



# Connections Policy

Connection Offer Process

October 2024

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# Introduction

The references and definitions used in this policy shall have the meaning as assigned to them in the Grid Code, the Transmission Interface Arrangements (the “TIA”) or the SONI Transmission Connection Charging Methodology Statement (the “TCCMS”) unless otherwise stated herein or where the context otherwise requires. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the definitions in the Grid Code, the TIA and/or the TCCMS, the Grid Code shall prevail. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Grid Code, the TIA and the TCCMS.

SONI Limited (“SONI”) is the licensed electricity Transmission System Operator (“TSO”) in Northern Ireland and is responsible for planning and operating the Transmission System in a safe, secure and economic way to ensure a reliable supply of electricity.

Under Article 12 of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 (the “1992 Order”)<sup>1</sup>, SONI is required to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to “*ensure the development and maintenance of an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission which has the long-term ability to meet reasonable demands for the transmission of electricity*” in accordance with its Transmission Licence<sup>2</sup> (the “Licence”). SONI discharges this duty in relation to connections under Condition 25 of the Licence through offering terms to customers for new connections, or for modification of existing connections, to the All-Island Transmission Networks at entry or exit points on the Northern Ireland Transmission System. The Northern Ireland Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (“TSSPS”)<sup>3</sup> set out the minimum requirements for the planning of the Northern Ireland Transmission System (“Transmission System”), and these standards are used in SONI’s assessment of applications for connection (“Connection Application(s)”) to the Transmission System along with requirements that may be set out in the SONI Grid Code (“the Grid Code”).

The number of Connection Applications received by SONI has increased in recent years, as has their complexity. SONI recognises the need to allocate access to transmission capacity and transmission infrastructure as efficiently as possible, to projects that are more likely to be delivered, and in a manner that prioritises the development of a co-ordinated Transmission System. This policy has been developed to ensure this can be done in compliance with SONI’s obligations under Condition 20 of the Licence.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1992/231/article/12>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uregni.gov.uk/electricity-licences>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.soni.ltd.uk/customer-and-industry/general-customer-information/Transmission-System-Security-and-Planning-Standards-June-2023.pdf>

The aim of this policy is to set out;

1. The steps required to make a Connection Application<sup>4</sup>, together with the pre-requisites necessary for SONI to deem a Connection Application effective;
2. The process under which SONI will issue a connection offer<sup>5</sup> (“Offer”) to an applicant for connection to the Transmission System (the “Offer Process”); (including but not limited to delivery milestones e.g. Relevant Consent, and consequence of failing to deliver against milestones)
3. The required steps to enable an applicant to accept an Offer under this process
4. The outcome where the acceptance terms of the Offer have not been met by the applicant by the end of the Offer acceptance period
5. The process under which changes to Applications, Offers and Connection Agreements will be accepted

SONI will review this policy on an ongoing basis, considering industry and government policy changes whilst ensuring that it supports SONI in meeting its statutory obligations under the Licence. SONI reserves the right to modify this policy at any stage to ensure it delivers the statutory obligations.

Please note that in the event of any inconsistencies between this paper and any Connection Agreement, the Connection Agreement would take precedence.

