FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT FOR THE NORTHERN IRELAND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PROGRAMME 2027-29

OCTOBER 2026

Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme

Utility Regulator

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this Framework Document is to provide the rules and procedures for organisations wishing to participate in the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation's (the Utility Regulator) NI Sustainable Energy Programme or "NISEP" (formally the Energy Efficiency Levy).

This Framework Document will apply to the years 2027/29 and the call for schemes will take place in October 2026. The rules in place in this document are binding on participants who shall be subject to the terms and conditions included in the Accedence Agreement, Appendix 5.

The Programme is administered on behalf of the Utility Regulator by an appointed Programme Administrator. Full details of the Programme Administrator role are listed in Appendix 4.

1.1 Format of Framework Document/How to use this document

The opening section of this document sets out the background to the NISEP, how it is managed and details of how funding is allocated.

Section 2 covers the broad framework for the NISEP and discusses in detail the various factors that need to be taken into account when developing schemes for funding. Section 3 discusses overall energy savings and types of schemes which can be submitted by organisations who wish to apply for NISEP funding. Section 4 sets down the procedures for scheme submission, Section 5 details the reporting of schemes and Section 6 describes the scheme monitoring and auditing.

The Appendices are:

- Example of a Customer Satisfaction Survey (Appendix 1);
- Example of the Vulnerability Matrix (Appendix 2);
- Guidance on the use of the different energy efficiency and sustainable energy measures, and a list of legislation relevant to sustainable schemes (Appendix 3);
- Details on the role of the Programme Administrator (Appendix 4); and
- Accedence Agreement (Appendix 5 will be published as a separate document);

- Minimum Requirements of a Fraud Policy to be supplied by Applicants (Appendix 6).
- State Aid and Subsidy Control Guidance and Declaration Forms for Commercial Schemes (Appendix 7)
- Primary Bidder Code of Conduct (Appendix 8)
- Post Termination Obligations (Appendix 9)

1.2 Background to Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP)

A sum of money is collected from all electricity customers through a Public Service Obligation (PSO), and it is used to provide funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy schemes. Previously known as the Energy Efficiency Levy (EEL), it is now known as the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP).

The strategic objectives of the NISEP are to contribute to the achievement of:

- Efficiency in the use of energy;
- Socially and environmentally sustainable long-term energy supplies; and
- The above at best value to customers whilst also having due regard to vulnerable customers.

The principle behind NISEP is that the schemes operate on a not-for-profit basis and for the achievement of the above strategic objectives.

Since 2002, as a result of a consultative process, the majority of the funding (80%) has been targeted at vulnerable customers in Northern Ireland. Subsequent consultations have substantiated the view that this level of funding for vulnerable customers should remain whilst fuel poverty levels in Northern Ireland remain high.

The Utility Regulator began a review of the EEL in 2008, the results of which were published in March 2009. After due consideration of all the issues the main decisions taken were as follows:

- to rename the Programme as the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP);
- to continue with the NISEP for at least 3 years, after which time it will be reviewed;

- to permit natural gas supply licence holders to apply directly for funding;
- to invite organisations other than licensed energy suppliers to bid for funding by September 2010; and
- to widen the types of eligible schemes to include renewable energy measures.

Since 2013 the NISEP has been rolled forward on an annual basis pending the outcome of the Department for the Economy's (formerly the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment) review of energy provision in Northern Ireland. Following recent discussions with the Department for the Economy (DfE), it is agreed that the NISEP should be extended to 31st March 2029 or until the replacement Domestic Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Heat scheme has commenced.

As per section 2.3 of the Accedence Agreement, the Utility Regulator may, at its sole discretion and without cause, elect that Approved Schemes shall end at the expiry of the first year, 2027/28, (31 March 2028) by giving written notice to the Primary Bidder on or before 30 September 2027. In this event, all reporting requirements outlined in this Framework Document that would otherwise apply at the conclusion of the second year 2028/29, shall instead apply at the conclusion of 2027/28 and shall be completed in accordance with any timescales specified by the Utility Regulator in accordance with the Accedence Agreement and the Framework Document.

1.3 Organisations permitted to compete for NISEP funding

Pre-registered organisations that meet set eligibility criteria will be permitted to apply for funding. The registration process and the eligibility criteria are set out below at paragraph 1.4.

1.4 Registration to become a Primary Bidder

Organisations wishing to be included in the 'Call for Schemes' in October 2026, other than licensed gas, water or electricity companies, and those previously granted Primary Bidder status, were required to submit a registration form (to the Programme Administrator at nisep@est.org.uk) to register for participation in the NISEP before 31 July 2026, as communicated with the NISEP extension announcement on the Utility Regulators website 2 April 2026; Extension announced to the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme | Utility Regulator.

If Primary Bidder status is not granted before the end of October 2026, the new applicant will not be able to bid for schemes for NISEP 2027/29. Scheme Submission Packs will be issued to Primary Bidders by the Programme Administrator after the Call for Schemes.

Organisations which currently hold a licence issued by or regulated by the Utility Regulator had already demonstrated financial stability and an acceptable track record through the licensing process, accordingly, they will be automatically entitled to accede to this Framework Document.

Please note that whilst licenced companies do not have to go through the Primary Bidder registration process for 2027/29, as they have already demonstrated to the Utility Regulator they are financially stable and have an acceptable track record, this is the only exception to the requirements in the Framework Document that applies to licenced companies.

Should NISEP be extended beyond March 2029, all new organisations (including those who hold a licence) who are interested in bidding for NISEP, will need to apply to become a NISEP Primary Bidder and meet all criteria outlined below.

Essential criteria for acceptance as a Primary Bidder

An applicant will only be accepted as a Primary Bidder if it can meet the following criteria:

1. Is validly and properly constituted (e.g. whether by way of a limited company, registered charity, public/statutory organisation or otherwise) in its country of incorporation or origin;

2. Primary Bidders must be a company with a registered business address in the UK or ROI and must maintain an operational office (e.g. to include office address, staffing, and business activity) within Northern Ireland at the time of application submission and for the duration of the scheme, including the 1-year post scheme delivery for Post Implementation Reporting and Audit. Evidence of both registration and an active operational presence may be requested as part of the application and compliance process.

3. Has a UK bank or building society account in the name of the primary bidder, which requires one signature on each cheque or withdrawal;

4. Is VAT registered;

5. Are not individuals or sole traders as these are not acceptable as registered primary bidders to the NISEP;

6. Can meet the requirements to provide appropriate accounts and information set out at paragraph 2d) of the registration process below;

7. Can demonstrate financial viability and financial capacity to deliver schemes, (please note, a credit check will be carried out for all applicants, Primary Bidder status may not be granted should the credit check state high risk and therefore indicate a risk in the applicant's ability in managing funds);

8. Can sign the Accedence Agreement in Appendix 5 of this document;

9. Can agree that all measures installed using NISEP funding, will be installed in Northern Ireland;

10. Can demonstrate technical capability of delivering energy efficiency, fuel poverty or renewable energy related projects (see technical soundness criteria below) or previous experience as the lead organisation or principal contractor to carry out such works;

11. Can provide evidence of having a complaints procedure in place and quality assurance procedures; and

12. Can provide copies of their Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment Procedures.

13. Can provide a copy of their Data protection/GDPR policy.

14. Can provide evidence of their customer care policy including an appeals process and evidence that staff have had appropriate training in working with vulnerable customers.

15. Can provide a statement to confirm that all staff entering customer homes will be Access NI checked. Where information disclosed through an Access NI check identifies a potential risk to customers, the Primary Bidder must undertake a documented risk assessment. If the assessment concludes that the individual presents an unacceptable risk to customers, they must not undertake NISEP duties involving direct customer engagement, including visits to customers' homes, or any other activities identified as presenting a risk to customers.

16. Can provide a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and a statement to include that all subcontractors/managing agent would have safeguarding policies in place. Safeguarding policies must be relevant to the delivery of NISEP funded installations and interactions with applicants

17. Can provide a copy of the organisation's Diversity and Inclusion policy.

18. Can declare any conflicts of interest alongside their mitigating actions.

19. Will self-identify where they have been in breach of any laws and regulations.

20. Will self-identify where they have had a contract terminated for breach, failure or negligence etc on their part.

21. Can certify they meet ISO 9001 certification for quality assurances.

22. It has not previously had its registration for Primary Bidder status withdrawn within the last three years on the basis of quality issues, financial impropriety, poor record keeping, poor financial controls or fraud.

23. If Primary Bidder status was withdrawn 3 or more years ago, you must be able to demonstrate technical capability of delivering energy efficiency, fuel poverty or renewable energy related projects (see technical soundness criteria below) or previous experience of overseeing contractors to carry out such work, within the last 3 years; References will be required to support successful delivery and independent quality monitoring results will also be required.

