

Consultation on Electricity Connection Policy to the Northern Ireland Distribution System

15 November 2010

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1. Introduction

Under Article 19 of The Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 NIE has a duty, upon being required to do so by the owner or occupier of any premises, to give a supply of electricity to those premises. In meeting such a request NIE may require any expenses reasonably incurred in providing it to be defrayed by the person requiring the supply of electricity to such extent as is reasonable in all the circumstances. Therefore NIE is required by its Licence to prepare a statement, approved by the Authority, setting out the basis upon which charges will be made for connection to the Distribution System.

This statement is required to be in a form and to contain the detail necessary to enable any person to make a reasonable estimate of the charges to which it would become liable for the provision of a connection to the Distribution System.

More specifically under the terms of its licence NIE shall set connection charges at a level which will enable it to recover:

- (a) "the appropriate proportion of the costs directly or indirectly incurred in carrying out any works, the extension or reinforcement of the licensee's system and the provision and installation, maintenance and repair and, following disconnection, removal of any electrical lines, electrical plant, meters, special metering, telemetry, data processing equipment or other items; and
- (b) a reasonable rate of return on the capital represented by such costs".

The number and nature of connections to the distribution system have changed in the recent past and this trend is expected to be sustained as a result of government targets and incentives for renewable and embedded generation. Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources requires guaranteed access to the grid for renewable generators and the current rules in place meet the terms of this directive. This consultation will however look at the rules for bearing and sharing costs associated with that access. Therefore the Utility Regulator has initiated a review of the policies and principles implemented by this connection charging statement, to ensure that it:

1. is appropriate for the increasing trend in renewable and micro generation connecting to the system;
2. is appropriate for the nature of demand connections currently required;

3. promotes openness and transparency;
4. ensures that connection costs are cost reflective

All classes of customer are included in this consultation. The charging statement currently contains different connection rules for:

- authorised generators requiring a licence to generate
- demand connections greater than 1 MW
- other customers (micro generation, smaller businesses and domestic)

In addition, any connections at 110 kV or above are processed by the Transmission System Operator under separate charging arrangements, which have been harmonised by the SEM Committee across the island of Ireland. This is not within the scope of this consultation.

A link to the current Statement of Charges for Connection to the Northern Ireland Distribution System has been provided in Section 14 References.

2 Structure of the Paper

The purpose of this consultation paper is to identify the specific areas of the current Statement of Charges for Connection to the Northern Ireland Distribution System which may need to be reviewed. These areas could have an impact on the current costs to connecting customers and also those who pay for use of the system that they are already connected to. While some of these issues may be addressed in the short term, any which have an impact on the regulatory allowance NIE can claim via use of system charges will be included in the determination of allowed revenues under the price control which will take effect in 2012.

The aspects of the current policy that are considered appropriate to review at present are:

- Section 3) Current charging methodology in the Statement of Charges (new domestic and smaller business connections)
- Section 4) Treatment of domestic connections of significant cost
- Section 5) Connection costs paid by “vulnerable customers”
- Section 6) Connection of micro-generation
- Section 7) Rebates for generators and customers
- Section 8) The definition of “connection assets” and associated costs
- Section 9) Timing of Connection Offers and Connections
- Section 10) The treatment of Charges for Connecting Groups of Generators
- Section 11) Other issues

3. Current charging methodology in the Statement of Charges (new domestic and smaller business connections)

Current situation

The current charging methodology in the Statement of Charges produced by NIE provides information for domestic customers and small business that require a new connection. The provisions for this group of customer, who are neither an over 1MW customer nor an authorised generator, is identified in section 5.1. Any customer in this category wishing to connect is required to pay 60% of the estimated cost of installing new and/or modified Connection Assets.

It should be noted that in situations where, in NIE's view, the recovery of 40% of the cost of a high value, low usage connection through charges for use of the Distribution System is an excessive subsidy for the customer being connected then the customer will be charged the full cost of the connection. NIE has indicated that it regularly charges 100% for connections to holiday homes, mobile homes and temporary and unmetered supplies in accordance with Section 5, paragraph 5.2.2, of the current statement of charges.