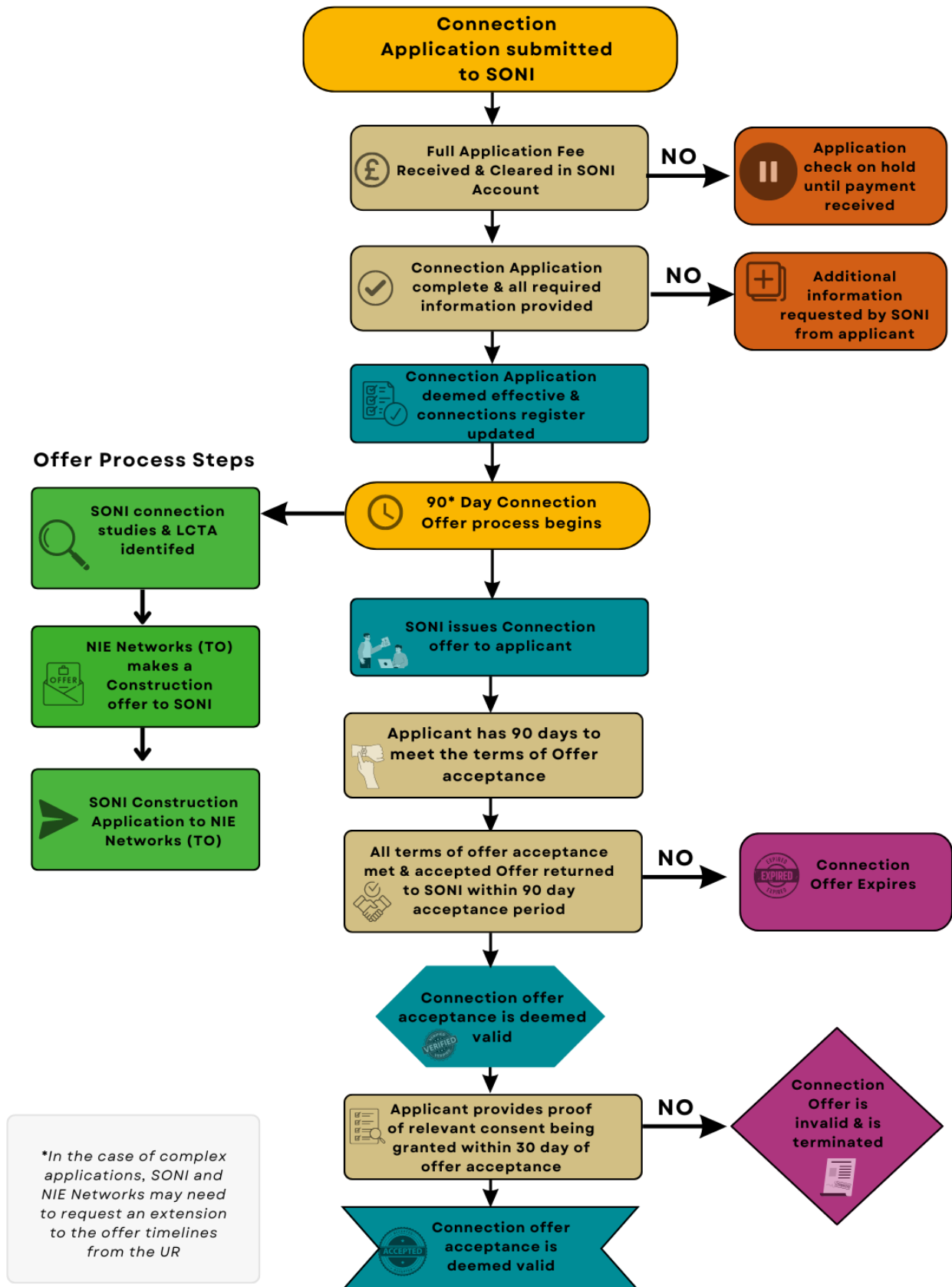
**Figure 1.** SONI Transmission Connection Offer Process valid from the publication date of this policy<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> New applications or immaterial changes to existing Connection Applications, modifications to Connection Offers and/or Connection Agreements.

<sup>5</sup> New Offer or modification Offer to modify an existing connection/Connection Agreement

<sup>6</sup> And subject to TCCMS update where relevant



# Pre-Application

## General Information

### Pre-Application Meetings & Feasibility Studies

If a prospective applicant is considering applying for an Offer for their proposed project, we encourage early engagement with the SONI Connections team.<sup>7</sup>

SONI will facilitate a meeting to discuss the potential connection. In advance of this meeting, the applicant must complete and provide the SONI Connections team with a completed Customer Pre-Meeting Form.<sup>8</sup> At the meeting, the proposed project can be discussed, as well as the steps within the Offer Process, and SONI will endeavour to assist in helping to answer queries the prospective applicant may have, in as far as is possible.

