred solution and preparing the TNPP for submission to the Utility Regulator by September 2027. Progress, risks and dependencies will be monitored through established governance and reporting processes to ensure the project remains aligned with strategic objectives, regulatory requirements and stakeholder expectations. Through transparent reporting and evidence-based decision-making, we will ensure accountability remains central to the successful development of this important transmission network investment.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Maintains transmission infrastructure required to support renewable integration and net zero.



Grid Security - Strengthens network resilience and reliability through asset renewal.



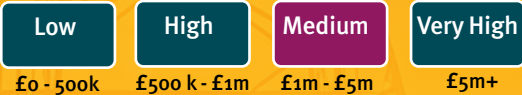
System-Wide Costs - Reduces the risk and cost of asset failure through proactive renewal.



Service Quality - Supports a reliable and resilient electricity system through investment in critical network assets.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs



Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment

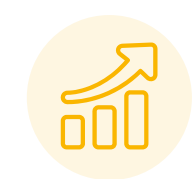
Project Overview

The Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment project will replace ageing transmission infrastructure at the strategically important Magherafelt substation, where a number of primary assets are approaching the end of their operational life. Investment in the redevelopment is required to maintain a secure, reliable and resilient transmission network and to ensure the continued operation of a key node within Northern Ireland’s electricity system. Magherafelt plays an important role in facilitating the transfer of electricity across the transmission network and supports the reliable operation of the wider power system. The redevelopment will modernise critical substation infrastructure, improve operational flexibility and reduce the risks associated with ageing assets, helping to maintain network reliability and security of supply for consumers. By proactively renewing critical infrastructure, we are ensuring the transmission network remains capable of supporting future electricity demand, accommodating the increasing electrification of transport, heat and industry, and facilitating the ongoing integration of renewable generation. The project will strengthen long-term network resilience and provide an improved platform from which future transmission requirements can be met. As part of the 2026/27 Forward Work Plan, we will continue to progress the project through the Grid Development Framework, including preparation and submission of the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) to the Utility Regulator for approval.

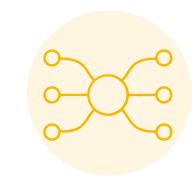
Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Submission of the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) to the Utility Regulator for approval. **August 2027**

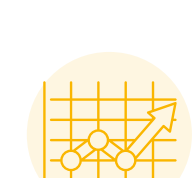
The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Improved network resilience by replacing ageing infrastructure, reducing risks associated with end-of-life assets.



Enhanced security of supply by maintaining a critical transmission node and supporting the reliable transfer of electricity across the network.



Future-proofing the network by maintaining and enhancing transmission capability to meet future system needs and support Northern Ireland’s evolving energy landscape.



Asset renewal and modernisation through the replacement of ageing equipment with modern infrastructure that supports long-term network operation and improved performance.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Plan - Identifies and progresses investment required to maintain a resilient and future-ready transmission network.



Deliver - Advances a major transmission infrastructure redevelopment project through the Grid Development Framework.



Operate - Supports the safe, secure and reliable operation of the electricity transmission system through asset replacement and network resilience improvements.

Service Ambition

The Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment project reflects our ambition to maintain a secure, resilient and future-ready electricity transmission system. By proactively investing in the redevelopment of this strategically important substation, we will improve network resilience, reduce the risk of equipment failures and strengthen the reliability of electricity transfers across the network. The project will support future economic growth, increasing electrification and continued renewable integration, helping to deliver a more resilient, adaptable and sustainable power system that provides long-term value for consumers.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement will continue throughout the development of the Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment project in line with our Grid Development Process and regulatory approval processes. We will engage with the Utility Regulator, NIE Networks, local authorities, landowners and other key stakeholders to ensure project requirements, impacts and delivery considerations are understood and addressed. Feedback received will inform project development and decision-making, helping to balance technical, environmental and stakeholder considerations. This engagement will support transparency, build trust and help ensure the successful delivery of this essential electricity infrastructure project.

Accountability

The Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment project will be governed through our Grid Development Process, supported by established governance arrangements and regulatory oversight. During this Forward Work Plan period, accountability will focus on progressing the project through key development stages, including submission of the Transmission Network Preconstruction Project (TNPP) to the Utility Regulator. Progress, risks and dependencies will be monitored through established project governance and reporting processes to ensure alignment with strategic objectives, regulatory requirements and stakeholder expectations. Through strong governance, transparent reporting and evidence-based decision-making, we will ensure accountability remains central to the successful development of this important transmission network investment.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Strengthens network resilience and reduces the risk of failures through the replacement of ageing transmission infrastructure.



Grid Security - Maintains and future-proofs key transmission infrastructure required to support the integration of increasing levels of renewable generation over time.



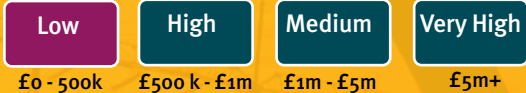
System-Wide Costs - Avoids higher future costs associated with asset failure, emergency replacement works and network reliability impacts.



Service Quality - Supports a reliable electricity supply for customers and stakeholders through continued investment in critical network assets.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs



Major Network Project Updates

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Alongside our assessed Forward Work Plan projects, we are continuing to progress two significant network reinforcement projects. These projects have featured in previous Forward Work Plans and continue to represent significant network reinforcement activity. While they do not have specific deliverables for 2026/27, we have provided an update on their continued development for transparency and consistency.