NIE's current price control makes provision for the recovery of the 40% subsidy via its capital allowance. The depreciation of the assets is charged annually and a return on the capital is paid at the rate specified for distribution system assets. Customers on DUoS tariffs for demands greater than 1MW do not contribute to the subsidy. In addition the subsidy is recovered from the remaining distribution demand customers according to their DUoS tariff type, e.g. domestic customers pay less than commercial customers.

Issues with current situation

While this subsidy was considered to be appropriate for the initial electrification of Northern Ireland and served to deliver the wider social benefits associated with a supply of electricity to homes and small businesses, there are now requirements on regulators to ensure that charges to customers are cost reflective.

Given the extent of the distribution system within Northern Ireland today, it could be argued that the electrification policy has been delivered and that the circumstances that required a subsidy no longer exist. In addition to the depreciated cost of 40% of the assets, customers pay NIE a return on the capital used to construct the assets (currently 4.0% p.a). A review of this policy would not only reduce the direct cost charged to electricity customers by the DUoS tariff, but

also minimise any increases in the value of the asset base (and subsequent return on the capital) associated with this subsidy.

Given that the capital cost of the subsidy is contained within NIE's RP4 capex determination until 2012 and that customers would require notice of any changes, any alteration to the subsidy policy could only be implemented from the start of the next price control in 2012.

Proposed solution

The Utility Regulator proposes that, in order to promote cost reflective charging and to encourage connections at the points of the network that require the least construction of new assets, the 40% subsidy be removed from the start of RP5.

Views sought

The Utility Regulator welcomes comments about the proposed removal of the 40% subsidy.

4. Treatment of domestic connections of significant cost

Current situation

The Utility Regulator has been made aware of several cases where the cost of a connection is significantly higher than the typical costs due to the location of the applicant. At present NIE notifies the Utility Regulator of any domestic customer who has applied for connection to the distribution system and whose cost for that connection is greater than £15,000. The Utility Regulator is not required to intervene in cases where the connection cost is deemed to be high however NIE is required to provide justification of the costs.

Issues with current situation

If the 40% subsidy is removed, then the number of situations where the cost to the connecting customer is above this threshold is likely to increase.

Possible solutions

The Utility Regulator believes that when a customer is building a new house or premises etc the cost of the connection to the distribution system should be factored into the overall cost of the building and that the cost of connection should be paid in full. Therefore, while regulatory scrutiny will continue to be applied to the composition of these connection costs, these costs should act as a locational signal and no subsidy is proposed.

This should act as an incentive to developers to balance the costs of constructing properties with the cost of the construction of any additional electricity infrastructure required.

Views Sought

Do you consider that the charging of the full cost of a connection for a new dwelling or business premises would act as a locational signal to future developers and will ensure a balanced decision about the total costs associated with the alternative options available?

5. Connection costs paid by “vulnerable customers”

Current situation

The Utility Regulator has been in discussions recently with NIE and the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (CCNI) regarding high costs connections which may be attributed to vulnerable customers.

The Utility Regulator’s FWP states

We will have regard to the interests of individuals who are disabled or chronically sick; individuals of pensionable age, individuals with low incomes and individuals in rural areas. Section 75 of the NI Act also requires us to consider other groups such as children and minority ethnic groups. We seek to secure improvements in service delivery to vulnerable customers through our monitoring of licence conditions and codes of practice. This is achieved through the regulatory processes and also in consultation with vulnerable customers and their representative organisations.

Other work streams in this area can be found as part of the Utility Regulator’s Social Action Plan 2009 – 2012.

Issues with current situation

A vulnerable customer seeking to connect to the distribution system is currently treated no differently than any other customer and will be required to pay NIE for the cost of connection. This is regardless of whether or not the customer in question has the ability to pay for his or her connection. The removal of the 40% subsidy would possibly increase the number of occurrences of this situation, however the affordability threshold for vulnerable customers is low and there is a concern that even a subsidised cost of connection could be deemed excessive.

Possible solutions

The Utility Regulator proposes to continue working closely with CCNI in this area and aims to resolve the following issues in regard to vulnerable customers including

- a) A framework regarding how a vulnerable customer is defined and identified. This will be developed as part of the Utility Regulator’s Social Action Plan.