It should be noted that SONI will **not** be in a position to provide assurances regarding any potential connection arrangements and/or connection charges for the proposed project at this stage. However, a meeting can be helpful in directing potential applicants to relevant and/or published information.

With this in mind, and with the ever-changing environment of transmission connections and indeed the connections queue, SONI cannot facilitate feasibility studies for a connection ahead of receiving a valid Connection Application.

In place of this, SONI is seeking to engage with industry partners to move towards a more strategically plan-led approach to connections, whereby there would be more flexibility for SONI to signal the most appropriate and strategic locations and technology type. In our view, this would quicken the timescales and reduce costs by reducing the technical complexity of connections and the need for wider unnecessary network reinforcements.

In progressing this approach with the relevant stakeholders, SONI can develop the grid more proactively and in more of a plan-led fashion which can ensure the required grid and connection capacity is available for the right generation, in the right places, in a timelier manner.

We believe this shift in approach, (which would require collaboration between government, industry and regulatory partners) would accelerate progress towards Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets and deliver better value for money for consumers.

In the coming months, SONI intends to engage with industry and the Utility Regulator on what more of a plan-led approach would look like for Northern Ireland and the formal changes to the Licence that would be required to facilitate this.

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<sup>7</sup> [connections@soni.ltd.uk](mailto:connections@soni.ltd.uk)

<sup>8</sup> available from [connections@soni.ltd.uk](mailto:connections@soni.ltd.uk)



## Route to Obtaining Licence

SONI will only accept Connection Applications for projects that can currently obtain the relevant licence from the Utility Regulator<sup>9</sup>. A Transmission Use of System Agreement (“TUoS Agreement”) is a pre-requisite to connecting to the power system, and a licence is required to apply for that.

## Procurement Processes

The Offer Process is not directly linked to any other processes, including for example, the Balancing Market, the Capacity Market and System Services procurement processes. Changes to Transmission System Operator (“TSO”) timelines associated with these other processes may prompt change to Offer Process timelines and/or milestones and timelines within Offers.

## Connection Application

Under this policy, applicants seeking an Offer to connect to (and/or applicants seeking to modify an accepted Offer to connect to the Transmission System will need to meet the following prerequisites in order for the Connection Application to be deemed effective:

1. Submission of the relevant and complete Transmission Connection Application form<sup>10</sup> (“Connection Application”) (which includes the application declaration, the consent to release information form and use of assumed data declaration (if applicable)<sup>11</sup>, and is available on the SONI website<sup>12</sup>);
2. Payment of the relevant Connection Application fee (“Application Fee”)<sup>13</sup> in full<sup>14</sup> by electronic fund transfer or cheque; and
3. Submission of any subsequent additional data and/or clarifications on the Connection Application requested by SONI.

Whilst it is not required<sup>15</sup> that the relevant form of consent<sup>16</sup> (“Relevant Consent”) for the project has been achieved at application stage, the process of obtaining the Relevant Consent should be at an advanced stage at the time a Connection Application is submitted. A relevant reference number (for example, the planning reference from the Northern Ireland

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<sup>9</sup> i.e. The UR can issue a licence to the applicant for the project

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that before SONI can begin the connection studies, the applicant will need to provide, in line with the Grid Code, all Standard Planning Data and any Detailed Planning Data (as may be requested) for the project in order to enable SONI to undertake the necessary connection studies.

<sup>11</sup> SONI reserves the right to request agreement to this assumed data from Customers before progressing with studies.

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.soni.td.uk/\\_uuid/463e7512-d115-4d94-b1ab-79b8cb366f73/index.xml](https://www.soni.td.uk/_uuid/463e7512-d115-4d94-b1ab-79b8cb366f73/index.xml)

<sup>13</sup> See the Transmission Connection Charging Methodology Statement (TCCMS)

<sup>14</sup> and cleared in the SONI bank account as confirmed by SONI Finance

<sup>15</sup> Since 22 January 2018

<sup>16</sup> As outlined in this document

Planning Portal) or reference for other relevant consenting regimes is required within the Connection Application form.