Mid-Antrim Upgrade

The Mid-Antrim Upgrade continues to progress through the Grid Development Process, supporting reinforcement of the Kells–Rasharkin 110kV circuit. Following approval of the TNPP submission, the project has progressed through Part 2 of the process. A proposed purchase area for the new Terrygowan substation and surrounding temporary licence area has been identified and formalised, with negotiations ongoing. The overhead line alignment has also been confirmed, supported by continued landowner engagement and detailed design work. Engagement with local representatives and council planners has progressed through Pre-Application Discussions, Notifications and Community Consultation. The project will now move towards planning application submission across three council areas. A provisional determination has also been received in relation to the revised easement compensation arrangements, with rollout expected to begin in winter 2026.

Energising Belfast

Energising Belfast continues to progress as a major reinforcement of the Castlereagh–Hannahstown 110kV corridor and wider Belfast network. Two potential substation sites have been identified and progressed to Heads of Terms with landowners. While negotiations have been protracted, engagement is continuing alongside assessment of alternative sites to support project deliverability. Cable design has advanced for the majority of the Donegall Main to Belfast Central route, with the final design dependent on confirmation of the substation locations. Engagement with local representatives and planners is also continuing in relation to zoning designation and environmental assessment requirements. The project will change power flows across the greater Belfast transmission network, and a Static Synchronous Series Compensator (SSSC) is proposed as part of the development. This will require an uplift to the original TNPP submission, expected to be submitted to the Utility Regulator in Q1 2026/27.



Summary of SONI Outcomes for Role 3

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Decarbonisation

Role 3 is supporting Northern Ireland's transition to a low-carbon electricity system by developing the transmission infrastructure, network planning frameworks and connection policies required to accommodate increasing levels of renewable generation. Projects including the Transmission Cluster Policy, Roe Cluster, Transmission Development Plan 2027 (TDPNI), Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement (TYTFS) 2026 and the 275kV Redevelopment Programme are focused on creating the network capacity, strategic investment plans and connection pathways needed to facilitate the energy transition and future electrification. Through ongoing engagement with regulators, network companies, developers, government departments and local stakeholders, these projects ensure network development is coordinated, transparent and aligned with future system needs. Together, they will enable renewable integration, strengthen network resilience and support delivery of Northern Ireland's renewable electricity and net zero ambitions.



Grid Security

Grid security is being strengthened through long-term transmission planning, strategic network development and the modernisation of critical infrastructure. Projects including the Transmission Development Plan 2027 (TDPNI), Transmission Cluster Policy, Roe Cluster, and the Kells, Magherafelt and Castlereagh 275kV Redevelopments are helping to ensure the network can continue to operate securely as renewable generation and electricity demand increase. Through ongoing engagement with regulators, network companies, developers, landowners and local stakeholders, these projects support coordinated and evidence-based network development that balances future system needs with network resilience. By strengthening transmission capability, replacing ageing assets and planning for future requirements, they help maintain security of supply and ensure the electricity system remains reliable throughout the energy transition.



System-Wide Costs

A more coordinated and strategic approach to network development can deliver better long-term value for consumers. The Transmission Cluster Policy and Roe Cluster support more efficient connections by reducing infrastructure duplication and improving utilisation of transmission assets. The Firm Access Quantity Methodology, TYTFS 2026 and Transmission Development Plan 2027 provide greater transparency and clearer investment signals, supporting informed decision-making by developers, policymakers and network operators. Collectively, these projects reduce the risk of inefficient investment and support a cost-effective transition to a low-carbon electricity system.



Service Quality

Greater transparency, improved planning information and meaningful stakeholder engagement are key themes across the Role 3 programme. Projects including the Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement (TYTFS) 2026, Transmission Development Plan 2027 (TDPNI), revised Firm Access Quantity Methodology and Transmission Cluster Policy are providing stakeholders with clearer information on future network requirements, connection opportunities and transmission investment needs. Through ongoing consultation and engagement with regulators, network companies, developers, landowners, communities and government bodies, these projects help ensure decisions are informed, transparent and responsive to stakeholder needs. By improving the quality of planning information and strengthening stakeholder participation, the Role 3 programme is helping build confidence in the future development of Northern Ireland's transmission system and its ability to support the energy transition. The 275kV Redevelopment projects will modernise critical substation infrastructure, improve operational flexibility and reduce the risks associated with ageing assets, helping to maintain network reliability and security of supply for consumers.



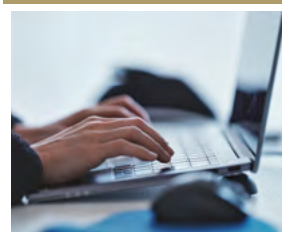
ROLE 4 Commercial Interface

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



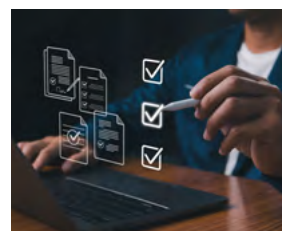
Initial Enquiries

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



Use of System Agreements

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.

