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1. Introduction

EirGrid and SONI are the electricity Transmission System Operators for Ireland and Northern Ireland respectively – together we bring electricity to every part of the island and plan for future growth.

The EirGrid and SONI corporate strategies are shaped by climate change and the need for a secure transition of the electricity sector to low-carbon, renewable energy. The context of climate change is well understood and beyond scientific doubt and the only question now is how fast society can respond to limit the damage already done and protect our planet for current and future generations.

To support this, in 2021 we launched the Shaping Our Electricity Future initiative, which sought to understand the changes needed to the electricity system to achieve at least 70% of electricity from renewable generation sources (referred to as RES-E) by 2030 in both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

In November 2021, the Irish Government published its Climate Action Plan 2021, which set a target of a 51% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030 relative to 2018, up to 80% RES-E in Ireland by 2030 and commits Ireland to reaching net zero emissions by 2050. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 saw the introduction of carbon budgets, which set out limits on an economy wide basis on the total greenhouse gases that can be emitted in Ireland in five-year periods. On 6 April the Government's first carbon budget programme came into effect comprising three budgets for 2021-2025, 2026-2030 and 2031-2035. A process is now underway to allocate this to each sector through setting sectoral emissions ceilings in similar five year budget periods.

In June 2022, the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) came into force. This legislation commits Northern Ireland to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, the introduction of targets for 2030 and 2040 and the introduction of a carbon budget for 2023-2027 and every 5 years thereafter and the development of a climate action plan within 24 months. Part of this legislation also sets a new target of achieving at least 80% RES-E in Northern Ireland by 2030. We will continue to reflect on this as policy develops.

Given the updated legislation, we now need to plan for an electricity system that can deliver up to 80% RES-E (hereafter referred to as the Renewable Ambition) by 2030 in both Ireland and Northern Ireland. We also need to consider how the electricity system in Ireland complies with the requirements set out in the sectoral emissions ceilings for electricity to 2030 when finalised.

During this significant electricity system transition we will need to deliver the Renewable Ambition while retaining the essential reliability, resilience, and affordability of the Ireland and Northern Ireland electricity systems. We also need to consider the impacts of ageing infrastructure, the retirement and displacement of fossil fuel generators, an increase in renewable electricity supply, new technologies and storage, a rise in demand from large energy users and distribution connected customers, the social impacts of electricity infrastructure and a change in consumer preferences, behaviours, and expectations for their electricity supply.

The main objective of the Shaping Our Electricity Future initiative is to outline a blueprint for a secure transition to deliver the Renewable Ambition.

1.1 What do EirGrid and SONI do?

EirGrid and SONI plan for the future of the all-island electricity grid and operate it every minute of every day; this includes interconnecting to neighbouring grids and running the wholesale electricity market. We ensure that everyone has power when they need it at the most economic price possible. The grid safely brings power from generators to both the ESB Networks and NIE Networks' distribution systems, which supply every home, farm, community, and business in Ireland and Northern Ireland. It also brings power directly to large energy users like high-tech manufacturing and data centres.

The EirGrid and SONI five-year company strategies are shaped by climate change and the transition of the electricity sector to low-carbon, renewable energy. This transition will have widespread consequences where there will be major changes in how electricity is generated and also in how it is bought and sold. There will also be major changes in how electricity is used, such as for transport and heat across the decade. All these changes will need to be managed in a coordinated and cost-effective way.

The electricity system will carry more power than ever before and most of that power will be from renewable sources. Coal, peat and oil-based generation will be phased out in the next decade. As this happens, new technology will allow electricity users to generate and store power and return any surplus to the grid.



2. Shaping Our Electricity Future V1.0

2.1 What did Shaping Our Electricity Future V1.0 do?

In 2021, EirGrid and SONI launched the Shaping Our Electricity Future initiative, which set out to understand the changes needed to the electricity system to ultimately deliver a target of at least of 70 % RES-E in both Ireland and Northern Ireland. A deep and broad consultation was held in spring 2021 with both industry and the public. EirGrid and SONI conducted a range of engagement and participation activities over the course of 14 weeks — this included a deliberative dialogue process in Ireland and national forums involving industry and civil society in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Scenario-based analysis was conducted across the whole electricity system which resulted in the Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap. The Roadmap was published November 2021 and provided an outline of the key developments to enable the delivery of the 70% RES-E target and support the transition to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

2.2 What was the key feedback from the Shaping Our Electricity Future V1.0 consultation?

The following is a summary of the feedback EirGrid and SONI received over the course of the 14 week engagement in spring 2021.