In order to ensure efficient, co-ordinated and economical management of the Offer Process, in accordance with the Licence, SONI will **not** accept more than one Transmission Connection Application concurrently for the same project.

Additionally, an applicant cannot accept more than one Connection Offer for the same project, i.e., connection offer(s) from the TSO for connection to the Transmission System, connection offer(s) from the Distribution Network Operator (“DNO”) for connection to the Distribution System, or connection offer(s) from the Other TSO<sup>17</sup> for connection to the Other Transmission System.

SONI will only begin work on formulating the terms of an Offer after the Connection Application has been deemed effective. Details related to these pre-requisites are outlined below.

## Payment of Application Fees

When making a Connection Application, the applicant must pay the full Application Fee on application submission.<sup>18</sup>

SONI shall only commence a formal application check when the full Application Fee is received and the funds have cleared (as confirmed by SONI Finance). The Application Fee may be paid via by electronic fund transfer or cheque.

The value of the Application Fee is dependent on the Maximum Export Capacity (“MEC”) in MW and/or Maximum Import Capacity (“MIC”) in MW of the applicant’s project.

## Technical Compliance

Article 12(2) of the 1992 Order and the terms of the Licence impose a general duty on SONI to:

- “ensure the development and maintenance of an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission which has the long-term ability to meet reasonable demands for the transmission of electricity;
- contribute to security of supply through adequate transmission capacity and system reliability; and
- facilitate competition in the supply and generation of electricity.”

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<sup>17</sup> “The holder of a licence granted pursuant to Section 14 of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999 in the Republic of Ireland to operate a Transmission System” as defined in Grid Code.

<sup>18</sup> Please see Section 8 and Table 1 of the SONI TCCMS for more details. (<https://www.soni.ltd.uk/customer-and-industry/regulatory-information/>). \* TCCMS is currently under review and therefore subject to change.



In complying with this duty, the following components of the application are considered:

## **Compliance with Grid Code and European Network Codes**

Compliance with technical codes and standards is in the interests of electricity consumers as failure to comply can have a direct and adverse impact on the security and quality of electricity supplied and may have health and safety implications<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, in accordance with Condition 25 of the Licence, in order for SONI to offer to enter into any Connection Agreement or TUoS Agreement, the applicant must **commit to compliance** with the Grid Code and any relevant European Network Code(s)<sup>20</sup>, insofar as they are applicable to the applicant's project.

Applicants must be compliant with all relevant codes and standards. Should a situation arise where the plant or apparatus that an applicant is seeking to connect (as part of their project) will not be/is not fully compliant with the Grid Code and relevant European Network Code(s),<sup>21</sup> the applicant must seek to obtain a derogation<sup>22</sup> from the particular requirements and/or obligations of the Grid Code and/or relevant European Network Code(s) that they will not be able to comply with.

Milestones associated with Grid Code and relevant Europe Network Code(s) compliance will be outlined within the Offer. Failure to comply with these milestones will result in the Offer being terminated and SONI will draw down on any associated MEC / MIC capacity bond.<sup>23</sup>

## **Grid Code Planning Data and Use of Assumed Data**

Standard Planning Data must be provided to SONI when applying for an Offer or for a modification to an existing Offer and/or Connection Agreement. The data required are set out in the relevant application forms as per the Planning Code section of the Grid Code.

However, it should be noted that under PC6.4.2 of the Grid Code, SONI may specifically request Detailed Planning Data at application stage to permit more detailed system or other Transmission System studies for the purposes of formulating the terms of an Offer. As such, SONI reserves the right to request additional data if necessary and the applicant should provide such information as required promptly throughout the Offer Process.