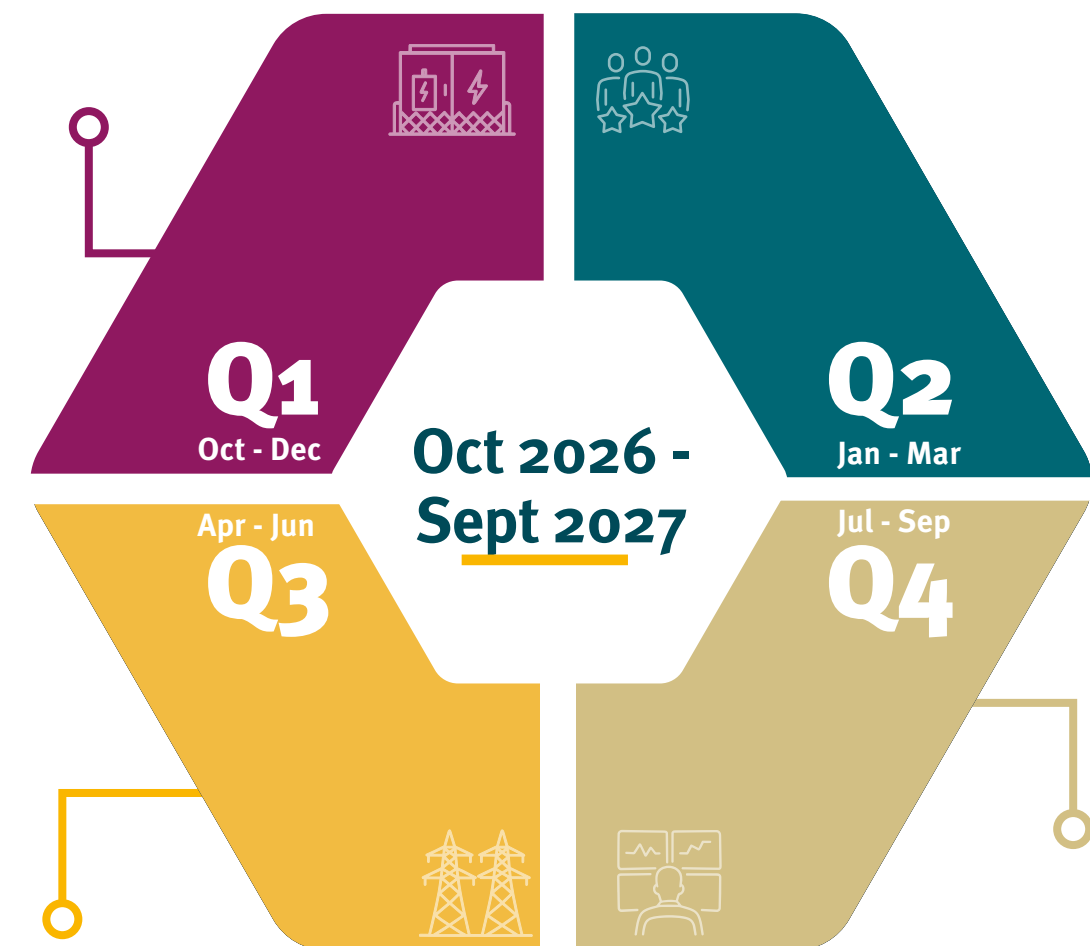
Summary of Quarterly Deliverables

FWP26-15 LCIS Phase 1 – Dynamic Stability Assessment

RoCoF Impact Assessment Completed and Report Issued for LCIS Phase 1 Synchronous Condensers, Including MUON Constraint Implications

FWP27-13 Flexibility Procurement

Support Department for the Economy (DfE) and UR in developing the policy and regulatory pathway for flexibility and storage procurement



FWP001 LCIS Phase II – Procurement Process Tender Stage

Commence and complete the LCIS Phase II procurement process, including tender evaluation and contract award to secure delivery of Phase II service

FWP27-13 Flexibility Procurement

Support development of a procurement approach for flexibility services, including storage subject to policy and regulatory

LCIS & Storage Procurement

How Low Carbon Inertia Services (LCIS) delivers value

Building on commitments set out in previous Forward Work Plans, LCIS remains an important initiative to support the operation of a power system with increasing levels of renewable generation. The diagram below highlights the benefits LCIS can deliver for both the electricity system and consumers.