- b) The minimum period of time during which the applicant has been a permanent resident at that address. The current proposal is that an applicant has been a resident at the address for more than 10 years. (it is proposed that only existing dwellings would be eligible for any support)
- c) NIE will need to complete a pro-forma, on an individual basis, for passing the relevant details through to the Utility Regulator and or the CCNI and other agencies, if necessary, to allow decisions regarding vulnerability and ability to pay to be taken.
- d) Will the infrastructure bring broader benefits to the community? This is where there is a reasonable argument that there should be infrastructure in the area, for example, where the customer lives on or near a main road, or where there are a number of dwellings without supply. In such cases this infrastructure work should be funded by NIE and should be included as part of NIE's capital expenditure allowance, and attract the same rate of return as other investments.
- e) Unable to Pay. For the Utility Regulator and CCNI this will be difficult to quantify but will likely include factors such as income. The Utility Regulator and CCNI may need to engage with DSD and NIHE to agree a process whereby DSD and NIHE are the initial assessors of need and vulnerability.

The above issues will need to be resolved before determining whether or not the applicant has a case.

With any scheme like this, there is potential for misuse. It is important to remember that the connection of a property to the electricity network will increase its value, which will benefit the owner (not those funding the cost of the connection).

Views Sought

Do you consider it appropriate that the Utility Regulator, in conjunction with the CCNI, and NIE divert resources to this line of work?

Do you consider that it is appropriate that a limit should be set as to the amount a vulnerable customer should pay for their connection?

What levels of funding do you consider to be appropriate for vulnerable customers?

If a limit is set do you consider it appropriate that those vulnerable customers with a high cost connection have part or all of their connection funded through the wider customer base?

What steps do you consider appropriate for the Utility Regulator to take to ensure that any new process developed for the treatment of vulnerable customers is not abused?

6. Connection of micro-generation

Current situation

'Class A: Small' supply is defined within the Electricity (Class Exemptions from the Requirement for a Licence) Order (Northern Ireland) 1999 Schedule 2 as:

Persons who do not supply any electricity except—

(a) electricity which they generate themselves; or.

(b) electricity which they generate themselves together with electricity which is supplied to them by the holder of a licence under Article 10(1)(c) or (2) of the Order,.

and who do not at any time supply more electrical power than—

(i) 500 kilowatts disregarding in the case only of electrical power generated solely by CHP generating sets, not being non-fossil fuel generating sets, power provided to any consumer of the type specified in paragraph (b)(i) or (b)(ii) of Class C; or.

(ii) in the case of electrical power generated solely by non-fossil fuel generating sets, one megawatt, disregarding power provided to any consumer of the type specified in paragraph (b)(i) or (b)(ii) of Class C.

A micro generator is defined under the Renewables Obligation Order (Northern Ireland) 2009 27.—(1) as:

a generating station which—

(b) has not had a declared net capacity in excess of 50 kilowatts at any time after 31st March 2009.

In GB the government has stated a desire for renewable micro generation to connect to the system, and has offered an incentive of a subsidised network connection to eligible generators.

Issues with current situation

Approximately 60% of the NI 11kV rural distribution network is unsuitable, without upgrading, for connection of generation above a minimal size (6 kW), and the Utility Regulator recognises that this may present a barrier to micro-generation

It is acknowledged that there are tangible benefits that can be delivered by renewable micro-generation in NI and can go some way towards meeting government targets and reducing emissions. To support this form of generation government has recently increased the levels of incentivisation through Renewable Obligation Certificates. However there is a risk that large scale grid code compliant renewable generators might have to be curtailed in order to allow micro-generators to operate. This risk is due to the high penetration of wind that is expected in next few years, the small and finite demand within NI for electricity and limited potential for exporting generation. In addition to this, conventional plant would still be required to run in order to ensure system stability.