In order to deem the Connection Application effective, SONI requires all necessary Grid Code planning data and all such information as SONI may reasonably require for the purpose of formulating the terms of an Offer. In the absence of the applicant providing the complete set of data required, SONI may use assumed data to complete the connection studies. Applicants shall be required to confirm their agreement with any SONI proposed assumed data and the use of any assumed data by SONI is at the sole risk of the applicant with SONI accepting no

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<sup>19</sup> As per the [Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2012](#).

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.entsoe.eu/network\\_codes/](https://www.entsoe.eu/network_codes/)

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.entsoe.eu/network\\_codes/](https://www.entsoe.eu/network_codes/) <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/wholesale-market/electricity-network-codes>

<sup>23</sup> See section 9 of the TCCMS

responsibility or liability should the assumed data differ from the actual parameters of the applicant's as built connection plant and apparatus and/or facility, including where this subsequently results in additional works being required to facilitate the connection (and/or additional connection charges to the applicant).

All relevant Detailed Planning Data under the Grid Code must be submitted to SONI within 28 days of accepting an Offer from SONI. The relevant Detailed Planning Data is set out within the Planning Code section of the Grid Code and as part of the Data Registration Code section of the Grid Code.

All potential connection applicants should carefully review the Grid Code and the relevant European Network Code(s) to ensure that they can meet all the requirements and obligations relevant to their project from the outset.

## Application Declaration

On submission of the Connection Application, the applicant must sign an application declaration as set out in the Connection Application form.

If it is discovered before a contract is in place that an applicant has made a false, misleading or inaccurate representation, then the Connection Application may be withdrawn from processing by SONI, and any live Offer terminated. For clarity, the application declaration applies to the technical compliance<sup>24</sup> portion of the Offer Process as well as to all other substantive information supplied by the applicant (e.g. location of the project, the operating regime, ownership rights, etc.).

## Application Effective Date

All applications will be assigned an 'application effective date', which will be the date on which all of the below requirements have been fulfilled:

- the Connection Application is received by SONI (the time that the emailed Connection Application was received);
- the relevant Application Fee is paid in fully and is confirmed as received in the SONI bank account; and
- the application check is complete by SONI with any further data and information requested by SONI having been submitted by the applicant so that SONI to carry out the connection studies and formulate the terms of the Offer.

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<sup>24</sup> Including Grid Code and relevant European Network Code(s) compliance

Where SONI is in receipt of two or more applications, the application with the earliest application effective date will be first in the connection queue.

All applicants will have a period of 210 days from and including the application effective date to secure Relevant Consent (which will ordinarily be comprised of the 90 day Offer Process time, 90-day Offer acceptance period, plus an additional 30 days within which the Relevant Consent must have been obtained). For the avoidance of doubt, where SONI issues an Offer in less than 90 days, additional time will be added to the Offer acceptance period so that the applicant has a total of at least 210 days from the application effective date to meet the relevant consent milestone.

## Connection Offer

SONI will endeavour to issue the Offer within 90 days of the application effective date. However, it should be noted that where a connection is complex, this may not be possible and SONI may need to request an extension from the Utility Regulator (the “UR”) to the Offer timelines<sup>25</sup>. To the extent that this is the case, and an extension is granted by the UR, the timescale for preparation of the Offer will be adjusted accordingly, but the Offer acceptance period will remain at 90 days from and including the Offer being issued.

The milestone where the Relevant Consent must be in place for the project will be the later of thirty (30) days post Offer Acceptance or two-hundred and ten (210) days post the application effective date.

Figure 1 outlines the steps involved and indicative timescales of the Offer Process, including the interaction between SONI and NIE Networks, in its role as Transmission Owner (“TO”) in providing a Construction Offer to enable SONI to progress the Offer. Both SONI and the TO work together to meet the required timescales as set out in their respective licences and the Transmission Interface Arrangements (“TIA”)<sup>26</sup>. However, transmission connections are often complex, even when considering them at a high level, and additional time may be required by either SONI and/or the TO to develop costings and prepare the Construction Offer and/or the Offer.