24. Must have at least one member of staff either employed directly by the organisation or engaged through an external professional services contract holding a minimum qualification of **accounting technician,** who will have oversight and who will be responsible for signing off each payment claim. The primary point of contact for payment claim queries can remain with the Primary Bidder appointed contact, as long as the accounting technician maintains oversight of the monthly claim including the sign off of any changes that may impact the monthly claim amount.

Essential Technical Soundness Criteria

The applicant will be deemed to have a sufficient track record only where it can demonstrate that it has acted as the lead organisation (i.e. principal contractor or equivalent) in the delivery of at least one successful energy efficiency, fuel poverty or renewable energy scheme to the value of at least **£500,000** in a single financial year completed within the last three years. The scheme must represent a centrally managed programme of works across multiple properties. The applicant must provide evidence that it had full contractual responsibility for the design,

management, delivery and oversight of the scheme. This must include responsibility for:

- Overall programme and financial management
- Management of subcontractors, supply chain and procurement
- Customer engagement and delivery
- Compliance with all reporting, governance and quality requirements

Experience gained solely as a subcontractor, installer, or delivery partner will not be considered sufficient to meet this requirement

In addition, the applicant must demonstrate experience and capability in:

- Delivering centrally managed, multi property schemes planned, coordinated and controlled as a single programme;
- Maintaining financial standing evidenced through audited accounts and recent management accounts, evidencing financial stability and capacity to support programme delivery
- Customer communications and engagement with those who benefitted from the scheme;
- Customer satisfaction processes including the management and resolution of customer complaints;
- Quality assurance processes including the monitoring of quality standards and rectification of any sub-standard installations;
- Demonstrating that the business and installers and delivery partners hold the appropriate accreditations, registrations and quality assurance memberships relevant to the measures proposed under the scheme, e.g. IAA, Gas Safe, OFTEC, MCS etc, where applicable
- Record keeping, reporting and benefits realisation and evidencing the successful completion of the scheme;
- Fraud prevention and awareness.
- The applicant must provide a copy of a statement to confirm that it has knowledge of all relevant legislation and statutory duties.
- It is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to ensure that all schemes comply with relevant legislation and statutory duties.

Registration

All Primary Bidders must either:

1. hold a Licence issued by or regulated by the Utility Regulator,

OR

2. be registered as a Primary Bidder under the procedure set out below.

If organisations do not hold a licence as defined in (1) above, then they must apply to be registered as Primary Bidders using the following procedure;

1. They must have completed a Primary Bidder registration form to commence the process as soon as possible (and by no later than 31 July 2026) and submitted this form to the Programme Administrator at nisep@est.org.uk.

2. Provide the following information/documentation to the Programme Administrator:

a) Name and address of applicant

b) Legal nature of applicant, e.g. a company incorporated under the Companies (Northern Ireland) Act 2006, registered charity, public body etc. and such further information concerning the constitution of the Applicant as the Programme Administrator may request

c) Contact details of a designated post-holder and named individual to whom all NISEP correspondence from the Programme Administrator will be addressed including postal address, email address and telephone number, in Northern Ireland

d) The most recent annual accounts of the applicant in respect of which an auditor's report has been prepared, together with that report and the annual accounts of the applicant for the two financial years preceding that together with the appropriate auditor's reports. (For companies not legally required to have an auditor's report prepared, accounts properly inspected and signed off by an accountant will suffice.) Also, such interim accounts (whether audited or not) may have been prepared in respect of a period more recent than those above. If the applicant is a wholly owned subsidiary Company, then audited group accounts should also be sent

e) Management Accounts for the last two quarters

f) Organisational structure and resources (fixed assets, staff numbers etc.) including the ability to undertake marketing activity.

g) A statement of capability demonstrating evidence of ability to complete the work; e.g. evidence of qualifications of staff or contractors to be used, membership of trade associations, courses attended and previous experience. NOTE: Registration can be withdrawn or future funding refused if the bidder fails to provide information to the Programme Administrator when requested or fails to keep appropriate records

h) At least two references from organisations which have knowledge of the company's appropriate work and which can confirm that the applicant has been responsible for a fuel poverty, energy efficiency or renewable energy scheme which meets the criteria set out under technical soundness below

i) If you intend to work with partner organisations on any schemes, please state how you intend to manage this relationship. Please note that it is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to ensure adherence to the rules within this framework document. Primary Bidders will be held responsible by the Utility Regulator for adherence to the framework document.

j) A copy of your organisation's fraud policy and fraud response plan, including a statement of zero tolerance to fraud. A summary statement of any frauds or attempted frauds against the primary bidder in each of the previous three financial years together with a synopsis of the types of actions taken and their outcomes should also be supplied.

k) A copy of your organisation's complaints procedure should be supplied along with details of your quality management system/quality assurance procedures for installation of measures;

l) A copy of your organisation's Health and Safety Policy should be supplied along with details of Risk Assessment procedures followed.

m) A copy of your organisation's Data Protection/GDPR Policy.

n) A copy of your organisation's Customer Care or Customer Service Policy including an appeals and complaints process.

o) A statement to declare any conflicts of interest alongside your mitigating actions.

p) A statement confirming that, to the best of your knowledge, your organisation has not been in breach of any legal or regulatory requirement in the last five years.

q) A statement confirming that your organisation has not a contract terminated for breach, failure or negligence on its part.

r) A copy of your ISO 9001 certification for quality assurances.

s) A statement to confirm that all staff entering customer homes will be Access NI checked annually. Where information disclosed through an Access NI check identifies a potential risk to customers, the Primary Bidder must undertake a documented risk assessment. If the assessment concludes that the individual presents an unacceptable risk to customers, they must not undertake NISEP duties involving direct customer engagement, including visits to customers' homes, or any other activities identified as presenting a risk to customers. Evidence may be requested at audit

t) A copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and a statement to include that all subcontractors/managing agent would have safeguarding policies in place. Safeguarding policies must be relevant to the delivery of NISEP funded installations and interactions with applicants.

u) A copy of the organisation's Diversity and Inclusion policy.

v) A report or document that demonstrates that you meet the Technical Soundness Criteria as listed above.

w) A statement to confirm that it has knowledge of all relevant legislation and statutory duties.

Once the submitted information has been reviewed and checked by the Programme Administrator, the Utility Regulator will provide a response to the applicant regarding the approval or rejection of Primary Bidder status. If appropriate, details of the successful applicant will be added to a Register of Bidders which will be held by the Programme Administrator.

If an applicant has been refused access to the NISEP, then the applicant can appeal to the Utility Regulator. The Utility Regulator will reserve the right to refuse registration to any organisation which has not successfully demonstrated financial soundness or a successful track record of delivery, and/or does not meet any of the other eligibility criteria that may be required.

Review and withdrawal of Primary Bidder status

The Utility Regulator may withdraw Primary Bidder status from a Primary Bidder at any time. Any Primary Bidder that has had status withdrawn may no longer carry out installations on any NISEP schemes where:

1. in the case of a Primary Bidder that is licensed, it no longer holds the relevant licence,

2. in the case of a Primary Bidder that is not licensed;

   (i) the Primary Bidder has not provided the Programme Administrator with an update of the information as required in Section 1.4 when requested, or

   (ii) there has been a change of circumstances since first registration which the Utility Regulator is satisfied, renders the Primary Bidder unsuitable for continuing registration as a Primary Bidder,

3. the Primary Bidder has not had a bid for funding approved under Section 4.5 in the previous three years,

4. the Utility Regulator is satisfied that there are, or have been, significant quality concerns in relation to measures installed by or on behalf of the Primary Bidder (including where the Primary Bidder has acted as an installer or sub-contractor for another Primary Bidder),

5. the Utility Regulator is satisfied that there are, or have been, significant quality concerns in relation to any work undertaken by or on behalf of the Primary Bidder or a connected party under any other government funded scheme, where a Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) and/or independent investigation has resulted in an upheld finding against the Primary Bidder or connected party.

6. the Utility Regulator is satisfied that there are, or have been, any issues of financial impropriety, poor record keeping, poor financial controls or fraud on the part of the Primary Bidder or a connected party in relation to the NISEP or other government funded scheme.

7. the Primary Bidder has not delivered a ‘successful’ scheme in the previous three years. (i.e. if a scheme closed without any uptake, this would be considered unsuccessful)

8. the Primary Bidder has claimed VAT fraudulently.

For the purposes of 5 and 6 above, a party is a 'connected party' in relation to another party where –

(i) it is associated to that party within the meaning set out in section 256 of the Companies Act 2006, or

(ii) it, or one of its directors, is associated with a director of that company within the meaning set out in section 252 of the Companies Act 2006.

If Primary Bidder status is withdrawn, the organisation in question will not be permitted to reapply for that status for a period of three years.

For approved /existing Primary Bidders

Before submitting bids for funding, a Primary Bidder must agree to adhere to the rules within this Framework Document by signing the Accedence Agreement in Appendix 5.