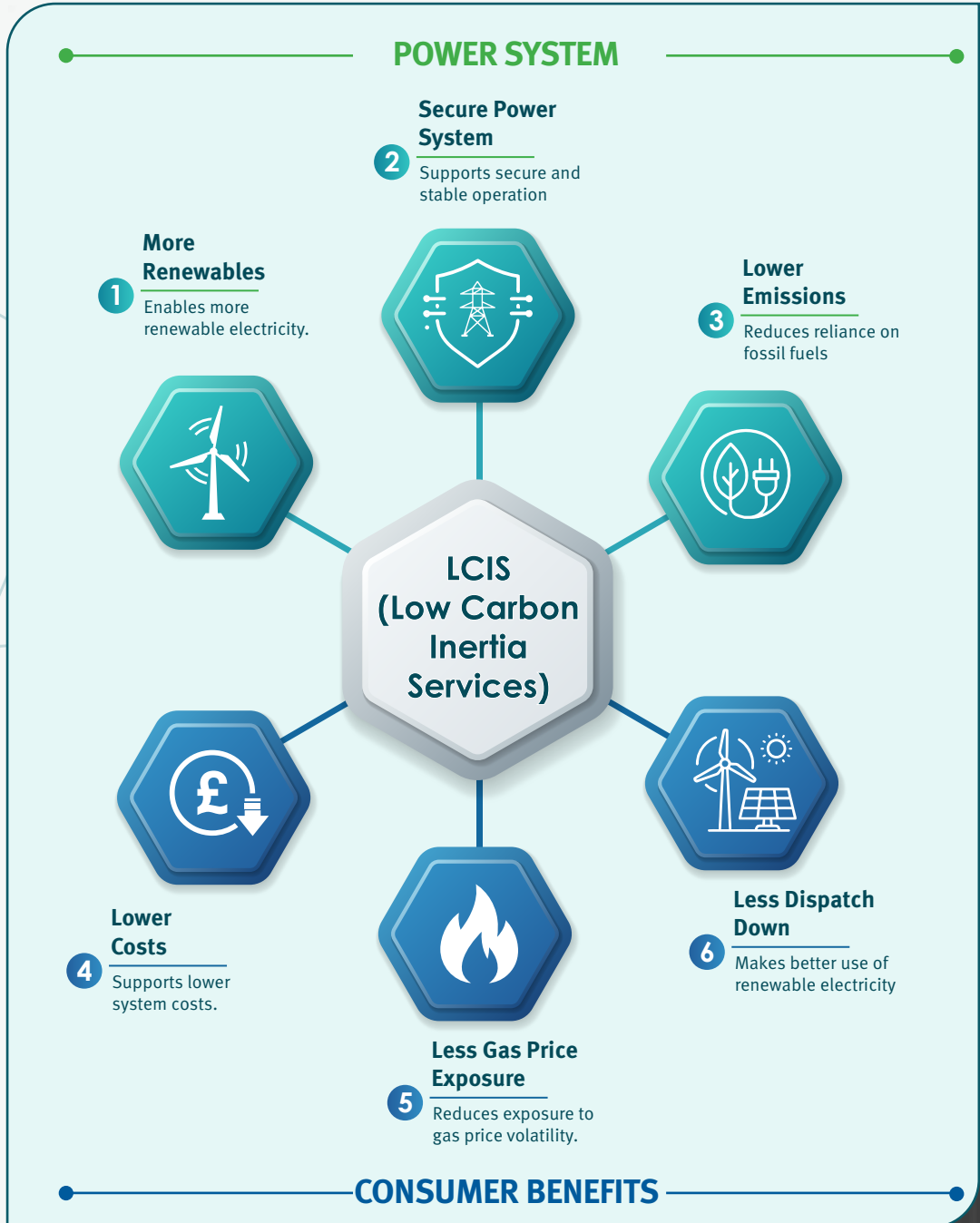


Figure 8: LCIS Explained

How Storage Procurement delivers value

Previous Forward Work Plans referred to this work as Long Duration Electricity Storage (LDES). As the programme has evolved, it is now presented as Storage Procurement to more accurately reflect the role of procuring storage capability to support renewable integration, system security and consumer value. The diagram below highlights how Storage Procurement is expected to deliver value across the electricity system and support the transition to a secure, low-carbon future.