For information, a brief description of the steps that SONI and NIE Networks must follow in compiling an Offer are:

## Construction Application

SONI undertakes the necessary connection studies to determine the proposed connection arrangement. SONI meets with NIE Networks to discuss the proposed connection

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<sup>25</sup> Under Condition 25(5) of the SONI Licence.

<sup>26</sup> Transmission Interface Arrangements between SONI and NIE Networks. See: <https://www.soni.ltd.uk/customer-and-industry/regulatory-information/>

arrangement and subsequently applies to the TO via a construction application (“Construction Application”) for a Construction Offer to build the Transmission connection to the project. The Construction Application is based on high-level design assumptions (e.g. around the consideration of other connections that are in the connection queue or an assumed connection circuit route), as many elements of the proposed connection arrangement cannot be confirmed until the completion of the pre-construction phase (e.g. if required, once planning permission for establishing the Connection Assets for the proposed connection arrangement is obtained, ground investigation works have been completed, and landowner consents obtained, etc).

## Construction Offer

The TO then develops and issues a Construction Offer to SONI which sets out the TO’s terms, conditions and estimated construction charges to carry out the work to construct the proposed connection arrangement to connect the project as outlined in SONI’s Construction Application. The Construction Offer includes the high-level scope of the construction works (and any assumptions used to develop this scope), commercial terms, a high-level construction programme and any other terms and conditions that the TO deem necessary.

## Connection Offer

Once the Construction Offer has been received from the TO, SONI pass through the terms, conditions and construction charges from this into SONI’s Offer to the applicant in respect of the connection of the project

The Offer will set out the Least Cost Technically Acceptable (“LCTA”)<sup>27</sup> connection arrangement (as determined via connections studies), works required to connect the project to the Northern Ireland Transmission System, together with the associated connection charges, commercial terms and a high-level indicative programme. While SONI and the TO endeavour to be as accurate as possible in developing the connection charges contained in the Offer, there are a number of uncertainties that exist (e.g. considerations that may arise during the planning consultation process, ground conditions that become apparent before or during construction, etc.). Therefore, the connection charges in the Offer are an informed high-level estimate, based on the information available to SONI and the TO at the time of the Offer. The connection charge may vary and be revised as the project progresses. Where this may be the case, the applicant shall be required to formally accept any variations to the connection charges via a revised Offer setting these out.

The Offer will also include delivery and payment milestones associated with pre-construction and construction. Failure to meet these milestones will result in the Offer being terminated.

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<sup>27</sup> As defined in the TCCMS.

For the avoidance of doubt, Firm Access Quantity (“FAQ”) will be assessed in line with established processes<sup>28</sup> that were previously consulted upon.<sup>29</sup>

## Offer Acceptance

The Offer will remain open for acceptance by the applicant for a period of 90 calendar days from and including the date of issue.

The Offer issued by SONI to the applicant will set out standard terms and conditions applicable to acceptance of the Offer, along with what documentation and evidence that must be provided to meet the acceptance terms and conditions when the signed acceptance form is returned to SONI in order for SONI to deem the acceptance valid. These are:

1. The Acceptance Form is completed and submitted by the applicant on or before the Offer expiry date;
2. The deposit against the connection charge as outlined in the Offer is paid in full and is confirmed as received in the SONI bank account;
3. Required security cover (e.g. MEC Bond or MIC Bond) is in place in a form agreed with SONI<sup>30</sup>;
4. The applicant provides written evidence, to SONI’s reasonable satisfaction, of its ownership of the project and ownership and/or rights to use the land(s) on which the project is located; and
5. Upon receipt of a written request from SONI, the applicant provides written evidence that the insurance(s) are in place as per the Offer.

Should the applicant fail to comply with any of the above terms by the time of the Offer expiry date, the Offer will expire, and the application will be removed from the connections register<sup>31</sup>. If the applicant chooses to reapply at a later date, the Offer Process will restart from the beginning and a new application fee, a new position in the connection queue and new application effective date will apply.