All approved Primary Bidders intending to bid for funding for NISEP 2027/29 must submit a 'Call for Schemes' registration form in the first instance, by mid-October 2026 (date will be confirmed in the 'Call for Schemes'), after which the Programme Administrator will request the following documentation in advance of the scheme submission deadline.

1. Complete the Call for Schemes Registration Form.
2. Signed NISEP Accedence Agreement (The Agreement).
3. A copy of the organisation's fraud policy and fraud response plan, including a statement of zero tolerance to fraud.
4. A statement to confirm that all staff entering customer homes will be Access NI checked annually.
5. A copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy. Safeguarding policies must be relevant to the delivery of NISEP funded installations and interactions with applicants.
6. A copy of the organisation Diversity and Inclusion policy.
7. A copy of the organisation's Customer Care or Customer Service Policy including an appeals and complaints process.

Please note, Primary Bidders who are newly approved for 2027/29 will have submitted documents as part of their Primary Bidder application and therefore will not have to submit points 3 – 7.

1.5 Amount which may be bid for by each Primary Bidder

For 2027/29 schemes existing Primary Bidders will only be able to bid for their individual cap amount. Any submissions above an individual cap amount will automatically be rejected. The maximum capped amount for participation in 2027/29 is £2,000.000.

The maximum capped amount for a new Primary Bidder or a Primary Bidder that has not participated in the NISEP within the last two NISEP years will be £300,000 (or an amount equivalent to the value of any previous single energy scheme a new Primary Bidder has delivered, **whichever is the lesser amount. This cap is for both 2027/28 and 2028/29 years; therefore, it is a maximum cap of £600,000.**

For existing Primary Bidders, who have completed delivery of schemes in the 2025/27 period, but who have not yet been audited, provided there is successful delivery as demonstrated in the 12 months summary report, the cap can be increased from £300K to £600K in their third and fourth year of participation. For other existing Primary Bidders who have been audited, the maximum capped amount for fourth year and over of participation in 2027/29, will be £2,000,000.

The minimum amount of NISEP funding a Primary Bidder can bid for individual schemes will be **£150,000**. Any submissions below this will automatically be rejected. However, the Utility Regulator reserves the right, at the bid approval stage, to approve a scheme value of less than £150,000, taking into account a range of factors including, but not limited to, geographical spread, target customer groups, and previous scheme performance.

Please note if a Primary Bidder cap has been set for NISEP 2027/28, it will remain the same cap for NISEP 2028/29 and will not increase.

Please note, any cap applied at bid and approval stage may not always apply to those in their third year and over of participation where additional funding is being allocated in-year. However, Primary Bidders in their first or second year of participation will not be able to exceed any initial cap set.

Should there be connected Primary Bidders, i.e. joint ownership, the cap set remains in place. For the avoidance of doubt, one Primary Bidder cannot bid for schemes to the value of £4,000,000 if they own two registered Primary Bidder organisations whose individual caps are £2,000,000.

The Programme Administrator will outline each Primary Bidder's cap after the call for schemes registration stage.

Following receipt of a 'Call for Schemes' registration form, a credit check will be carried out on all Primary Bidders bidding for funding. NISEP bids for funding

may not be reviewed (and subsequently funding granted) should the credit check state high risk and therefore indicate a risk in the applicant's ability in managing funds.

1.6 Scheme Partnerships and Sub-contractors

The Primary Bidder is responsible for ensuring that all NISEP funding is accounted for and appropriately spent on approved schemes in accordance with the conditions specified in this Framework Document and the terms agreed through the scheme submission, approval, and variation process. There will be no relationship between a scheme partner or sub-contractor (who is not a Primary Bidder) and the Utility Regulator and/or the Programme Administrator. It is the responsibility of the Primary Bidder to sufficiently vet any scheme partner or sub-contractor it may choose to work with and to ensure that they comply with all relevant laws and obligations. It is the responsibility of the Primary Bidder to ensure their installers / sub-contractors are certified and that certifications are routinely checked.

Contractual Arrangements

Primary Bidders must have fully documented, written and legally binding contractual agreements in place and maintained with all managing agents and sub-contractors prior to commencing work or activity as part of a fair, transparent and binding procurement process, and those agreements must flow down the relevant terms of this Framework Document so that all obligations on the Primary Bidder are fully enforceable on their sub-contractors (NB: electronic copies of contractual agreements must be held on record and be available for audit inspection).

Primary Bidders must complete and maintain a checklist to ensure that they are maintaining all the supporting documentation required as per Section 1.6, in respect of their Public Procurement obligations including details related to the selection, award criteria and scoring achieved as part of the evaluation of responses to requests for tenders or quotations. A copy should be retained for audit inspection.

Conflicts of Interest

Contractual agreements between the Primary Bidder and subcontractors must also include a Conflict of Interest declaration for the duration of the scheme period prior to commencing work or activity. A sub-contractor is any individual or organisation undertaking NISEP related work on behalf of the Primary Bidder and includes Installers, Scheme Managers, Quality Monitoring Inspectors etc. Where a Primary Bidder appoints a scheme partner a signed Conflict of Interest

Declaration form must be completed and updated annually, to demonstrate that there are no conflicts or that any potential conflicts have been mitigated. A separate and explicit declaration must be included in contractual agreements and completed and signed by both parties prior to any work being undertaken in respect of a NISEP funded scheme for each and every sub-contractor engaged and must remain in place and valid for the entire duration of the NISEP scheme. Where a scheme partner is a connected company of the Primary Bidder or part of the same Group of companies, a signed Conflict of Interest Declaration is still required.

The Primary Bidder will be responsible for Conflicts of Interest of subcontractors and the management and mitigation of such. For the avoidance of doubt, while contractual and other arrangements between Primary Bidders and scheme partners and/or subcontractors are entirely the responsibility of the Primary Bidder and not the Utility Regulator, the Utility Regulator is entitled to full oversight of all commercial dealings relating to NISEP. Funding will only be released to the Primary Bidder.

The Primary Bidder will remain solely liable for the return of any NISEP funding allocated to it and not spent on Approved Schemes in accordance with the provisions of the Framework Document. The scheme audits carried out by an auditor, on behalf of the Programme Administrator, must be conducted with the Primary Bidder and not a scheme partner or sub-contractor although they may be present at the audit.

Primary Bidders must ensure that any work carried out by scheme participants conforms to best practice, customer satisfaction and quality standards, and that all customers are provided with the appropriate guarantees and warranties.

Participation / Administration Fees

The Primary Bidder must not charge scheme partners or sub-contractors any fees purely to participate in NISEP. For the avoidance of doubt, the Scheme Submission Form should, where possible, include a transparent process, where fees may be charged to installers for poor quality installations or poor administration. If fees are charged, it is the responsibility of the Primary Bidder to ensure that such fees form part of any contractual relationship.

Primary Bidders are required to fully disclose the circumstances under which they have a contractually agreed the right to charge any fee to a contractor as part of the Scheme Submission Form. Furthermore, Primary Bidders are required to demonstrate how they have communicated any additional fees to sub-contractors in advance. The Primary Bidder will be required to provide a detailed breakdown of any additional fees charged, giving rationale and quantum, as part of any NISEP scheme in the Post Implementation Report (as referenced in section 5.2).

The application of any additional fees shall be subject to regular review by the Programme Administrator to ensure that they are in line with agreed processes. Fees charged must be detailed in the 5 month, 8 month and 12 month interim reports and also be detailed in the PIR as 'Third Party Indirect costs'. Any invoices and contractual arrangements relating to fees charged, should be provided to the Programme Administrator and be made available at audit stage for the auditor's review.

Procurement

The NISEP is funded by customer money, Primary Bidders should ensure that procurement processes used to engage other organisations (such as sub-contractors (including those of a self-employed nature), scheme managers, installers and inspectors) and suppliers of measures are fair and ensure best value use of NISEP funding. The nature of any contractual relationships must also meet this test. The Primary Bidder must declare in the Scheme Submission Form the proposed delivery structure (e.g. scheme partner, managing agent, sub-contractors, inspectors etc.) and if already appointed, name the participants.

For the avoidance of doubt, scheme partners and subcontractors may be treated differently for the purpose of this requirement. A scheme partner refers to some other party who is a main contributor to the scheme in partnership with the Primary Bidder e.g. providing additional funding, providing access to the scheme participants and/or designing or setting up the scheme. A subcontractor is defined as any individual or organisation undertaking NISEP works on behalf of a Primary Bidder, and this includes self-employed contractors.

Where a Primary Bidder appoints a scheme partner, (such as a connected or group company) a signed Conflict of Interest Declaration should be completed to demonstrate that any potential conflicts have been mitigated. This documentation must also be retained for review at Audit Stage. Primary Bidders must also ensure that were a scheme partner is appointed as opposed to procured, that best use of NISEP funding is also considered.