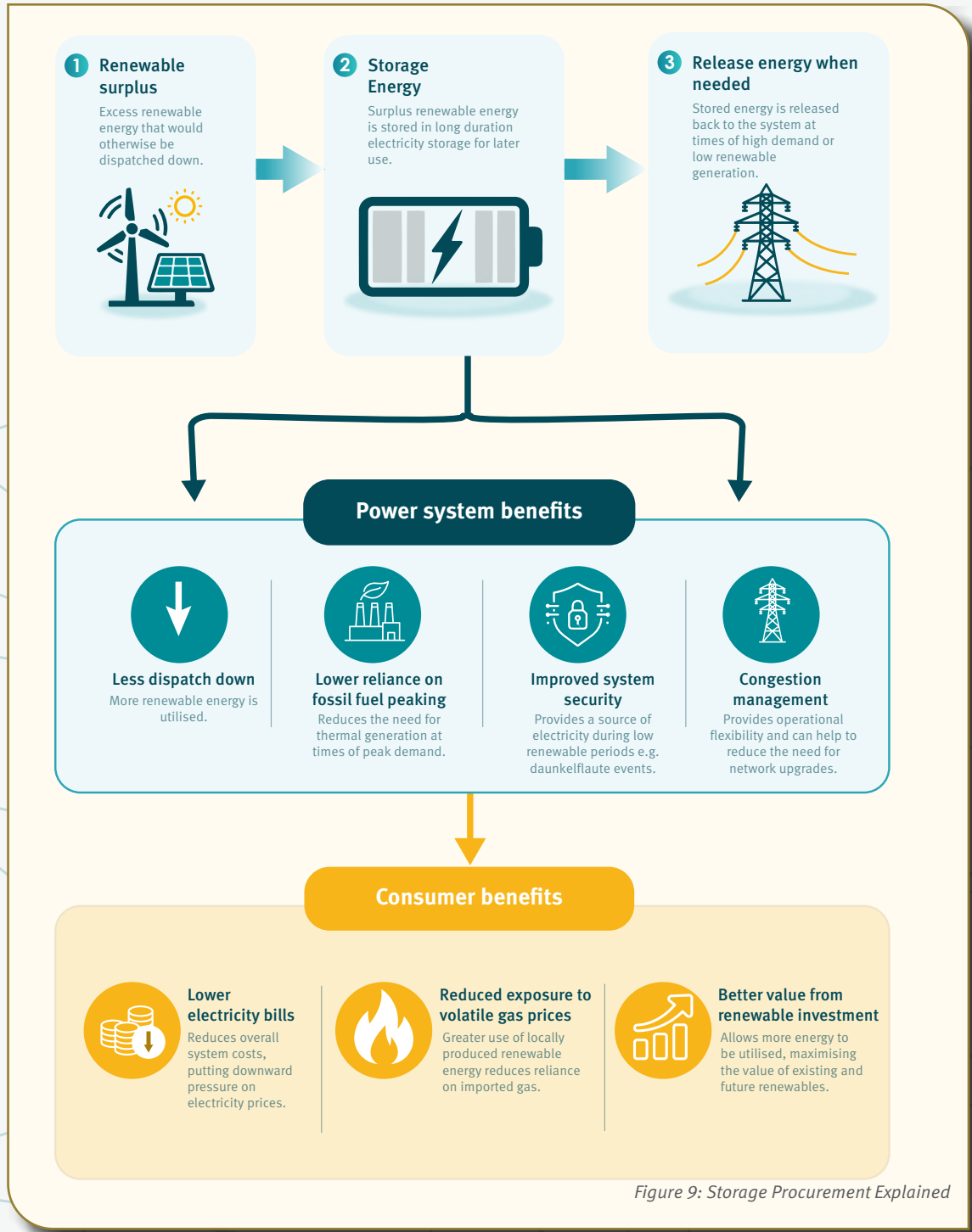


Figure 9: Storage Procurement Explained

Benefits Realisation

	Project	Intended Outcome	Benefit Measure	Baseline	Target Benefit	Benefit Realisation
01	FWP001 LCIS Phase II – Procurement	Demonstrate the contribution of Low Carbon Inertia Services to system stability and renewable integration.	Renewable capability increase enabled (MW); reduction in stability-related constraints.	Existing operational constraints and dependence on conventional generation.	Demonstrate a pathway to 50–100MW of additional renewable headroom and tie-line capacity through low-carbon inertia services.	1-3 years
02	FWP26-15 LCIS Phase 1 – Dynamic Stability	Procure low-carbon system stability services required for future grid operation.	Volume of frequency response and reserve services available from renewable generation (MW).	Conventional stability arrangements remain dominant.	Procure 4000 MVA.s of Low Carbon Inertia Services providing power system stability services, enabling higher renewable penetration levels.	3-5 years
03	FWP27-13 Flexibility Procurement	Establish a flexibility procurement framework for storage and other flexibility resources, supporting a low-carbon electricity system and future flexibility needs.	Procurement pathway, framework and delivery arrangements agreed.	No flexibility procurement framework currently exists; policy, regulatory and delivery arrangements under development.	Enable future procurement of flexibility and storage services through a policy, procurement and funding framework that supports renewable integration and system resilience.	Within 1 year



LCIS Phase 1 – Dynamic Stability Assessment

Project Overview

The Low Carbon Inertia Services (LCIS) programme is a key enabler of Northern Ireland’s transition to a low-carbon electricity system. Phase 1 will assess the impact of new low-carbon stability services, including synchronous condensers, on system stability and operational constraints as renewable generation levels continue to increase.

The project will undertake detailed dynamic stability assessments to evaluate the contribution of LCIS Phase 1 assets to system security following major disturbances. The outcomes will inform operational policy development, support the secure integration of renewable generation and provide evidence for potential changes to existing operational constraints. This work will support the delivery of Northern Ireland’s renewable electricity targets while maintaining a secure and resilient power system.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- RoCoF Impact Assessment Completed and Report Issued for LCIS Phase 1 Synchronous Condensers, Including MUON Constraint Implications - **December 2026**

Alignment to SONI Strategy

-  **Plan** - Supports the planning and development of future operational arrangements required for a low-carbon power system.
-  **Deliver** - Provides the technical evidence required to implement operational changes and maximise the benefits of new stability services.
-  **Operate** - Supports secure system operation by assessing system stability requirements and opportunities to reduce reliance on conventional generation

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:

-  **Supporting Decarbonisation** by enabling higher levels of renewable generation while maintaining power system security.
-  **Enhancing Grid Security** through improved understanding of system behaviour during credible disturbance events.
-  **Reducing Reliance on Conventional Generation** by assessing opportunities to relax operational constraints supported by new stability services.
-  **Enabling Future Network and Market Developments** by providing evidence to support future operational and policy decisions.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Dynamic Stability Assessment will be undertaken in collaboration with EirGrid through established operational policy, system planning and technical governance processes. Engagement will also involve internal operational, planning and engineering experts, ensuring that the assessment reflects both existing operational experience and future system requirements. Throughout the project, stakeholders will contribute technical expertise, operational insights and analysis of emerging power system challenges associated with increasing levels of renewable and inverter-based generation. This collaborative approach will help ensure that recommendations are robust, evidence-based and practical to implement within an evolving power system.

Service Ambition

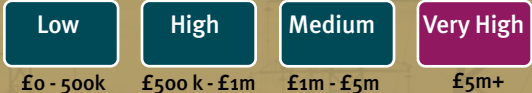
The Low Carbon Inertia Services (LCIS) Phase 1 Dynamic Stability Assessment reflects our ambition to enable the secure operation of a low-carbon electricity system while supporting Northern Ireland’s transition to higher levels of renewable generation. As the generation mix continues to evolve, with increasing volumes of renewable and inverter-based generation connecting to the system, it is essential that power system stability can be maintained without unnecessary reliance on conventional generation sources. Through this project, we will assess the contribution of LCIS Phase 1 assets, including synchronous condensers, to system stability following major disturbance events. The assessment will provide the technical evidence required to inform future operational policies, support innovation in system operation and identify opportunities to optimise existing operational constraints while maintaining security standards. By improving our understanding of how new low-carbon stability technologies perform in practice, this project will help unlock greater renewable integration, improve system resilience and support the transition towards a cleaner, more secure and more efficient electricity system for consumers.

Accountability

We are accountable for delivering a comprehensive Dynamic Stability Assessment that evaluates the contribution of LCIS Phase 1 assets to maintaining system stability and supporting the secure operation of a low-carbon electricity system. This includes undertaking detailed technical studies, assessing system performance under credible disturbance scenarios, evaluating the operational implications of Low Carbon Inertia Services and identifying any opportunities for future operational policy development. The project will provide the evidence base required to support informed decision-making regarding future operational arrangements and potential adjustments to existing system constraints. Progress will be demonstrated through the completion of technical assessments, publication of recommendations, governance reviews and delivery of the RoCoF Impact Assessment report, including consideration of MUON constraint implications. The outputs will provide assurance that future operational decisions continue to be based on robust analysis, support system security and enable the efficient integration of renewable generation.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes

-  **Decarbonisation** - Supports renewable integration through operation at lower levels of synchronous generation.
-  **Grid Security** - Enhances understanding of system stability and supports secure system operation.
-  **System-Wide Costs** - Supports efficient system operation and maximises value from low-carbon stability technologies.
-  **Service Quality** - Improves the consistency, transparency and responsiveness of stakeholders’ experience of engaging with SONI.
-  **Cost Scale** - Estimate of SONI related costs



LCIS Phase II – Procurement Process Tender Stage

Project Overview

Low Carbon Inertia Services (LCIS) are a key enabler of Northern Ireland’s transition to a low-carbon electricity system. As conventional synchronous generation is displaced by increasing levels of renewable and inverter-based generation, new sources of system stability are required to maintain secure and reliable operation of the power system.