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<sup>28</sup> Which are subject to change

<sup>29</sup> See Section 6 of the [Alternative Connection Application and Offer Process Proposal - Decision Paper, published 31 May 2016](#).

<sup>30</sup> See Section 9 of the TCCMS.

<sup>31</sup> As published on the SONI website

## Relevant Consent Milestone

The Relevant Consent must be in place on the later of thirty (30) days post Offer Acceptance or 210 days post the Application being deemed effective.

Evidence demonstrating that relevant consent has been granted, to SONI's reasonable satisfaction, must be submitted to SONI by the later of thirty (30) days post Offer Acceptance or two hundred and ten (210) days post the Application being deemed effective. Please note that where relevant consent is full planning permission, a Notice of Opinion to approve will not be accepted as proof that full planning permission has been granted.

The consent must be relevant and accurately reflect the project that is described in the application form.

For the avoidance of doubt, SONI reserves the right to act in its sole discretion in determining whether any evidence of relevant consent provided is sufficient. Generally, SONI's role will be to assess whether there is prima facie evidence of sufficient Relevant Consent on the basis of the documentation provided. Where this is unclear, SONI may request further documentation (e.g. Certificate of Lawful Use or Development).

If the Relevant Consent has not been obtained within the required timeline, then the Offer will be terminated with immediate effect.

The submission of a Connection Application without the relevant consent already in place or already in the process of being obtained is done entirely at the risk of the applicant.

If at any time post Offer acceptance the Relevant Consent is found to be no longer in place or has expired, SONI reserves the right to terminate the Offer with immediate effect.

The Relevant Consents are as follows:

- The Relevant Consent for onshore projects is full planning permission;
- The Relevant Consent for a Compressed Air Energy Storage ("CAES") project is a Mineral Prospecting Licence;
- The Relevant Consent for offshore generation projects (e.g. an offshore windfarm or tidal project) is either an Exclusivity Agreement or an Agreement for Lease from The Crown Estate;
- The Relevant Consent for Interconnection with another balancing zone are:
  - Inclusion in ENTSO-E's Ten-Year Network Development Plan project list<sup>32</sup>; and

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<sup>32</sup> <https://tyndp.entsoe.eu/>



- Evidence, to SONI's reasonable satisfaction, of the completion of a circuit routing feasibility study; and
- Evidence, to SONI's reasonable satisfaction, that a contract is in place with an offshore survey company to provide seabed surveys.

SONI will verify that the terms of the Offer have been met and the Relevant Consent has been received and is sufficient for the project that the Offer relates to.

In the scenario that Relevant Consent has been granted but is subject to Judicial Review ("JR"), SONI will respect the presumption of legality of the Relevant Consent while the JR is ongoing, and the project would maintain its place in the connections queue. SONI will commence work on the connection while the JR and any appeal thereof is being considered by the courts; however, this will only be done at the sole financial risk of the applicant.

In addition, the Offer may need to be reassessed (e.g. revised studies required) by SONI once the JR has concluded, which may require an additional application fee to be paid by the applicant and/or require additional technical work, including revised studies.

If the applicant meets the terms of Offer acceptance but fails to provide proof of relevant consent within the required timeline, SONI will write to the applicant to confirm that the acceptance is no longer valid, the Offer has been withdrawn and the application will be removed from the connections queue.

If at any time post Offer acceptance the Relevant Consent is found to be no longer in place or has expired, SONI reserves the right to terminate the Offer with immediate effect.

## **Offer Acceptance & Relevant Consent (Offshore Specific)**

### **Temporary Amendment to Policy**

SONI recognises the strategic importance of Offshore Wind connecting to the Transmission system. The Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 ("The Act") set a target that at least 80% of electricity consumption must come from renewable sources. Analysis undertaken in producing the Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap (v1.1) ("SOEF") published by EirGrid and SONI<sup>33</sup> shows that in order to achieve this target by 2030, at least 500 MW of offshore wind is required. We note however that the current ambition for offshore generation in Northern Ireland is from 2030 as set out in DfE's Path to Net Zero Energy – 2024 Action Plan

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.soni.ltd.uk/the-grid/shaping-our-electricity-f/>.