If Primary Bidders have developed a scheme in partnership with another organisation, which was fundamental to the bid being put together and brought forward, Primary Bidders must identify the partner organisation as a partner and demonstrate that they meet the criteria. Whether an organisation is defined as a scheme partner or a subcontractor the Primary Bidder must state how they intend to manage the relationship. Please note that it is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to ensure adherence to the rules within the Framework Document. Primary Bidders will be held responsible by the Utility Regulator for adherence to the Framework Document.

Primary Bidders should adopt good practice by conducting a transparent, competitive procurement process on each occasion. Where applicable, Primary Bidders should at all times conduct procurement activity in full compliance with

The Public Contract Regulations 2015 and any applicable supplementary or supporting legislation thereof while it remains in force and the Procurement Act 2023.

Where applicable, Primary Bidders must also comply with the Public Procurement Policy of Northern Ireland in the execution of all purchasing activity. Any advertising completed as part of a procurement process, must be carried out in such a manner as is appropriate to bring the competition to the attention of the maximum number of qualified organisations. Such a process is likely to include but not be limited to the following components:

- Clear specification of the terms for which the contract is being sought;
- Public advertisement in a form and to an extent that will ensure maximum exposure of the contract opportunity to potentially competent contractors;
- A reasonable time period for potential contractors to respond to the competition, usually recommended to be at least three weeks;
- Clear selection and award criteria, including any weightings to be applied, which are published at the time of advertising. These should be designed to enable as wide a range of potential bidders as possible to tender for the work, in so far as this is consistent with ensuring a competent field of bidders;
- A written evaluation process applied in a consistent and transparent manner to all bidders and from which constructive and detailed written feedback may be offered to unsuccessful bidders as requested;
- A requirement that any contractors declare and put in place procedures to avoid any form of conflict of interest. For the avoidance of doubt, we consider that sub-contractors appointed to inspect installations should not also be included as installers.

1.6.1 Distortion of Competition

Primary Bidders are required to ensure that they do not:

a) show undue preference to any affiliated person; or

b) exercise undue discrimination between any persons (or classes of person), or

c) otherwise act so as to materially distort or restrict competition in the energy services market to the detriment of consumers, in particular by (but not limited to) their actions in the selection of sub-contractors or partners, or the terms and conditions on which they are appointed.

For Primary Bidders that produce their own product, preferential treatment cannot be given to installers using this product as opposed to other equivalent products on the market. Financial penalties cannot be applied to installers using a different product.

1.7 Funding Allocation

80% of the total funding available will be ring-fenced for Priority domestic customers as defined in Section 2.6.

60% of Priority group funding will be ring fenced for schemes which do not require a contribution from priority customers. Where a scheme is marketed as "fully funded" there should be no customer contribution.

The 80% of funding ring-fenced for Priority customers will be divided into the following 'pots':

- 32.5% of the NISEP funds will be ring-fenced for Priority domestic 'whole house solutions'(WHS), at least 60% of which will go to schemes whereby no customer contribution is sought. This leaves 40% for WHS 'customer contribution' schemes. Geographical spread is also considered and the funding available may be separated into 'On Gas' and 'On and Off' gas areas should bids be submitted which are limited to 'On Gas' areas.

- 15% will be allocated to Priority domestic 'Whole House Solution Innovative' schemes upgrading or converting to electric heating where no customer contribution will be sought.

- 25% is allocated to other schemes such as Priority domestic 'Individual Measures', of which at least 60% will go to schemes where no customer contribution is sought. Please note, for domestic Individual Measure schemes offering cavity wall insulation and loft insulation, no customer contribution should be sought.

- 7.5% is allocated for Social Housing Provider (SHP) schemes (for all energy efficiency measures eligible under NISEP). The funding split is outlined in Table 1.1 below. A maximum cap of NISEP funding offered per measure will be applied for SHP schemes, this is outlined in section 2.1.

The remaining 20% of funds is allocated to Non-Priority customers, split as follows:

- 6% allocated to Non-Priority domestic schemes
- 7% allocated to domestic innovative technology schemes (including hard to treat measures such as solid wall insulation schemes, customer contribution electric heating schemes).
- 7% allocated to non-domestic and commercial technology schemes.

Note: if the Programme Administrator does not receive enough bids to fill a particular ring-fenced classification it is at the discretion of the Programme Administrator, with the agreement of the Utility Regulator, to reallocate funding to an oversubscribed classification.

Table 1.1 – NISERP funding split per category

Table 1.1 below details the NISEP funding available for 2027/28 and the breakdown into the various categories for schemes. Please note this is subject to minor change.

NISEP funding	2027/28
Total Fund Available (as collected)	£7,941,946
Programme Administrator's fee (estimated - includes CPI at 5%)	£450,000
Amount Available for Schemes **	£7,491,946*
Priority Customers 80%	£5,993,557
Priority Whole House Solution Schemes 32.5%	£2,434,882
Whole House Solution - no customer contribution 0% of available funds. Split further for 'On Gas' only schemes and 'On & Off Gas' schemes	£1,460,929
Whole House Solution - Customer Contribution 40% of available funds. Split further for 'On Gas' only schemes and 'On & Off Gas' schemes	£973,953
Priority Innovative Whole House Solution Schemes 15% (No customer contribution allowed) (Includes Priority Hard to Treat homes, Solid Wall Insulation schemes, Whole House Solution Electric schemes)	£1,123,792
Priority Individual Measure Schemes 25% (No customer contribution allowed on Insulation Only schemes)	£1,872,987
Priority Social Housing Provider schemes 7.5% (Includes all HA / NIHE schemes, Individual Measures, WHS and Innovative schemes)	£561,896
Non Priority Customers 20%	£1,498,389
Non Priority Domestic Conventional schemes 6% (Includes Insulation Cashback schemes)	£449,517
Non Priority Domestic Innovative schemes 7% (Includes but is not limited to Non Priority Domestic Customer Contribution Electric schemes)	£524,436
Non Priority Non Domestic / Commercial schemes 7%	£524,436

*Provisional estimate at this stage, this is related to NISEP 2027/28, if this amount changes, then the amount available for schemes will also change. Funding includes CPI which may change.

** Eligible Types of schemes and the package of measures to be offered have been defined in the Framework Document.

The Programme Administrator's costs will be paid from the total funding available. In order to meet the Programme objectives, the funding is ring-fenced into a number of 'pots' to facilitate the delivery of different types of schemes.

In the case of bids in a particular category exceeding the level of funding available, the more cost-effective schemes will be approved first. However, to ensure the best use of funds and also equality of opportunity considerations, the Utility Regulator reserves the right to accept less cost-effective schemes, e.g. where they provide good additionality or where geographic spread, or specific target groups are relevant. Whole House Solution schemes targeted at 'off gas' areas which may be less cost effective, may be considered to ensure availability of NISEP funding throughout NI in both 'on gas' grid and 'off gas' grid areas.

1.8 Additional Government Funding for NISEP schemes

In the event that additional local or central Government funding becomes available during the NISEP year, to provide energy efficiency measures (in addition to the current PSO fund), allocation criteria will be agreed for that year between both parties, (the UR and specific funding body). The criteria will reflect current Framework Document 'approval of schemes' criteria, however, other specific criteria may apply. Additional terms and conditions may also apply to additional funding streams and where any specific conditions conflict with any of the terms and conditions in the NISEP Framework Document and the NISEP Accedence Agreement (The Agreement), those specific conditions will take precedence.

2. Broad Framework of NISEP

2.1 Eligible Initiatives

Schemes submitted for funding must meet all of the following essential criteria and are subject to the discretion of the Utility Regulator:

Scheme Submission Requirements

Schemes must be submitted by the deadline of 15 December 2026.

The scheme submission must be provided along with any required relevant information (as determined by the Programme Administrator) about the scheme;

Scheme submissions and the information contained within must comply with the NISEP operational rules and procedures as set out in this Framework Document and as determined by the Programme Administrator;

Schemes must be implemented within Northern Ireland. If the scheme is available to all of Northern Ireland, the Primary Bidder must be able to demonstrate that the scheme will be targeted throughout Northern Ireland. If a scheme is only targeting specific areas, the Utility Regulator has the right to review the amount of NISEP funding awarded based on geographic spread;

Schemes must meet the additionality criteria defined in Section 2.2 below;

Scheme design must not distort, restrict or impede competition within the market for energy services.

Schemes must be designed and managed cost effectively. In order to demonstrate this, Primary Bidders and their partners and sub-contractors must retain accurate records of the procurement process that they have undertaken (see section 1.6 for further information on procurement processes);

By way of their procurement process, Primary Bidders must ensure that all contracts with and between Scheme Managers and/or sub-contractors and suppliers of measures ensure a 'level playing field' between energy service providers and industry bodies;

Funding Limits and Financial Requirements

The maximum total NISEP bid per Primary Bidder is £2,000,000. NISEP bids for funding per scheme must be at least £150,000 (Primary Bidder individual caps will be communicated when the Scheme Submission Pack is issued);

An upper grant limit of £35,000 per Domestic customer is available for all schemes (applicable to all measures included in the scheme application), this

applies to Priority and Non-Priority Domestic, and all Innovative schemes. For solid wall insulation schemes which exceed this upper limit, the Programme Administrator will review any exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis.