Building on Phase I, which successfully procured synchronous inertia, reactive power support and system strength services for the 2026/27 period, Phase II focuses on securing the additional low-carbon stability services required to support operation of the electricity system towards 2030. This project will progress the procurement and tender stages of Phase II, including evaluation of bids and contract award for successful service providers.

Through competitive procurement, we will identify and secure the most effective solutions to address future system stability requirements, support the further relaxation of the Minimum Units On (MUON) constraint and enable higher levels of renewable generation to operate securely on the power system.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Complete the LCIS Phase II procurement process, including tender commencement, evaluation and contract award - **June 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Enables Higher Renewable Integration by securing the stability services required to operate the power system with higher levels of wind and solar generation.



Delivers strategic stability services through competitive procurement of inertia, system strength and voltage support.



Delivers Better Value for Consumers through competitive procurement of cost-effective stability solutions.



Supports Lower Fossil Fuel Use through alternative stability services and reduced constraints.



Supports Renewable Energy Targets by addressing key technical challenges of a highly renewable power system.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Advise - Provides evidence and recommendations to support market, regulatory and operational decisions relating to future system stability services.



Plan - Embeds low-carbon stability services into long-term planning for a highly renewable electricity system



Deliver - Executes the competitive procurement process and contract award for additional system stability services.



Operate - Enables future integration of low-carbon stability services into operational arrangements, supporting secure system operation with lower levels of conventional generation.

Service Ambition

As the electricity system evolves towards higher levels of renewable and inverter-based generation, we will continue to develop innovative approaches to maintaining system stability and security. Through Phase II of the LCIS programme, we will procure the additional low-carbon stability services required to support operation of the electricity system towards 2030.

Building on the successful delivery of Phase I, this procurement will help establish the next generation of stability services needed to facilitate higher levels of renewable integration while maintaining secure and reliable system operation. Through competitive procurement and innovation, we will identify solutions that strengthen system resilience, reduce reliance on conventional generation and deliver value for consumers.

Stakeholder Engagement

Phase II of the LCIS programme will be delivered in collaboration with key stakeholders, including EirGrid, NIE Networks, the Utility Regulator, government departments, technology providers and market participants. Through engagement and consultation activities, stakeholders will provide input on service requirements, procurement arrangements and future system needs. This engagement will help ensure that the services procured are practical, deliverable and aligned with operational requirements. Ongoing engagement with qualified tender participants will also support a transparent, fair and competitive procurement process, while providing the market with greater clarity on future opportunities to deliver low-carbon stability services.

Accountability

We are accountable for progressing the Phase II procurement process and securing the additional low-carbon stability services required to support operation of the electricity system towards 2030. This includes managing the tender process, evaluating submitted bids, engaging with stakeholders and securing the approvals necessary to award contracts to successful service providers. Progress will be demonstrated through the commencement of the tender process, completion of tender evaluation and the award of Phase II contracts. These milestones will provide assurance that the programme remains on track to deliver the stability services required to support increasing levels of renewable generation while maintaining a secure and resilient power system.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Supports higher levels of renewable generation and reduces dependence on conventional fossil fuel generation for system stability.



Grid Security - Enhances system stability through the procurement of additional inertia, system strength and voltage support services.



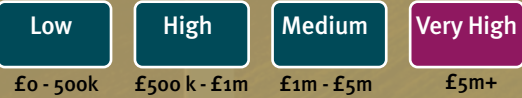
System-Wide Costs - Promotes competition, innovation and efficient procurement, helping to minimise long-term costs to consumers.



Service Quality - Ensures a reliable and resilient electricity system by securing the stability services required to meet evolving operational requirements.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs



FWP27-13

Flexibility Procurement

Project Overview

The Flexibility Procurement Framework project supports the development of future arrangements for procuring flexibility services that will enable the secure and efficient operation of an increasingly renewable electricity system. As Northern Ireland continues its transition towards a low-carbon electricity sector, additional flexibility resources, including energy storage and demand-side services, will play an increasingly important role in maintaining system reliability and supporting renewable integration.

The project focuses on supporting the Department for the Economy (DfE), the Utility Regulator and other stakeholders in establishing the policy, regulatory and procurement arrangements required for future flexibility and storage procurement. This includes contributing to policy development, supporting regulatory assessments and helping define potential delivery models and implementation routes.

By establishing an appropriate framework for future flexibility procurement, the project will help create the conditions necessary to unlock investment in new technologies, support system resilience and enable a more efficient and sustainable electricity system.

Deliverables: Performance Measure & Timescales

- Support Department for the Economy (DfE) and UR in developing Northern Ireland’s Indicative Non-Fossil Flexibility Objective following completion of the 2026 Flexibility Needs Assessment - **December 2026**
- If determined to be necessary by the DfE to meet Northern Ireland’s Indicative Non-Fossil Flexibility Objective, SONI will support the development of a procurement approach for flexibility services, including storage - **Ongoing throughout 2027**

The key benefits we will deliver from this project are:



Supporting Decarbonisation by enabling the deployment of flexibility resources required to accommodate higher levels of renewable generation.



Enhancing Grid Security through procurement arrangements that support reliable and resilient system operation.



Supporting future market development through competitive procurement and new technology participation.



Enabling investment in flexibility technologies through clear procurement routes and market signals.