Public Engagement Feedback

Community ownership of renewables

strong desire that communities should be supported and incentivised to develop community owned renewable projects.

Costs

no appetite for the cost of electricity to rise because of the transition to a low-carbon electricity system.

Economic development

need for rural communities to share in any economic upturn as a result of the implementation of the 70% RES-E target.

EirGrid and SONI roles

the public in either jurisdiction was not fully aware of EirGrid and SONI and their respective roles in relation to the electricity grid and markets

Environment and ecology

concern how the outcome of Shaping Our Electricity Future would impact on the landscape across Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Landowner concerns

a key concern was the recognition and protection of landowner rights where infrastructure development takes place on farmland.

Micro-generation

communities are eager to get involved and believe micro-generation should have a relatively significant role.

New technology / future proofing

ensuring the grid is fit for purpose beyond 2030 and that the grid utilises technology to minimise new grid infrastructure.

Offshore generation

a large amount of feedback supported offshore generation; many stakeholders felt that it has a less negative environmental and visual impact.

Onshore generation

wind energy was accepted as a solution to support decarbonisation. However, the public generally preferred onshore solar generation.

Public acceptance / licence

consultation process clearly identified and reinforced the need for public acceptance / licence by energy infrastructure developers.

Public Engagement Processes

stakeholders were adamant that it must be genuine open and honest engagement.

Security of supply

security of energy supply is an important consideration in reaching the renewables target.

Industry Feedback -

Alternative technologies

consider mature non-wires alternatives and new technology options in any future development of the network.

Costs

similar to public engagement feedback, no appetite for the cost of electricity to rise because of the transition to a low carbon electricity system.

Market enhancements

electricity markets must evolve significantly to support investment for new and existing market participants.

Network delivery

public acceptance is crucial for the timely delivery of new grid infrastructure.

Network reinforcements

commence building the required network infrastructure to support renewables as quickly as possible.

Operations processes and tools

must evolve to manage increased variable generation mix with a focus on facilitating increased penetration of renewable generation.

Renewable targets

70% renewables is a step on a journey towards a net zero energy system and this should be implicit in any plans from EirGrid and SONI.

Resourcing

considered that EirGrid /SONI requires the funding and resources to implement the proposed program of work.

Security of supply

similar to public engagement feedback, security of energy supply is an important consideration in reaching the renewables target.



2.3 What were the main messages in Shaping Our Electricity Future V1.0?

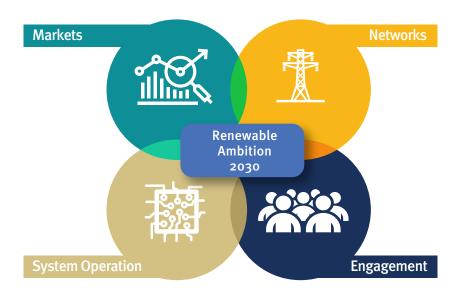
The following is a summary of the main messages from the Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap launched in November 2021. They built on the aforementioned 14 week engagement and corresponding technical and economic analysis by EirGrid and SONI.

- There is enough planned renewable capacity to meet the 70% RES-E target.
- Additional network infrastructure must be built to achieve the 70% RES-E target.
- Maximising the use of the existing power grid is key to delivering the 70% RES-E target.
- In the short to medium term, the system adequacy position in Ireland will be challenging
- New large scale dispatchable resources (low carbon) are needed estimated at 2 to 3 GW of new dispatchable capacity across Ireland and Northern Ireland for a secure transition to 2030.
- Continued secure operation of the power system is critical
- Operating the future power system with fewer conventional synchronous generators will be technically challenging
- System services will play a key role in managing the resilience of the power system.
- Service providers connected to the distribution network and partnerships between the Transmission System Operators (TSOs) and Distribution System Operators (DSOs) are required to help release the full potential of demand-side flexibility
- Market design needs to be closer aligned to long-term renewables policy objectives of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- To enable the deliverability of electricity infrastructure the consultation process clearly identified and reinforced the need for public acceptance.
- There was strong support for the connection of micro-generation from communities across Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- There was strong support for community ownership of renewables and that communities should be supported and incentivised to develop community owned renewable projects
- A need for rural communities to share in any economic upturn because of the implementation of a roadmap with major Renewable Ambition.
- EirGrid and SONI recognise cost is a key concern in a secure transition and we are committed to working with governmental and regulatory stakeholders to help ensure a secure, reliable but also affordable electricity system out into the future

2.4 Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap - Multi-year plan

The key components of the 'Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap' are grouped under the following four areas:

- Network Infrastructure
- Engagement
- System Operations
- Electricity Markets



2.4.1 Network Infrastructure

In spring 2021 four separate network approaches were consulted upon to assess how the electricity transmission network in Ireland and Northern Ireland could be developed to support the projected changes in electricity demand, generation, and interconnection by 2030. The final Roadmap considered all feedback (from public and industry).