For Non-Priority nondomestic /commercial schemes, the NISEP grant should be 25% of the total direct costs for a single project, (with the upper limit of £35,000 per single project.)

For Non-Priority customers, including commercial customers, grant funding can be applied to cover the cost of the measure as well as installation costs. Primary Bidders must ensure that their approved NISEP funding amount or the percentage of NISEP grant funding is maintained. Commercial customers in relation to NISEP eligibility are defined as any non-domestic premise except for fully funded public buildings (e.g. Government department buildings).

For all Priority Schemes, (fully funded or customer contribution schemes) the customer must not be required to contribute towards additional measures (as defined in section 2.6. All additional measures offered per scheme, should be either 100% funded by NISEP or 100% funded by a third-party contribution.

For Priority Whole House Solution schemes that are designed in such a way that a customer contribution is required, the contribution from a Priority customer must not exceed a maximum of 40% of the main heating measure cost. NISEP and/or third party contribution must fund the other 60% of the heating measure. This excludes contributions from Social Housing Providers.

For Social Housing Provider schemes the NISEP funding cap is set as follows;

- Maximum grant of £1,100 off a natural gas central heating system if on gas network, or an oil central heating system where gas is not available.
- Maximum grant of £1,200 off Electric High Heat Retention Storage Heaters.
- Maximum grant of £300 for Cavity Wall Insulation and £300 for Loft Insulation.
- Where a scheme offers air source heat pumps and/or Solar PV installation and insulation, the maximum grant is 50% off an air source heat pump installation and/or Solar PV installation and 50% off Cavity Wall Insulation and Loft Insulation, if applicable.

Please note, the above NISEP funding amount may be reviewed dependent on the scheme submission.

Customer Eligibility Requirements

Schemes aimed at Priority customers must be targeted in line with the guidance provided in Section 2.6 of this document;

For applicants who do not hold full ownership of the property, written consent from Co-Ownership confirming approval for the installation of the relevant energy efficiency measures must be provided to the Primary Bidder at application stage. This consent will allow the applicant to proceed with a NISEP grant application. NISEP funding is available for the applicant's primary residence only.

Private tenants should only be able to avail of part funded schemes, e.g., 60/40 Whole House Solution schemes or insulation cashback schemes. Landlords therefore must contribute to the energy efficiency measures being installed.

Landlords eligible for the above schemes are limited to a maximum of 5 properties, per individual Primary Bidder scheme per NISEP year. Primary Bidders must have adequate processes in place to ensure they meet this requirement. This may be subject to audit; therefore, sufficient evidence should be available to demonstrate the threshold has not been breached.

NIHE leaseholders who do not qualify for the Affordable Warmth Scheme (or the DfC replacement Fuel Poverty scheme) may be eligible for NISEP. They are not eligible for Individual Measure schemes or any insulation offered as part of a Whole House Solution Scheme, however, NIHE leaseholders who do not qualify for the Affordable Warmth Scheme (or the DfC replacement Fuel Poverty scheme) may be eligible for a heating upgrade via NISEP (as long as other eligibility criteria is also met). For any works to proceed, NISEP must have written permission from the NIHE Leasehold Unit. Primary Bidders must include this guidance within scheme terms and conditions and retain NIHE written permission (provided by the applicant) for review at audit. Applicants should seek this approval via the following address and provide approval confirmation to the NISEP Primary Bidder. Central.LeaseholdUnit@NIHE.GOV.UK

When applying for permission, the customer and/or Primary Bidder must clearly communicate the relevant NISEP timeframes to NIHE e.g. if an application is submitted in Quarter 4 (Q4), approval will need to be granted promptly otherwise there is a risk that the installation will not be completed within the required timeframe. The NIHE Leasehold Unit will coordinate with local NIHE heating and area office teams and will provide written confirmation of its decision. It is the responsibility of both the customer and the Primary Bidder to engage with NIHE to obtain the necessary permissions. Where an application has already been submitted and the proposed works are technically ready to proceed, but are awaiting formal approval, the Primary Bidder should ringfence the required funding.

Self build/new build properties, including new extensions, are not eligible for NISEP funding.

To avail of NISEP funding, the domestic property must be in a safe and habitable condition to receive the measure(s) required. Building works required at a

property and work completed by other contractors must be completed first before any measures are installed under NISEP. A technical survey must be completed after building works are completed to ensure the property still meets NISEP requirements of funding. NISEP funding is not available for properties requiring comprehensive whole house renovation where the scale of construction, reconstruction, or redevelopment is considered equivalent to a new build.

For domestic schemes, there should be no overlap with other grant or incentive schemes external to the NISEP for a particular measure/technology. It should be clear and cited on all paperwork that the NISEP is the source of grant funding, and that the customer is not receiving any other grant such as the Department for Communities' Affordable Warmth Programme (and Warmer Healthier Homes, the replacement programme due to launch April 2027) or other grant schemes outside of NISEP. Primary Bidders should request customers to declare in their application form whether they have been approved under any other grant funded programme or availed of a grant in previous years, for a similar measure. Primary Bidder to name these grant programmes in the application form, so it is visible to the customer. If a customer has been approved (works yet to be completed or claimed for) under any other grant programme, for the same measure at the same property, they are ineligible for NISEP support. Additionally, if a grant has been provided within the last 15 years for the same measure at the same property the customer is ineligible for NISEP support. Exceptional circumstances may be granted, and Primary Bidders should seek guidance from the Programme Administrator in the first instance. Prior approval may be required before works commence.

Measure and Technology Requirements

Funding must be targeted at activities that result in sustainable energy measures being installed that benefit the consumer and can include innovative but proven technologies. Types of schemes and the package of measures have now been defined in this Framework Document. Measures must be installed and schemes that only distribute measures with no guarantee of installation are ineligible for funding. Funding cannot be used for research, demonstration or purely behavioural or educational projects.

Measures promoted should be in customers' financial interest.

Measures promoted must be proven technology which meet or exceed relevant standards (e.g. safety, quality, etc.) and are recognised by the Programme Administrator. Measures must comply with the specifications set out in Appendix 3, Guidance on the use of Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Measures (refer to the Programme Administrator for any types of measures not included in this appendix).

Measures must be specified and installed in accordance with all relevant British Standards. Further guidance on Standards is provided in Appendix 4. The list of standards is not exhaustive, and standards are subject to ongoing update - it is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to ensure that the most recent standards are used when implementing schemes.

Whole House Solution schemes that target all Northern Ireland customers must offer an electric option to customers with existing electric heating;

For insulation only schemes offering cavity wall and loft insulation measures, both measures must be equally marketed and offered to a qualifying householder and schemes should be designed to ensure maximum uptake of both measures. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, (which must be clearly documented in survey paperwork), both measures should be installed if required and suitable for the property. A thorough technical survey for insulation requirements should be carried out i.e. the Primary Bidder must not rely on the property owner/tenant to ascertain insulation requirements. Customers should also be made aware of the benefits of both insulation measures. Similarly, where solid wall insulation is offered, unless there are exceptional circumstances, both solid wall insulation and loft insulation should be installed if required and suitable for the property.

Whole House Solution schemes should be designed to ensure the maximum uptake of all measures offered per household i.e. unless there are exceptional circumstances (which must be clearly documented in survey paperwork). A thorough technical survey for insulation requirements should be carried out i.e. the Primary Bidder must not rely on the property owner/tenant to ascertain insulation requirements. Where the survey identifies suitable and technically feasible insulation measures, customers should be required to accept these measures in order to proceed with the installation of a heating measure. Customers who decline recommended insulation measures will not be eligible to proceed with heating installations, unless a specific and documented exception applies which renders the insulation unsuitable for the property or customer circumstances. This requirement must be communicated clearly to customers and included within written terms and conditions.

For Individual Measure and Whole House Solution schemes where the property is up to current standards for both cavity wall and loft insulation, insulation of an extension can be funded by NISEP however, Primary Bidders must record this as a 'partial fill' so that energy savings are downgraded.

NISEP does not fund loft insulation in flat roof properties.

Excluding Social Housing Provider schemes, Priority Innovative schemes which are designed to include an Air Source Heat Pump must also include Solar Photovoltaics (PV). This will help offset any potential increased energy costs as a result of converting to electric heating from oil or gas. Customers should continue to be made aware of running costs of electric heating. On scheme delivery,

should a customer already have pre-existing Solar Photovoltaics (PV) they will still be eligible for an Air Source Heat pump. The pre-existing Solar Photovoltaics (PV) must be MCS compliant and deemed suitable by the Primary Bidder. This requirement must be included within the terms and conditions of the application form. Please note, domestic battery storage is ineligible for NISEP funding.