It should also be clear that distribution systems were designed to transmit energy from the transmission connected energy sources to load customers. They were not designed to perform to the level of network security required of transmission systems which cater for interconnection of large generators, nor is it practical to assume that they could be rebuilt with that robustness. Thus the 110kV system is more robust than the 33kV which in turn is more robust than the 11kV and LV systems. Much generation is now being connected at distribution levels. The standard of network security that generators connecting to distribution systems should expect is not specifically defined. Respondents are asked to consider whether the charging mechanism should have a defined level of network security. To maintain better for flexibility in the level of network security NIE and the generator making application to be connected could also agree this on a case by case basis.

Micro generation is not required to be grid code compliant and therefore does not provide reactive power, inertia or reserve to the system operators. Micro-generators are required to be D Code compliant, including in the provision of associated facilities. The cost to both micro-generators and the system operators of enforcing compliance would be excessive, given that NI has sufficient generation to meet demand for the next seven years. It should also be noted that micro-generators below 500 kW do not have to use renewable sources of energy and so could be adding to the carbon emissions from NI.

Possible solutions

Given the subsidy available to renewable micro-generators in GB for connections, the Utility Regulator believes that subsidies could be considered for NI. However this should be assessed in the context of the differing characteristics of the electricity systems in GB and NI.

Views sought

Do you consider it appropriate for micro-generation connections to be subsidised by the use of system tariffs in NI, given the demand profile and generation portfolio expected over the coming decade and the target of 40% of electricity supplied in NI to come from renewable sources by 2020.

What level of subsidy of the cost of connection do you think should be considered by the Utility Regulator?

7. Rebates for generators and customers

Current situation

The Statement of Charges for Connection to the Northern Ireland Distribution System identifies the charge associated with proposals for a new customer to be connected to the Distribution System by making use of existing Connection Assets which were funded by an existing domestic customer(s) (connected within the preceding five years) the new customer will be charged a proportion of the value of the shared Connection Assets, calculated in accordance with the Electricity (Connection Charges) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992. (Section 6.8)

If the existing domestic customer(s) was connected within the preceding five years then that customer(s) will be entitled to receive a partial rebate of the original connection charge from NIE, less a payment to NIE in respect of reasonable administrative expenses.

Where a number of customers connect simultaneously and share the use of a Connection Asset, each customer will be charged a proportion of the estimated cost of the shared Connection Asset. Each customer's charge will be based on the ratio of their connection capacity to the total connected capacity making use of the shared Connection Asset

Within the Transmission Connection Charging Methodology Statement the time line defined within the cost allocation rules for shared assets, for making use of existing Connection Assets which have been funded by an existing user is ten years.

Issues with current situation

Rebated shared connection costs under the above definitions only apply to domestic customers and this could be seen as impacting on other classes of customers e.g. businesses.

There is a material distortion between the time frames identified above applied to transmission and distribution connections.

Possible solutions

The Utility Regulator is considering harmonising the Statement of Charges for Connection to the Northern Ireland Distribution System with the Transmission Connection Charging Methodology Statement and adopting a ten year period for the allocation of rebates for shared connection assets. These proposals would be applicable from a future date that the Utility Regulator would determine.

Views sought

Do you consider it appropriate that a ten year period for rebates for shared connection assets is adopted?

Do you consider it appropriate that rebates will apply to all classes of customers connected to the distribution system?

8. The definition of “connection assets” and associated costs

Current situation

At present a customer connecting to the distribution system is required to pay for the assets necessary to:

- connect the customer’s equipment to the distribution system;
- reinforce the Distribution System which are at the connection voltage level and one voltage level above and
- In the case of a customer connecting at 33kV, reinforce the Transmission System at 110k.

This can therefore be classed as a “partially deep” connection policy.

The exact definition of a connection asset is defined in Section 8 of the Statement of Charges for Connection to the Northern Ireland Distribution System.

Issues with current situation

The Utility Regulator is keen to ensure that costs for connecting to the distribution system are transparent and fair and do not place an unreasonable financial burden on customers and generators looking to connect. Given the predicted amount of renewable generation to be connected to the distribution system any reduction in costs for connection will be an encouragement to the connecting generators and could facilitate achievement of the targets for emissions reductions and consumption of renewable energy; however this will increase the use of system charges for all customers.