The Consultation and associated feedback can be found here:

Shaping-Our-Electricity-Future-Plain-English-Consultation-Report.pdf (eirgridgroup.com)

Shaping-Our-Electricity-Future-SONI-Plain-English-Consultation-Report.pdf

The outcome of this process was blended scenarios for both Ireland and Northern Ireland. These reflected a balance of different views and were validated against current government policy in both jurisdictions, at that time.

Table 1: Summary of the separate scenarios for Ireland and Northern Ireland

	Ireland	Northern Ireland	
Demand	46.5 TWh (~High GCS Scenario)	10.1 TWh (~High GCS Scenario)	
Offshore Wind	+5,000 MW	+100 MW (Pilot)	
Onshore Wind	+1,300 MW	+1,100 MW	
Solar PV	+1,500 MW (500 MW micro- generation)	+400 MW (100 MW microgeneration)	
Batteries	+1,450 MW	+200 MW	
De-rated Gas Capacity	+2,000 MW	+600 MW	

A comprehensive set of network planning studies were also undertaken to determine what potential network reinforcements were needed to ensure the 70% RES-E target is delivered in both jurisdictions in the context of growing demand. This identified potential projects in addition to other committed projects which are currently progressing through EirGrid and SONI's grid development processes.

Table 2: Potential transmission network reinforcements

Reinforcement Category	Ireland	Northern Ireland
New circuits	4	3
Uprate existing circuits	17	7
Replace existing circuits	5	-
Upvoltage existing circuits	2	-
New transformer	1	1.2
Power flow controllers	6	-
Dynamic line ratings	5	2
Total	40	12

2.4.2 Engagement

EirGrid and SONI together with the governments, regulators, DSOs, the public and industry will both lead and underpin the Ireland and Northern Ireland response to climate change in the electricity sector. It is EirGrid's and SONI's role to plan and develop the grid for the 2030 Renewable Ambitions of each jurisdiction.

Over the next seven years, we will develop significant amounts of new grid infrastructure. More than ever before, it's important that we gain the support of individual landowners, their neighbours, and the wider communities. Our public engagement has and will continue to provide a comprehensive, thoughtful, transparent, and inclusive approach where we listen to those who live near future grid infrastructure. The scale of this challenge is enormous – therefore EirGrid and SONI ensured community engagement and participation was a key part of the Shaping of Our Electricity Future Roadmap.

2.4.3 System Operation

To deliver on government renewable electricity and climate policies in Ireland and Northern Ireland we must accommodate unprecedented penetrations of variable non-synchronous renewables such as offshore wind, onshore wind and solar whilst keeping curtailment levels to a minimum. This will require a significant evolution of the operation of the power system which will present unique challenges.

The System Operations strand of Shaping Our Electricity Future was divided into four workstreams:

- **Operational Policy:** The undertaking of operational studies and analysis and developing operational policies to facilitate the transition to 70% RES-E by 2030;
- **Standards and Services**: Ensuring we have the right operational standards and appropriate system services frameworks to support investment in required capability;
- **Operational Tools**: Overseeing the delivery of enhanced and new integrated control centre technologies and tools that are required to operate the system securely and efficiently with increasing levels of variable non-synchronous RES; and
- **Technology Enablement**: Facilitating the development and integration of new technologies and innovations on the power system to enable them to operate efficiently and effectively.