For Non-Priority Innovative schemes that include an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP), Primary Bidders may submit either: a Whole House Solution ASHP and Solar Photovoltaics (PV) scheme; or a Whole House Solution ASHP scheme, provided that customer eligibility is restricted to properties with a pre-existing Solar PV system. Any pre-existing Solar PV system must be MCS-compliant and deemed suitable by the Primary Bidder. This requirement must be included within the terms and conditions of the application form.

Please note, oil must not be installed where gas is available. Primary Bidders should check with all applicable network operators if gas is available before upgrading an old oil boiler with a new oil boiler.

For gas heating installations, properties that are not readily connectible to a gas main are **not** eligible for NISEP funding. Installing gas mains or extensions to gas mains will not be funded by NISEP. For further guidance on meter and gas service connections costs eligible under NISEP, please refer to section 2.6.

The existence of a pre-existing gas connection (e.g. for cooking) shall not in itself exclude a customer from eligibility for NISEP support for Whole House Solution measures including conversion from oil to natural gas. NISEP funding must not be used to facilitate, fund, or contribute towards a new gas network connection. Primary Bidders must ensure that records accurately reflect these circumstances.

NISEP no longer funds LED lighting or reflective radiator panels for domestic schemes. However, NISEP continues to fund LED lighting for non-domestic/commercial schemes.

Technical Survey and Installation Requirements

For all applicable schemes, all technical surveys undertaken to assess for cavity wall insulation and loft insulation must include a fully completed and detailed ventilation assessment section. Technical survey documentation (undertaken with the applicant present) must include the following:

- Confirm that ventilation requirements have been assessed and documented.
- Clearly outline the ventilation requirements where ventilation is deemed necessary for the property.

- Where ventilation is not required, the surveyor must provide a clear, evidence-based justification explaining why ventilation is not necessary for the specific property and measure.

- Confirm compliance with all relevant standards and guidelines outlined in this Framework Document Appendix 3 to include but not limited to documents published by Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency (CIGA); Technicians guide to best practice: Flues, chimneys and combustion air ventilators as listed in Appendix 3 section 1.2.

- Survey must be signed and dated by both the applicant(s) and surveyor. Unsigned forms will not be accepted as proof of completion.

Where a number of sub-contractors are used, Primary Bidders must also carry out a co-ordinating role to ensure that the maximum number of measures are installed as efficiently as possible to the maximum benefit of the property, including adequate ventilation given the range of measures installed. It is expected that customers are also provided with advice on how to use their heating controls effectively at the time of installation;

Where a priority customer is due to receive loft insulation, please allow the customer sufficient time to clear their loft. If the installer is aware that the customer may have difficulties with clearing their loft, it is expected the customer would be directed to organisations who may be able to assist. If a customer does not have sufficient time to clear their loft, at the end of the NISEP year for example, the customer should then be directed to an individual measures scheme to avail of the insulation measure. NISEP does not fund loft clearance i.e. storage items.

For all domestic heating installs, a heating additive must be included. For further information please contact the Programme Administrator.

To claim a NISEP grant and/or energy savings attributed, all measures must be installed, this includes hot water tank jackets, low-flow/eco shower head and draught proofing where applicable etc.

Primary Bidders are not liable for any preparatory works required to enable the commencement of NISEP installations (excluding the removal of defective loft and/or cavity wall insulation which should be completed by the installer).

Primary Bidders must minimise disruption to the property and leave it in a safe, tidy and habitable condition following completion of the installation works. Where existing floor coverings, floorboards or other fixtures have been temporarily lifted or removed to facilitate the works, the Primary Bidder must replace, refit or reposition those existing items ensuring building control regulations are met. This does not extend to the provision of new floor coverings, flooring, decorative finishes, or other specialist reinstatement works.

Homeowners should be advised in advance of any works that fall outside the scope of the installation and may require separate arrangements not funded by NISEP.

To avail of NISEP funding, the domestic property must be in a safe and habitable condition to receive the measure(s) required. Building works required at a property and work completed by other contractors must be completed first before any measures are installed under NISEP. A technical survey must be completed after building works are completed to ensure the property still meets NISEP requirements of funding. NISEP funding is not available for properties requiring comprehensive whole house renovation where the scale of construction, reconstruction, or redevelopment is considered equivalent to a new build.

Where Building Control or Planning Permission is applied for on behalf of the customer, Building Control/the Planning Authorities must be contacted in writing at the earliest opportunity by either the installer, managing agent or Primary Bidder, to confirm completion of works. Evidence of written correspondence may be requested at audit

Customer Communication and Scheme Administration

Primary Bidder must notify customers of any specific conditions of how funding is allocated or reserved to manage customer expectations e.g. the expiry date on any quotation provided to the customer. In addition, Primary Bidders must follow up with customers on the progress of their application and inform them if funding is no longer available due to the customer not meeting the required conditions to proceed etc.

If applicable, and in compliance with data protection regulations, where referrals are received from government funded organisations, Primary Bidders should ensure to provide feedback on acceptance/rejection of the referral or provide a status update if requested to the relevant organisation.

The Primary Bidder must review paperwork periodically to ensure that all mandatory fields required by the relevant Framework Document or the latest addendum if applicable (including income criteria) are correctly updated and reflected in their various scheme application forms.

Compliance, Governance and Legislative Requirements

It is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to ensure that all schemes are managed to standards that comply with all relevant legislation. Consideration must be given to legislation relevant to each specific scheme, as well to overarching statutes that may affect the proposals, including but not limited to the Human Rights Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation

(GDPR) 2016/679, and Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Under no circumstances should the provision or offer of any assistance under a NISEP scheme, financial or otherwise, be conditional upon or linked in any way to either the supply of electricity and/or natural gas or to an agreement to be supplied. For the avoidance of doubt, eligibility criteria for assistance under a NISEP scheme should include only those criteria which are specified in either the Framework Document or the approved scheme submissions. In particular, such criteria should not, under any circumstance, include a requirement to be or to become a customer of a particular electricity and/or natural gas supplier.

Deposits

Where a deposit is taken from a domestic customer in advance of work being completed, the Primary Bidder must have in place, and comply with, arrangements which ensure the following:

- The amount of that deposit will not exceed a maximum of 40% of the total amount of the expected contribution from that customer.
- The deposit is protected in law from the consequences of the insolvency of the Primary Bidder and/or sub contractor– or, where the deposit is paid to a scheme partner and/or sub contractor, the insolvency of that scheme partner and/or sub contractor – until the work to which that deposit relates has been completed, such that –

    (i) the deposit is ring-fenced and directly available to the customer in the event of such insolvency, and

    (ii) mechanisms are in place to ensure that there is no shortfall in the amount available to the customer in respect of the deposit.

- The deposit taken is transparent on the Invoice issued to the customer and submitted as part of the claim process.

It will be for the Primary Bidder to ensure customer money is protected and to decide on the most appropriate arrangements to put in place to protect customer deposits in the event of insolvency. For example, this could involve putting in place an appropriate trust to the benefit of customers.

There should be no interest-bearing options offered to NISEP domestic customers. Should a Primary Bidder wish to offer a 0% interest option, they must first contact the Programme Administrator or request this as part of their Scheme Submission. Primary Bidders should provide details of how they will take all appropriate safeguards when offering finance options to customers. Customers should not be pressured and should be directed to appropriate advice for

support. The lender should also check that the repayment terms are affordable to the customer's individual circumstances.

2.2 Additionality

To approve schemes submitted by organisations, the Programme Administrator must be satisfied that they deliver energy savings that are over and above that which would have been achieved without NISEP funding. This principle is known as 'additionality' and is central to the administration of the Programme and determination of energy savings for completed schemes.

All scheme submissions must contain a statement that describes how all measures to be installed using NISEP funding will be additional to any activity already planned by a householder or business.

The following criteria must also be met in regard to additionality:

- Schemes must be additional to any planned activity, regulatory obligation, or Government-funded initiatives;
- NISEP funding must form a minimum of 20% of the total scheme costs. In exceptional circumstances a case may be put forward by a Primary Bidder as to why a project should proceed with less than 20% of NISEP funding;
- The Programme Administrator must be satisfied that the Primary Bidder's action will lead to energy saving and that the total improvement is not due to other factors. Therefore, Primary Bidders must not set up any retrospective agreements to provide funding for measures already installed or purchased;
- Schemes should be designed to target only those customers who are not likely to have gone ahead with installing a measure anyway without any support or encouragement; and
- Primary Bidders will be required to retain evidence of the additionality of schemes and make it available for audit inspection.