Report<sup>34</sup>. There is need to progress development of offshore wind in Northern Ireland (“NI”) to support the delivery of Northern Ireland’s renewable ambitions.

The Relevant Consent for offshore generation projects (e.g. an offshore windfarm or tidal project) is either an Exclusivity Agreement or an Agreement for Lease from The Crown Estate (“TCE”). Currently, it is not possible for offshore developers to obtain the relevant consent from TCE for offshore projects in Northern Ireland waters.

The DfE and TCE issued a statement of intent<sup>35</sup> in January 2023 to confirm their joint aspirations in the field of offshore renewable energy development. This outlined the ways in which the two organisations will work together to enable leasing for offshore wind in the Northern Ireland marine area, in parallel with work to address relevant regulatory and planning challenges in conjunction with other Government Departments. As such, and to enable the progression of offshore projects in Northern Ireland, and to aid delivery of the 80% renewable energy targets, **for a limited time**<sup>36</sup>, the terms and conditions applicable to acceptance of the Offer for an offshore generation project will be as below. These must be provided when the signed acceptance form is returned to SONI in order for SONI to deem the acceptance valid. These are:

1. The Acceptance Form is completed and submitted by the applicant on or before the Offer expiry date;
2. The deposit against the connection charge as outlined in the Offer is paid in full and is confirmed as received in the SONI bank account; and
3. Required security cover (e.g. MEC Bond or MIC Bond) is in place form agreed with SONI.

The applicant must provide written evidence to SONI’s reasonable satisfaction that they have entered into and have been granted a lease in the next available leasing round for Northern Ireland, no later than four (4) weeks from the date the outcome of the leasing round is made available.

If the applicant is unsuccessful in the leasing round, the Offer will be withdrawn and SONI will draw down on the MEC Bond associated with the project as per the terms of the Offer.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Energy%20Strategy%20-%20Path%20to%20Net%20Zero%20Energy%202024%20Action%20Plan%20Report%20-%20Final%20%281%29.PDF>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/statement-intent-between-dfe-and-crown-estate>.

<sup>36</sup> Until such time as an offshore leasing round has been completed for Northern Ireland.

## Expiry of Offer

If the acceptance terms of the Offer have not been met by the applicant by the end of the 90-calendar day acceptance period, then the Offer automatically expires. If the applicant wishes to subsequently seek a further Offer for the connection of the same project after the Offer expiry date, a new Connection Application and relevant Application Fee will be required, and the application will be treated as a new application with the Offer Process starting from the beginning and the position in the connection queue reflecting the new application effective date.

## Changes to Connection Applications, Offers and Connection Agreements

Where an applicant wishes to make an immaterial<sup>37</sup> correction to a Connection Application, they should advise SONI Connections team at the earliest opportunity.

Where a Customer wishes to make a material change<sup>38</sup> to an issued Connection Offer, this will be treated as a new application. As such, the Customer will need to reject the issued Offer and submit a new application. The application will begin the Connection Offer Process from the start, with a new Application Fee and form required. The Customer's new application will join the Connections queue as a new Application and standard Offer Process timelines will apply.

Where a Customer wishes to modify an existing connection, or an accepted Connection Offer, a new Application Form will be required. The Connection Offer Process will begin again from the start, with a new Application Fee and a new Application Form required. The new application will join the connections queue as a new application and standard Offer Process timelines will apply.

## Disclaimer

All information provided is for information purposes only and does not constitute a legal contract between SONI and any person or entity. The use of information contained within this document for any form of decision making is done so at the user's own risk.

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<sup>38</sup> As determined by SONI.

## Contact for Queries

If you have any questions, please contact [connections@soni.ltd.uk](mailto:connections@soni.ltd.uk).