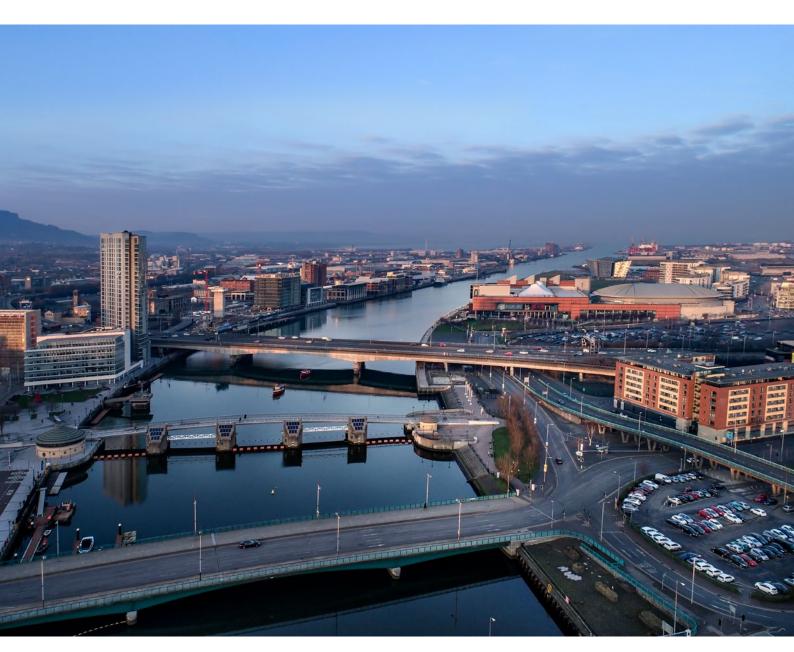


2.4.4 Markets

EirGrid and SONI identified key market initiatives to evolve the current market design to achieve the 70% RES-E target grouped under two pillars:

- 1. Aligning markets to the operational challenges of high renewables evolving the design of the wholesale electricity and system services markets to provide aligned incentives for third-party investment. This will provide the necessary energy and system services to meet dynamic demand requirements and physically operate the power system to deliver the 70% RES-E target.
- 2. Full integration of Single Electricity market (SEM) in the Great Britain and EU Markets evolving the market structures to best utilise interconnection to improve the economic outcomes for SEM consumers and to facilitate the long-term export of renewable energy efficiently and effectively.

Under these two pillars the Roadmap proposed a pathway of markets initiatives, key decision points, milestones and implementation timelines to inform how to achieve the 70% RES-E target in an affordable, effective and timely manner. This multi-year plan is a starting point for discussion within the industry to debate the needs and challenges in achieving the 70% RES-E target and facilitate appropriate design decisions in a timely coordinated fashion.



3. Evolving Policy

Policy will continue to evolve and therefore we must adapt with it. This section provides an overview of the current policy and how it has changed in recent times.

3.1 European Policy Developments

The EU and its member states continue to be at the forefront of international climate and energy policy with the aim of carbon neutrality by 2050 as set out in the *Regulation on the governance of the energy union and climate action* (EU/2018/1999) and the European Green Deal.

The 2030 Climate and Energy Framework set out binding targets for the EU to meet which include:

- 40% cuts in Greenhouse Gas emissions,
- 32% share of Renewable Energy and
- at least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency

As part of this, member states are required to produce National Energy and Climate Plans from 2021 to 2030 and a Long-Term Strategy to reduce Greenhouse Gases to 2050.

In December 2020, the European Council committed to increasing the EU emissions reduction target to at least 55% by 2030 showing further climate change ambition. The Fit for 55 package is a set of 13 cross cutting legislative proposals to revise and update EU legislation and to put in place new initiatives with the aim of ensuring that EU policies are in line with the climate goals agreed by the Council and the European Parliament. It is based on the 'polluter pays' principle and 'efficiency first' principle, proposing to extend carbon pricing to two thirds of emissions and an investment of €1 trillion.

The Commission adopted the State of the Energy Union Reports for 2021 on 26 October 2021, taking stock of the progress that the EU is making in delivering the clean energy transition, nearly two years after the launch of the European Green Deal. In summary they note that while there are several encouraging trends, greater efforts will be required to reach the 2030 goal of cutting net emissions by at least 55% and achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

As these commitments are embedded into policy instruments, at EU or National level, there may be further considerations and implications for the update to the Shaping Our Electricity Future roadmap.

3.2 Developments in the United Kingdom

In 2019, the UK updated its Climate Change Act to bring into law a requirement for net zero emissions by 2050. The UK was the first country to set carbon budgets; the fifth carbon budget, covering the period 2028 to 2030, limits the total greenhouse gas emissions in the UK to an average 57% reduction in emissions relative to 1990. The sixth carbon budget set an average 78% reduction in emissions for the years 2033 to 2037.

Energy policy is devolved to Northern Ireland, so how the country contributes to the carbon budgets and delivers net zero emissions will be set by the devolved administration.