Alignment to SONI Strategy



Plan - Supports the development of future market and operational arrangements required to integrate increasing volumes of renewable generation and flexibility resources.



Deliver - Provides the policy, regulatory and procurement framework inputs necessary to enable future flexibility and storage procurement



Operate - Supports secure system operation by facilitating the development of flexibility services that can respond to changing system conditions and support network resilience.

Service Ambition

The Flexibility Procurement Framework supports our ambition to enable a secure, low-carbon electricity system through increased flexibility and storage. This project will help shape the policy and regulatory framework needed to support future procurement arrangements, ensuring system requirements are met as the generation mix evolves. By working with government, regulators and industry stakeholders, we aim to establish arrangements that provide investment certainty, encourage innovation and support efficient delivery of flexibility services. This work will lay the foundations for future procurement processes that support renewable integration, strengthen security of supply and deliver a more flexible and resilient electricity system. The engagement process will support a shared understanding of the role that Low Carbon Inertia Services can play in future system operation and will help inform the development of coordinated operational policies across the all-island power system.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Flexibility Procurement Framework project will be delivered through collaboration with the Department for the Economy, the Utility Regulator, EirGrid and industry stakeholders, including flexibility providers and storage developers. Stakeholder input will inform policy development, regulatory considerations and procurement design, helping to ensure future arrangements are practical, transparent and aligned with energy policy objectives. Ongoing engagement will support a shared understanding of flexibility requirements and procurement options, helping to establish arrangements that meet future system needs and support decarbonisation ambitions.

Accountability

We are accountable for providing the technical, operational and market expertise needed to support future flexibility and storage procurement arrangements, ensuring system requirements are reflected in emerging policy and procurement frameworks. This includes supporting policy and regulatory development, procurement framework design and defining our future role. While policy, funding and regulatory decisions rest with the Department for the Economy and Utility Regulator, we remain accountable for agreed programme activities and technical inputs. Progress will be demonstrated through policy and regulatory inputs, stakeholder engagement, procurement recommendations and confirmation of our future role, helping establish the foundations for flexibility and storage procurement that supports decarbonisation, security of supply and efficient system operation.

Alignment with SONI Outcomes



Decarbonisation - Supports renewable integration through development of flexibility resources for a low-carbon power system.



Grid Security - Enhances system resilience through procurement of services that support security of supply and operational flexibility.



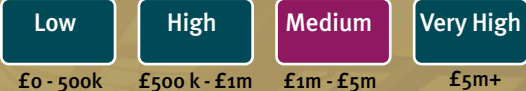
System-Wide Costs - Supports efficient investment and competition to identify cost-effective solutions to future system needs.



Service Quality - Supports a more adaptable and resilient electricity system that maintains reliable customer outcomes.



Cost Scale - Estimate of SONI related costs



Summary of SONI Outcomes for Role 4



Decarbonisation

Achieving Northern Ireland's decarbonisation ambitions requires more than the connection of renewable generation. It also requires the development of new technologies, system services and operational arrangements capable of supporting a power system with significantly lower levels of conventional generation. Through the LCIS Phase 1 Dynamic Stability Assessment, LCIS Phase II procurement and the Flexibility Procurement Framework, we are proactively identifying, developing and implementing the solutions required to operate a secure, low-carbon electricity system. By assessing the performance of new stability technologies, securing future low-carbon system services and helping shape the framework for flexibility and storage procurement, these projects will unlock greater renewable integration, reduce dependence on fossil-fuelled generation and create the foundations for a more sustainable electricity system.



Grid Security

Maintaining a secure and resilient power system throughout the energy transition requires SONI to anticipate emerging operational challenges and develop solutions before they become constraints on renewable integration. Through detailed stability assessments, the procurement of inertia, system strength and voltage support services, and the development of future flexibility arrangements, we are strengthening the capabilities needed to securely operate an increasingly complex electricity system. These projects will improve understanding of future system behaviour, support the evolution of operational policies and ensure that appropriate stability and flexibility services are available to maintain security of supply as the generation mix continues to evolve.



System-Wide Costs

Delivering net zero in an efficient and affordable manner remains a key priority for consumers and stakeholders. Through competitive procurement of low-carbon stability services and the development of future flexibility and storage procurement arrangements, we are helping create the conditions for greater competition, innovation and efficient investment across the electricity sector. By proactively identifying more efficient ways of meeting future system needs, supporting market participation from emerging technologies and maximising the value delivered by low-carbon solutions, these projects will help manage long-term system costs while delivering the reliability and flexibility required for a decarbonised power system.



Service Quality

Providing a reliable and high-quality electricity service throughout the energy transition requires continuous innovation in how the power system is planned and operated. Through a combination of technical assessment, forward-looking procurement activities and collaborative policy development, we are actively preparing the electricity system for future operating conditions with significantly higher levels of renewable generation. Working with regulators, government, network companies, market participants and technology providers, these projects will ensure that the stability and flexibility services required for future system operation are identified, developed and delivered in a coordinated manner. This proactive approach will support system resilience, maintain security of supply and help ensure consumers continue to receive a reliable electricity service as the transition to a low-carbon power system accelerates.