2.2.1 Existing regulations and legal requirements

The Programme Administrator must be satisfied that any reduction in energy consumption achieved as a result of a NISEP funded scheme will be achieved in addition to that required by other regulatory requirements, such as Building Regulations Part F (Conservation of Fuel and Power). For example, where

appropriate, action must lead to improvements in energy efficiency above the levels that would be achieved to meet the requirements of the current Building Regulations.

It is up to the Primary Bidders to familiarise themselves with the standards and requirements of the most up to date Building Regulations.

2.2.2 Actions with Partners and Third Parties

Where a Primary Bidder is planning to undertake a scheme in partnership with a third party, the Programme Administrator must be satisfied that this will result in increases in energy savings additional to those that would be achieved by the scheme partner without the Primary Bidder's funding. The following criteria will be taken into account:

Social Housing Providers

When partnering with Social Housing Providers (SHP), a Primary Bidder must obtain written confirmation that its involvement has resulted in additional energy savings. This declaration must be signed before the scheme commences. If any changes occur to the scheme, the SHP must sign another declaration. For this purpose, a change will be considered to mean a change in the type of measure installed, or a reduction in the Primary Bidder's average cost contribution of more than five percentage points. All works carried out under NISEP must be outside of the SHP's existing obligations (e.g. NISEP should not be used to fund the replacement of a broken boiler in a property owned by a SHP).

Monitoring may be necessary to avoid double counting between different schemes. The Programme Administrator may ask the Primary Bidder to inform the other stakeholders of their partnership to help avoid double counting of energy savings.

Other Government Programmes

Primary Bidders may be able to undertake action in conjunction with other Government programmes.

A signed letter must be provided by the relevant scheme partner to confirm that the Primary Bidder's actions have exceeded those of the Government programme and that the measures to be accredited to the Primary Bidder could not have been installed without the Primary Bidder's input, i.e. the Primary Bidder is not claiming measures which would have been installed through the other programme anyway.

There must be a clear, upfront agreement with the scheme partner to ensure there is no potential for double counting of energy savings (or other performance target) between NISEP and another government programme. If the Primary Bidder is part funding measures in conjunction with another Government programme, then the energy savings accredited to the Primary Bidder will be in proportion to the funding they have provided.

EU Programmes

Where Primary Bidders wish to utilise NISEP funding to lever match-funding for EU programmes, the express permission of the Programme Administrator must be sought in advance.

There must be a clear, upfront agreement with the scheme partner to ensure there is no potential for double counting of energy savings (or other performance target) between NISEP and the EU programme. If the Primary Bidder is part-funding measures in conjunction with another programme, then the energy savings accredited to the Primary Bidder will be in proportion to the funding they have provided.

Double Funding

There must be no double funding on any measures installed via NISEP and Primary Bidders must ensure they and their sub-contractors do not seek or claim funding via other NISEP schemes or any other grant scheme. The Programme Administrator will carry out duplicate funding checks across all NISEP schemes and across other Government Programmes but it is the responsibility of each Primary Bidder to ensure they have their own systems and processes in place to check for duplicate claims within their scheme(s) across NISEP years including grants offered by Primary Bidders outside of NISEP.

If there are any duplicate claims submitted and paid, the Primary Bidder will be required to return the money to NISEP.

Any suspected fraud or maladministration will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedures including reporting to relevant authorities such as the PSNI.

2.3 Eligible costs

Any activity which satisfies the relevant criteria above is eligible for funding. Individual schemes may include some or all of the following additional costs:

- Scheme management and other indirect costs (see section 2.9); and

- Direct subsidies for measures.

2.4 Scheme Delivery and Payment of NISEP Funding

Primary Bidders must use the latest templates for the applicable NISEP year for payment claims processing provided by Energy Saving Trust. Forms can be digitised but must replicate the latest template issued. Primary Bidders are responsible for good governance practices which includes (but are not limited to) data security and privacy, accessibility etc. Customers must be offered the option to receive documents in either hard copy or digital format.

Customer Application Form

It is the responsibility of the Primary Bidder to ensure that the customer application form is up to date and in line with the latest Framework Document requirements. Application form minimum requirements are listed below. Terms and conditions of each scheme including criteria set by the Primary Bidder must be communicated clearly and highlighted to applicants in writing, to ensure applicants are fully aware of the conditions they are agreeing to before works commence.

Terms and conditions within the application form must state eligible fuel switch/boiler replacement offered under the scheme. Customers in 'on gas areas,' readily connectible to the gas network with oil central heating can only convert to gas central heating, or an air source heat pump installation. Customers with oil central heating in 'off gas areas' can avail of an oil boiler upgrade or an air source heat pump installation. Customers in 'off gas areas', with no existing central heating i.e., where a coal fire or electric room heater is used as the Primary heat source, can only convert to other forms of electric heating.

The customer application form must be signed and dated by all applicants. The individual responsible for reviewing and verifying the supporting documentation (e.g. the surveyor) must also sign and date the form, confirming that the applicant(s) satisfy the programme's eligibility criteria. Valid photographic identification must be viewed for all applicants to verify their names and identity, and confirmation that these checks must be recorded on the application form.

For joint applications, the full names of all applicants must be provided and where possible both signatures collected on the form. The customer declaration on the application form must clearly state that, by signing the application form, the lead applicant confirms that all parties who have ownership of the property have consented to the installation of all proposed measures.

For applicants who demonstrate the property has been gifted but continue to 'have their day' in the house, evidence to support this should be reviewed by the Primary Bidder and recorded on the application form. The main applicant signature confirms that all parties who have ownership of the property have consented to all measures being installed but where possible all signatures should be collected on the form.

These requirements above should be set out clearly and incorporated into the application form and retained for review at audit.

For data protection purposes, it is not necessary for this documentation viewed to be copied or retained, the Programme Administrator does not require sight of the documentation for verification purposes.

If applicable, verification that the income criteria (for the specific scheme) is met for all applicants. All application forms must clearly show the income and the documentary proof provided to determine eligibility for the NISEP scheme. (Single parent and joint applications must be separated out on the application form even if the income criteria is the same). A record of at least two forms of documentation dated within the last three months must be reviewed to verify income. Acceptable evidence includes, but is not limited to a P60, letter from Social Security Agency, Post Office Account Statement, recent Payslips, or a personal/business bank statement. For rented properties of multiple occupancy, verification of income eligibility must be verified for all tenants residing at the property.

Customer declaration to include whether they have been accepted under any other grant funded programme or availed of a grant in previous years (public or private), for a similar measure at the same property in addition to a state aid declaration if applicable). Primary Bidder to name these grant programmes in the application form, so visible to the customer.

Verification of ownership, a record of what type of documentation has been viewed such as mortgage statement, deeds, etc. should be recorded. If applicable, should the applicant have a lasting power of attorney (LPA) in place, confirmation of consent should be provided by the power of attorney and recorded within the application form.

For rented properties including multiple occupancy dwellings the landlord of the property and the property itself receiving the measures must be registered with the Landlord Registration Scheme. (https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/landlord-registration-scheme). Appropriate checks must be completed by the Primary Bidder and records kept to verify this. The Landlord's permission must be sought for any work to be carried out in their property, which should be evidenced on the application form. For rented domestic properties and commercial premises, Primary Bidders are requested to consider eligibility criteria relating to length of tenancy. A minimum of 6 months remaining of the tenant's current lease

agreement should be considered. Supporting documentation must be reviewed and recorded on the form.

Customer declaration that at the time of application the property is the primary residence in which the applicant lives, and that the customer is not currently seeking to sell the property. Evidence gathered to support eligibility should be recorded on the application form and must be retained for review at audit; If private renting, the landlord should also sign a declaration to this effect.

If applicable, a customer declaration to confirm running costs of the new heating system and any financial implications have been communicated to the customer and that they understand and are content to proceed with the installation of measures funded by NISEP. Please note Primary Bidders will also be requested to sign a declaration to confirm that this has been actioned, as part of the monthly claim process. It is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to ensure all communication with the customer covers energy advice and running costs and therefore should a customer query a negative financial benefit post install, the Primary Bidder is solely responsible for resolving the query directly with the customer. Primary Bidders must explain to potential NISEP customers that energy costs can be volatile.

The customer must confirm their consent to the sharing of their personal data with other Government departments for the purposes of undertaking double-funding checks. The declaration must also include consent for post-installation access to the property by third-party auditors or inspectors, including those appointed by the Utility Regulator and/or external accreditation bodies. Applicants must be required to provide these declarations as part of their acceptance of the grant offer terms and conditions which forms part of the application form.

Customer Quotations

Primary Bidder must notify customers of any specific conditions of how funding is allocated or reserved to manage customer expectations e.g. the expiry date on any quotation provided to the customer. In addition, Primary Bidders must follow up with customers on the progress of their application and inform them if funding is no longer available due to the customer not meeting the required conditions to proceed etc.