3.3 The United Kingdom withdrawal from the EU (Brexit)

The Brexit transition period ended on 31st December 2020 and the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol to the Withdrawal Agreement has provided the basis for the continued operation of the SEM and trade of wholesale electricity across the island of Ireland and in Northern Ireland after 1 January 2021.

Under the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), new SEM-GB trading arrangements for the Day-Ahead electricity market were to be established, agreed, and implemented by April 2022 however, a policy decision in relation to these trading arrangements is still being discussed between GB and the EU.

3.4 Policy Developments in Ireland

In line with the EU ambition, the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 commits to achieving a 51% reduction in Ireland's overall Greenhouse Gas emissions by 2030 relative to 2018 emission levels, and to achieving a climate neutral economy no later than 2050.

The Climate Act 2021 establishes a legally binding framework with clear targets and commitments, to ensure the necessary structures and processes are in place to deliver our national, EU and international climate goals and obligations in the near and long term.

The Climate Action Plan (2021) and the Programme for Government: Our Shared Future (2020) and the targets in the Climate Act 2021 place an onus on EirGrid to both enable and deliver elements of the greatest change on the power system since the rural electrification project during the 1940's to the 1970's. This transformation will feed into major changes in how both business and society behave and operate. The Climate Action Plan 2021 explicitly sets out updated emission reductions needed to meet national and international targets over the period 2021 to 2030. Some of the targets for electricity by 2030 include:

- Reduce electricity sector emissions to a range of 2 to 4 MtCO2 equivalent
- Up to 80% of electricity demand generated from renewable sources
- Up to 8GW of onshore wind capacity
- At least 5GW of offshore wind capacity
- Between 1.5 and 2.5 GW of Solar PV capacity.
- At least 500 MW of community based renewable energy projects
- Ensure that 20-30% of system demand is flexible by 2030
- Delivery of three new transmission grid connections or interconnections to Northern Ireland, Great Britain, and the EU.

On 30 November 2021 the Government published its Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply to ensure security of electricity supply to 2.4 million homes and businesses throughout Ireland and facilitate the target of up to 80% renewable electricity generation by 2030. The Policy Statement builds on policies set out in the National Development Plan and the Climate Action Plan 2021, recognising that security of electricity supply and National Energy Security¹ continues to be a national priority as the electricity system decarbonises towards net zero emissions and associated need to develop flexible conventional generation. The Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) have published a programme of work which targets the development of circa 2,000 MW of flexible gas-fired generation capacity.

¹ gov.ie — National Energy Security Framework sets out the government's response to the impacts of the war in Ukraine on the energy system in Ireland (www.gov.ie)

3.5 Policy Developments in Northern Ireland

In 2021, The Northern Ireland Executive published its Energy Strategy 'Path to Net Zero Energy'. The new strategy outlines a roadmap to 2030 aiming to deliver a 56% reduction in energy-related emissions, on the pathway to the 2050 vision of net zero carbon and affordable energy. A key component of this is to meet at least 70% renewable electricity by 2030.

In January 2022, the Northern Ireland Executive released an Action Plan for the year which includes the aim of developing a plan to deliver 1GW of offshore wind from 2030.

In June 2022, the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) came into force. This legislation commits Northern Ireland to achieving emissions reductions of 48% from 1990/1995 level and net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Part of this legislation updated the requirements of the Energy Strategy in setting a new target of achieving at least 80% RES-E in Northern Ireland by 2030. The legislation also requires Northern Ireland to introduce carbon budgets, with the first budget to cover the period 2023 to 2027, and also requires that Northern Ireland publish a Climate Action Plan by June 2024.

4. Shaping Our Electricity Future Version 1.1

EirGrid and SONI are now working on version 1.1 of Shaping Our Electricity Future. This will build on the foundations of the previous version, feedback since the launch and will recognise evolving energy and climate policy in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Shaping Our Electricity Future V1

Launched Nov 2021 70% RES-E

Shaping Our Electricity Future V1.1

Targeting Dec 2022 up to 80% RES-E, GHG emissions



5. Call for Inputs – How you can help

Since carrying out the studies that underpin our roadmap, the target has increased to achieve 80% electricity from renewable sources by 2030 whilst also considering the longer-term journey to a zero-carbon electricity system. Therefore, we are now seeking your views and insights, which along with feedback received since the launch of our roadmap, will be used to inform our considerations / studies when updating the roadmap at the end of 2022.

5.1 Questions

Below are questions for your consideration broken down into the relevant areas. We ask that you frame any inputs into this call for inputs process using these questions. This will support us in our efforts in achieving the Renewable Ambition.