Possible solutions

One option, the Utility Regulator is considering, is a change to the distribution connection definitions. This change would be in line with the definition given in the transmission connection charging statement where the connections costs are for the connections assets defined as those assets which are installed

- to enable the transfer for the Maximum Export Capacity (MEC) or the Maximum Import Capacity (MIC) of the user(s) located at the connection point.

- as a result of the user's effect on fault current levels (excluding any other location other than the transmission node to which the User is connecting)

This would effectively introduce a “semi – shallow” connection policy. It will also have the effect of reducing the cost of the connection to the applicant. It should be noted, where asset reinforcement is required at other nodes or at other voltages due to the connection, this cost will have to be borne by the wider consumer body through an increase in the Distribution Use of System charges. Currently generators do not pay any charge for use of the distribution system as they are deemed to have paid the full cost at time of connection, this may need to be reviewed if the policy changes.

Views sought

Do you consider changing the definition currently in place regarding connection assets for the distribution system appropriate?

The Utility Regulator welcomes views on the merits of changing from a partially deep to semi-shallow connection, and the appropriateness of charging only demand customers for use of the distribution system.

9. Timing of Connection Offers and Connections

Current situation

Condition 30 of NIE's Licence specifies the timescale that NIE must comply with when offering terms for connection or modification to an existing connection. The time starts once NIE has received a connection application containing all the information that NIE may require for the purpose of preparing the connection offer. This is currently set at three months, except where the Utility Regulator consents to a longer period. There are no requirements defined for the time allowed to NIE for carrying out the work.

NIE recommend that a customer applies for an electricity supply or alteration only when planning permission has been granted for the proposed development. Following that, they may have to obtain some or all of the following to enable them to undertake the connection works:

- Approval from other landowners for the new or altered infrastructure including formal agreement to way leaves or easements
- Planning permission from the DRD Planning Service. This planning permission is entirely separate from the planning approval granted for the generation or demand site
- Permission from DRD Roads Service to carry out work on public roadways

NIE state that in some instances, it may take 9 months before the actual work can be completed.

Through their web site NIE state that, on receipt of all information required to progress an application, a quotation will be provided within 2-12 weeks. An application check list is provided to assist this process. Processing an application may involve load profiling, surveys etc.

Issues with current situation

There are two issues in getting connected to the Northern Ireland distribution system:

1. Getting a quotation or connection offer.

A number of different groups and customers have highlighted to the Utility Regulator the timings involved in receiving a quotation from NIE and the

frustration this has caused.

There is a risk that the time taken from an initial submission to NIE to receiving a quotation can be drawn out due to all data not being received by NIE. This point in the connection process can be drawn out while as there can be debate over the information required.

2. Connection times for the completion of the work.

The Utility Regulator is conscious that other electricity networks in Europe have quicker connection regimes and it is keen to explore all avenues that could lead to reduced connection times.

Possible solutions

To achieve a faster turn around in quotes and completion of the work will require a greater resource from NIE and in doing so could push up the cost of the connection quote. Going forward into NIE's next price control RP5 NIE could be incentivised to reduce both quotation times and the length of time it takes to connect a customer. This would only be applicable if NIE could demonstrate that there was added value to all customers. Respondents views on this topic will be taken forward and will help the Utility Regulator make informed decisions going forward into RP5.

Other solutions could be

- Should the offer from NIE include a date for connection (or a time from accepting the offer)?
- Should there be an option to pay for an accelerated service?

Views sought

Do you consider it appropriate to incentivise NIE to reduce connection and quotation times?

Do you consider it appropriate that NIE include a contractually binding duration for the connection works in their offers, with the areas outside their control that relate to the timing of that specific connection identified?

10. The treatment of Charges for Connecting Groups of Generators

Current situation

On 16 March 2010 NIE published a consultation paper on the Charges for Connecting Groups of Generators to the Northern Ireland Distribution System. The consultation focused on the proposals for connecting groups, or 'clusters', of generation projects to the distribution system and, in particular, outlines potential charging options. Views were invited on these proposals.

The consultation was open for 6 weeks and respondents were asked to address their responses to NIE.

Based on this consultation, NIE has provided a report to the Utility Regulator identifying its recommendations for the connection of groups of generators.

A link to this document has been provided in Section 14 References.