Project Alignment with UR Priorities

Role	Project Name	 Effective Engagement & Collaboration	 Open & Collaborative Innovation	 Digitalisation	 Organisational Learning, Accountability & Planning	 Markets through Competition & Stakeholder Engagement	 Whole-System Collaboration & Coordination
Role 1	System Strength		✓		✓		✓
Role 1	System Defence Plan				✓		✓
Role 1	Frequency Response from Wind		✓	✓	✓		✓
Role 1	Multi-Year Plan for Market Development	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Role 1	Hybrid Connections	✓	✓		✓		✓
Role 1	Future Arrangements for System Services	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Role 1	Strategic Markets Programme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Role 2	SRP27 Stakeholder Engagement	✓			✓	✓	✓
Role 2	Consumer Council Consumer Engagement Working Group	✓				✓	✓
Role 2	Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2027–2032	✓			✓	✓	✓
Role 2	Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios	✓	✓		✓		✓
Role 2	Plan-Led Electricity Development Approach	✓	✓		✓		✓
Role 2	Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Role 2	SONI Role Awareness Campaign	✓		✓			✓
Role 2	SONI Public Engagement Programme	✓					✓
Role 2	Annual Innovation Report		✓	✓			✓
Role 3	Transmission Cluster Policy	✓	✓		✓		✓
Role 3	Firm Access Quantity Methodology	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Role 3	Ten-Year Transmission Forecast Statement	✓	✓		✓		✓
Role 3	Transmission Development Plan 2027	✓	✓		✓		✓
Role 3	Kells 275kV Redevelopment	✓			✓		✓
Role 3	Roe Cluster	✓	✓		✓		✓
Role 3	Castlereaigh 275kV Redevelopment	✓			✓		✓
Role 3	Magherafelt 275kV Redevelopment	✓	✓		✓		✓
Role 4	LCIS Phase I: Dynamic Stability Assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Role 4	LCIS Phase II: Procurement Process	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

**UR Priorities**

**Effective Engagement & Collaboration**
Foster a culture of effective engagement and collaboration

**Open & Collaborative Innovation**
Foster a culture of open and collaborative innovation

**Digitalisation**
Provide a holistic, customer-based approach to digitalisation

**Organisational Learning, Accountability & Planning**
Foster a culture of organisational learning, accountability, planning, agility and responsiveness.

**Markets through Competition & Stakeholder Engagement**
Develop markets through competition, stakeholder engagement and collaboration

**Whole-System Collaboration & Coordination**
Foster whole-system collaboration and coordination with third parties and NIE Networks.



Performance Measures

As part of the Utility Regulator’s Evaluative Performance Framework (EPF), SONI reports against performance measures that support accountability, performance monitoring and transparency. Since publishing the 2025/26 Forward Work Plan, we have submitted our SRP27 Business Plan, including a proposed suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) focused on areas of direct accountability. Subject to the outcome of the SRP27 determination process, these KPIs are expected to be adopted in future Forward Work Plans.

The table below sets out our current EPF performance measures and targets for 2026/27.

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 2027 Performance 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 ± 0.2Hz, 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 timelines 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.

Appendix A:

Further information on Performance Measures and Alignment with SONI Outcomes

Decarbonisation

KPI	Purpose	Approach	Target for 2026/27
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 2026/27
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 2026/27
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 use 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 SEMO 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 2026/27
Stakeholder Satisfaction	To measure the quality and effectiveness of our stakeholder engagement and how well it meets stakeholder needs. The measure focuses on the proportion of stakeholders who report being “Very Satisfied”, setting a high standard for engagement quality and supporting continuous improvement.	Stakeholder satisfaction will be measured through our Engagement Evaluation Framework, combining post-engagement and annual surveys with qualitative feedback and insight. Building on previous results, we will continue to focus on the “Very Satisfied” measure as the primary indicator of engagement quality and use emerging trends and stakeholder feedback to inform improvements.	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 our 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 otherwise due to external dependencies e.g. regulatory processes or third-party requirements Any deviations will be explained in SONI’s Annual Performance Report 2026-27, 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.

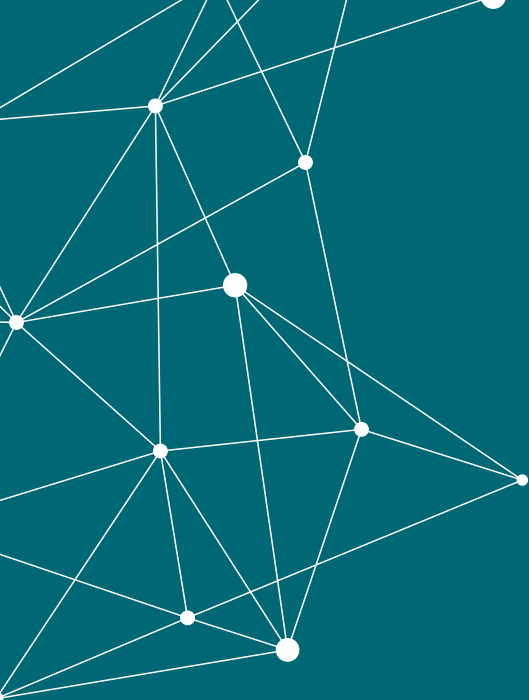


Glossary:

Key Acronyms and Technical Terms

Term/Acronym	Explanation
CEWG	Consumer Engagement Working Group: Consumer Council-led group supporting coordinated consumer engagement on the energy transition.
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 generators.
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
MEC	Maximum Export Capacity: The maximum amount of electricity a connected customer is permitted to export through its connection.
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.

Term/Acronym	Explanation
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
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer: Manufacturer of equipment or technology used within the electricity system.
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
RoCoF	Rate of Change of Frequency: Measure of how quickly system frequency changes following a disturbance.
SACG	Stakeholder Advisory and Challenge Group: Group providing stakeholder input and independent challenge to SONI's plans and proposals.
SDAC	Single Day-Ahead Coupling: European arrangements supporting integrated day-ahead electricity market trading.
SIDC	Single Intraday Coupling: European arrangements supporting integrated intraday electricity market trading.
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
TES	Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios: SONI's scenarios exploring potential pathways for Northern Ireland's future energy system.
TNPP	Transmission Network Preconstruction Project: Regulatory submission supporting progression of transmission projects through pre-construction activities.
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



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