5.1.1 Power System Assumptions

- 1) Following a deep and broad engagement programme, the Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap version 1.0 launched in November 2021 articulated a vision of the 2030 power system in Ireland and Northern Ireland. In the context of evolving energy and climate policy since this launch:
 - i) What would you recommend as the key areas of change in this vision and what is your reasoning for same? These could include:
 - · Electricity demand
 - Conventional generation
 - Renewable generation
 - Micro-generation
 - Interconnection
 - Storage
 - Demand side response
 - Others
 - ii) What are your thoughts on the renewable generation mix for Ireland and Northern Ireland specifically assumptions for onshore wind, solar and offshore wind? What is your reasoning for this?
 - iii) What are your views on the deliverability of the required renewable generation portfolio, given the 2030 timeframe, and the ongoing global supply chain challenges

5.1.1 Networks Reinforcements

- 2) The Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap version 1.0 describes a network reinforcement capital programme out to 2030. In the context of evolving energy and climate policy since the launch of version 1.0:
 - i) What recommendations have you on how we maximise the use of the existing grid / develop the existing grid in the context of an already extensive network capital investment programme?
 - ii) Are there any network reinforcement technologies or approaches you think we should consider in our updated roadmap that were not considered previously? E.g. clustered connection of renewable generation, flexible network devices or control strategies, longer duration storage options, further interconnection etc.

5.1.2 Networks Multi-Year Plan

- 3) The Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap version 1.0 describes a multi-year plan for the evolution of transmission network delivery out to 2030. In the context of evolving energy and climate policy since the launch of version 1.0:
 - i) What are your thoughts on the networks workstreams *Ireland Networks Plan* and *Northern Ireland Networks Plan*?
 - ii) What additional measures do you believe now should be considered?

5.1.3 Electricity Market

- 4) The Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap version 1.0 articulated EirGrid and SONI's recommendations on how electricity markets should evolve out to 2030. In the context of the evolution of energy and climate policy since this launch:
 - i) What are your thoughts on the market pillars Aligning markets to the operational challenges of high renewables and Full integration of SEM in the Great Britain and EU Markets?
 - ii) What additional measures do you believe now should be considered?

5.1.4 Operations Multi-Year Plan

- 5) The Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap version 1.0 describes a multi-year plan for the evolution of power system operations out to 2030. In the context of evolving energy and climate policy since this launch:
 - i) What are your thoughts on the operations workstreams *Operational Policy, Standards and Services, Operational Tools* and *Technology Enablement*?
 - ii) What additional measures do you believe now should be considered? Please include supporting reasoning as part of your response.

5.1.5 Stakeholder Engagement Multi-Year Plan

- 6) The Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap version 1.0 describes a multi-year plan for the evolution of stakeholder engagement out to 2030. In the context of evolving energy and climate policy since this launch:
 - i) What are your thoughts on the engagement workstreams Ireland Engagement Plan, Northern Ireland Engagement Plan and Industry Engagement Plan?
 - ii) What additional measures do you believe now should be considered?



5.2 How can you provide feedback and what is the timeline?

5.2.1 How?

Consider the content of this document and help us on our collective journey to meet the Renewable Ambition. We want to hear your inputs and you can do this by accessing our portal which can be found here: https://consult.eirgrid.ie/ OR https://consult.soni.ltd.uk/

If you would prefer to send us your views in another way or in a more open format, we welcome that too.

5.2.2 Timelines

This call for inputs is open for 4 weeks and will close 19th August 2022.

6. How your feedback will help Shaping Our Electricity Future Version 1.1?

This decade has the potential to be revolutionary for Irelands and Northern Irelands electricity systems. With your help, we can build on the results already achieved and continue to lead the world in how much of our electricity comes from clean, renewable sources.

We have the potential to meet the challenge of the climate crisis with innovation, communication and cooperation that will be an example for others. Ireland and Northern Ireland can make a meaningful difference to a global crisis, but it will mean embracing and accepting change. Some of these changes may have local impacts, but they will benefit future generations to come.

EirGrid and SONI are committed to a collective and collaborative form of decision-making which is why we want to hear your ideas and thoughts. We are open to workable ideas that can prepare the grid to take 80% of Irelands and Northern Irelands electricity from renewable sources by 2030 and the first step is to tell us what you think in response to our questions. At the end of 2022, we aim to publish our updated Roadmap which will act as a blueprint for the evolution of the electricity system out to 2030.





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