Views sought

The Utility Regulator would welcome any further views respondents may have on NIE's recommendations to the Utility Regulator.

11. Other issues

1. Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Costs

Current situation

As defined in section 6.6 of the Statement of Charges for Connection to the Northern Ireland Distribution System the connection charge may include an element to provide for the operation and maintenance (O&M) costs over the lifetime of the connection. Where such an O&M charge is levied it shall be paid as part of the connection charge. It shall be set at 2% of the Connection Asset value, increasing in real terms over the lifetime of the Connection Agreement, and discounted back to a present value using the regulated rate of return.

Currently demand customers do not pay any O&M costs within their connection charges. 100% of O&M costs for connection assets are recovered in demand DUoS charges for all customers both less than and greater than 1MW. This policy is consistent for all demand customers. However, the current policy for generator connections to the distribution network is that they pay 100% O&M for the connection assets within their connection charges. This charge is based on the lifetime of the connection asset.

Issues with current situation

Several customers have approached the Utility Regulator in recent months with regard to O&M costs and have indicated to the Utility Regulator problems with the O&M charges. Customers feel that the O&M costs can be excessive considering the actual cost of maintaining their connection asset. These were also raised in the responses received to the NIE consultation paper.

Possible solutions

The Utility Regulator does not at this time propose any changes to the O&M charges. Given the number of complaints raised however the Utility Regulator will seek to address the O&M costs in future papers.

Views Sought

Do you consider the above O&M costs and method of charging for them to be appropriate?

2. Grid Code and Trading and Settlement Code Costs

Current situation

Section 1.6.5 of the Statement of Charges for Connection to the Northern Ireland Distribution System states that the statement is required to include the methods by which and the principles on which any charges will be made for the provision of special metering or telemetry or data processing equipment by NIE for the purposes of enabling any person which is bound to comply with the Distribution Code to comply with its obligations in respect of metering there under, or for the performance by NIE of any service in relation thereto.

Generators who are variable price takers connected to the distribution system also must comply with the requirements placed on them by the Trading and Settlement Code.

Section 1.5 also states that the statement is required to be in a form and to contain detail as shall be necessary to enable any person to make a reasonable estimate of the charges to which it would become liable for the provision of a connection to the Distribution System.

Issues with current situation

The Transmission System Operator is required to have communications links to any distribution connected generators that must be grid code compliant and they must also undertake studies to identify the impacts that these generators have on the transmission system. The costs of these studies and communications systems are not explicitly included within the costs that are charged to connecting generators.

Possible solutions

It is the Utility Regulator's intentions to ensure that all costs associated with connecting to the distribution system are fully transparent and that customers are conscious of all costs likely to be levied against them by NIE. To this extent the Utility Regulator will instruct NIE to include within future iterations of the statement costs associated with the requirement to comply with the Grid Code and Trading and Settlement Code.

Views sought

Do you consider it appropriate that costs associated with compliance with the Grid Code are reflected in the Statement of Charges for Connection to the Northern Ireland Distribution

System? The Utility Regulator would welcome views on any issues or concerns relating to this issue.

3. Contestability

Current situation

Under its Licence NIE is responsible for the planning, development, maintenance and operation of the Distribution System, a system consisting of some 27,000 miles of network connecting approximately 800,000 customers and with a maximum demand of about 1,700 MW.

It is the only party in Northern Ireland entitled to offer terms to connect, or to modify an existing connection, to the Distribution System. Such terms are offered following receipt by NIE of an application containing all such information as NIE may reasonably require for the purpose of formulating the terms of the offer.

Issues with current situation

A number of connecting parties have raised concerns with the Utility Regulator regarding the cost of and time required to connect their windfarm to the system. They believe that it would be possible for them to connect their equipment quicker and for a lower cost than NIE have quoted. There are currently no formal mechanisms in place that would allow generators to tender openly for the construction of connection assets and subsequently manage the time and cost risks themselves.

Possible solutions

As part of its Forward Work Plan the Utility Regulator has stated that it will review the regulatory framework with a view to facilitating private network development and connections wherever appropriate. The Utility Regulator has already started discussions with both DETI and a private network developer in the area of private networks. This does not however cover connections at this time.

The disaggregation of connection activities into contestable and non-contestable activities would need careful consideration as would the arrangements whereby the Utility Regulator and NIE could be satisfied that new entrants to the connections market would adhere to consistent quality and health and safety standards.

Views sought

The Utility Regulator would welcome views on any issues or concerns relating to this topic.

12. Next Steps

This consultation paper covers a wide range of discrete topics. The responses to the paper will be used to inform a number of processes. These include:

- The RP5 price control for NIE
- Future updates to the Connection Charging Statement
- The forward work plan of the Utility Regulator

13. Views Welcome

The Utility Regulator would welcome views on the Statement of Charges in general. In particular respondents may wish to comment on payments and timings. Where possible, given the constraints on confidentiality, respondents should provide details on how they believe the charging statement has failed to address individual connection problems.

NIAUR welcomes representations and objections from all interested parties on the Statement Of Charges for Connection To The Northern Ireland Distribution System. Non-solicited views pertaining to any other part of this consultation paper or any associated matter are also welcome.

Responses to this consultation paper should be sent to both:

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By 10 January 2011

Unless marked as confidential all responses will be published. Individual respondents may ask for their responses, in whole or in part, not to be published, or that their identity should be withheld from public disclosure. Where either of these is the case, we will ask respondents to also supply us with the redacted version of the response that can be published.

As a public body and non-ministerial Government department, we are bound by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) which came into full force and effect on 1 January 2005. According to the remit of the Freedom of Information Act, it is possible that certain recorded information contained in consultation responses can be put into the public domain. Hence, it is now possible that all responses made to consultations will be discoverable under FOIA – even if respondents ask the Utility Regulator to treat responses as confidential. It is therefore important that respondents note these developments and in particular, when marking responses as confidential or asking the Utility Regulator to treat responses as confidential, should specify why they consider the information in question to be confidential.

14. References

Statement of Charges for Connection to the Northern Ireland Distribution System

June 2008

http://www.nie.co.uk/suppliers/pdfs/NIE_Distribution_Connection_Charging_Statement%28June08%29.pdf

Utility Regulator Forward Work Plan

http://www.uregni.gov.uk/uploads/publications/2010-11_FWP.pdf

Utility Regulator Social Action Plan 2009-2012

http://www.uregni.gov.uk/uploads/publications/2009-11-09_Social_Action_Plan_FINAL.pdf

Northern Ireland Electricity - Transmission and Distribution Price Control 2007-2012 Proposals

Paper December 2005

<http://www.niaur.gov.uk/uploads/publications/price-control-rp4-public-paper-nie4.pdf>

Northern Ireland Electricity – Transmission and Distribution Price Control 2007-2012

Further Consultation Paper June 2006

http://www.niaur.gov.uk/uploads/publications/T_D_Price_Control_2007-2012_Further_Consultation_Paper_June_06.pdf

Northern Ireland Electricity – Transmission and Distribution Price Control 2007-2012

Final Proposals September 2006

http://www.niaur.gov.uk/uploads/publications/TD_Final_proposals_Sept_06.pdf

Northern Ireland Electricity – Participate in Transmission Licence

http://www.uregni.gov.uk/uploads/publications/2009-08-26_NIE_plc_-_Licensing_Scheme_Transmission_Licence_-_Consolidated.pdf

Transmission Connection Charging Methodology Statement March 2008

[http://www.soni.ltd.uk/upload/SEM-08-029%20SONI%20Charging%20%20Statement\[1\].pdf](http://www.soni.ltd.uk/upload/SEM-08-029%20SONI%20Charging%20%20Statement[1].pdf)

Charges for Connecting Groups of Generators to the Northern Ireland Distribution System
Consultation Report 15 October 2010

<http://www.nie.co.uk/suppliers/pdfs/Consultation%20Report%20-%20Final%20-%2015%20October%202010.pdf>

Distribution Code

http://www.nie.co.uk/suppliers/pdfs/Distribution_Code_1_May_2010.pdf

Grid Code

<http://www.soni.ltd.uk/upload/CONSOLIDATED%20GRID%20CODE%201%20MAY%202010.pdf>

DETI Draft Strategic Energy Framework

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