Customer Waiting Lists

Where Primary Bidders signpost customers on to an alternative scheme that has funding availability, they should not also accept the customer onto their waiting list. Customers may remain on a waiting list, where a waiting list is carried forward into a subsequent programme year. All customers must be recontacted, complete an updated application form and be re-surveyed to confirm they meet the eligibility requirements of a new scheme year prior to any funding offer being

made. Waiting lists must be reviewed regularly, and the Primary Bidder must maintain appropriate follow-up with customers regarding their status and progress. Where funding becomes available for a property on the waiting list, the applicant must be notified and provided with details of the next steps.

Payment of NISEP Funding

The Programme Administrator will issue full guidance on the complete payment claim process, prior to the commencement of the relevant NISEP year; all Primary Bidders must adhere to this process. NISEP funding will only be paid to NISEP Primary Bidders and no payments will be made to subcontractors and / or customers of NISEP.

Payments will be made every month in arrears, during the relevant NISEP year, upon receipt of valid claims for reimbursement and satisfactory evidence that work has been fully completed (including any remedial works, if required) and of appropriate costs incurred.

Claims should only be made following completed activity and we strongly discourage bulk claims submitted at the end of the year. Primary Bidders can only claim for measures completed and any remedial action required for a measure should be actioned before a claim is made and signed off accordingly

For domestic schemes, all measures should be claimed together including heating, insulation and additional measures where applicable. Therefore, completion of one row per property including all applicable measures is required on the 'master claim' tab.

Claim documentation will include a monthly 'Payment Claim Spreadsheet' which includes an 'instructions' tab that sets out the steps for the monthly claim process. This tab contains a detailed breakdown of the claim process, the documentation required (depending on the scheme category) to be submitted and the format in which it is to be submitted. A few examples are listed below but the Primary Bidder must refer to the instructions tab for documents required.

For claims for heating, loft, wall insulation and renewable measures, Primary Bidders must submit a building control receipt or certificate (if applicable).

For claims for renewable measures, Primary Bidders must submit, per property, MCS registration certificates (per renewable measure), planning permission approval (if required), and an insurance backed guarantee per renewable measure.

For claims for innovative schemes only (i.e. offering solid wall insulation, air source heat pumps, PV, etc.), Primary Bidders must submit the completed independent

quality monitoring inspection report (signed by the quality monitor and the customer).

For claims for air source heat pump schemes EPC (pre and post install) supporting documentation must be submitted.

Guarantee Certificates, where required, must be submitted as part of the payment claim process (see Appendix 3 for more information).

A 20% random sample will be requested within each claim. If the 20% sample identifies a significant number of errors, (i.e. there are errors in the majority of the documentation supplied as part of the sample packs), the Programme Administrator may ask for an additional sample to check

NISEP cannot fund retrospective installations. All measures must be installed and invoiced for by 31 March of the given NISEP year.

Primary Bidders must ensure to respond to payment claim queries within 5 working days. The Programme Administrator will not be able to process a monthly claim if there are outstanding queries from a previous month. Please note, failure to process queries within the timeframe may result in less funding being released for the 2027/29 NISEP year.

The Programme Administrator will, within 10 working days after receiving all supporting documentation, check the claims and if satisfied, approve, and pass to the Utility Regulator. Should the claim be of a higher value than £300,000, the 10-working day time period automatically increases to 20 working days. The Utility Regulator will then authorise payment, if satisfied, within 5 working days. NIEN have a further 10 working days to process the payment. In the event that either the Programme Administrator or the Utility Regulator requires further information, the time period will commence from the date upon which all the information is satisfactorily received.

Where duplicates are detected post payment refunds must be made without delay. Where the Programme Administrator detects duplicates across 3 or more monthly claims the scheme may be suspended pending a decision on the appropriate action to take to rectify the situation.

Primary Bidders are solely responsible for the accuracy of the information contained in payment claims submitted. Primary Bidders must implement a robust review process to verify that all cost amounts claimed align with the corresponding invoice values and approved schedule of works (this includes a review of sub-contractor(s) claims). Any discrepancies must be investigated and resolved prior to submission, and all supporting documentation should be retained for claim review and audit purposes.

To facilitate the timely closure of the NISEP year, final claims must be submitted with all required supporting documentation and any outstanding queries

resolved by the deadlines set by the Programme Administrator. Primary Bidders are responsible for ensuring that final claims are complete and supported by all documentation required for endorsement. Failure to provide the requested information or meet the specified deadlines may result in the claim not being endorsed and no payment being made.

It is the Primary Bidders responsibility to ensure that subcontractors/scheme partners will deliver on all costs outlined in the approved bid submission(s) including third party, customer and NISEP contributions. Should any subcontractor/scheme partner costs change, the Primary Bidder is responsible for any additional costs incurred which must be transparent on all invoices submitted as part of a NISEP claim. The onus is on Primary Bidders to ensure that all costs claimed are both accurate and in line with their approved Scheme Submission/s and that they have processes in place to check costs in advance of submitting claims to the Programme Administrator for payment.

Once the monthly claim is endorsed by Energy Saving Trust and sent to the Utility Regulator for processing, no further changes to the cost of measure, if underclaimed, is accepted. If additional works are required such as ventilation / piping, contact the Programme Administrator in the first instance. However, please note that should an overclaim of NISEP funding be identified, the Primary Bidder must return the funding to NISEP.

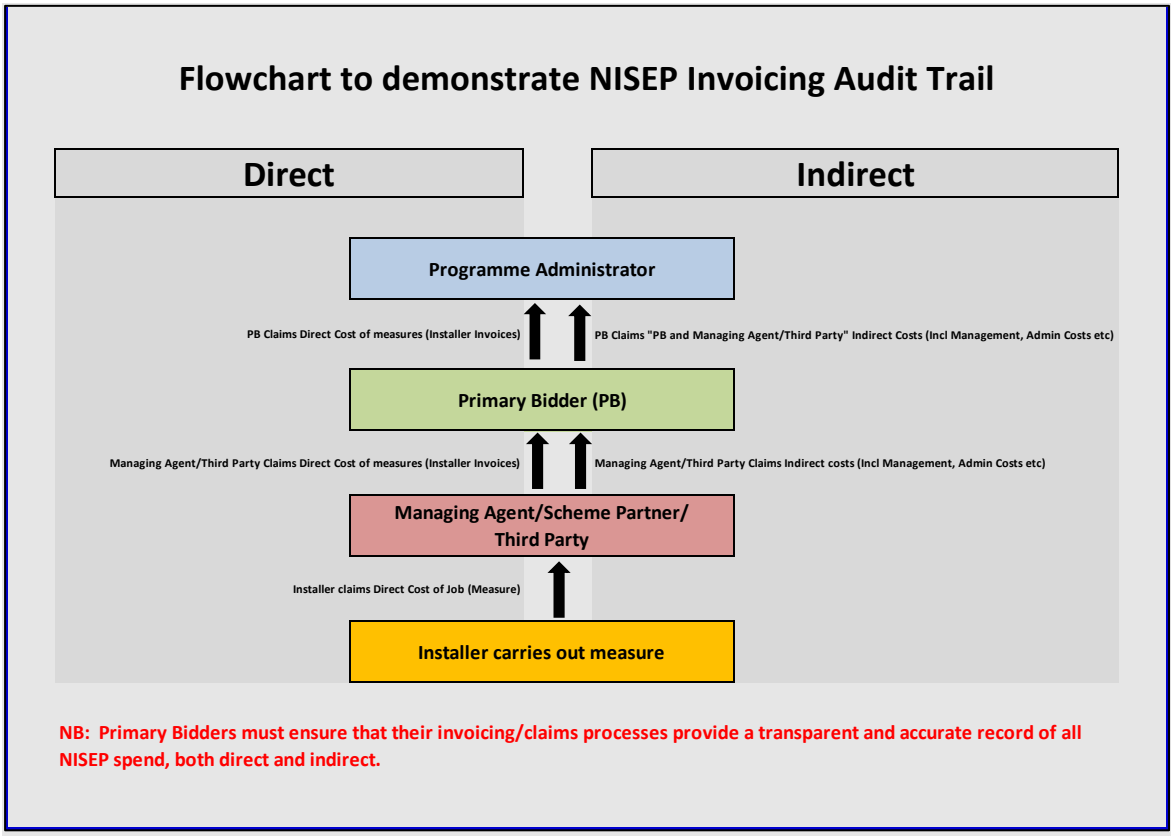
It is the responsibility of Primary Bidders to account for VAT and pay/recover VAT from HMRC in line with HMRC guidance. Claims for reimbursement of NISEP funding must not include VAT that is recoverable elsewhere. Neither the Programme Administrator nor the Utility Regulator provide VAT guidance. Primary Bidders are required to obtain VAT guidance from the HMRC before commencement of the relevant NISEP scheme year once approvals have been given. Primary Bidders must also be aware of any updated HMRC guidance in respect of VAT over the course of the relevant NISEP year to ensure that payment claims always reflect the latest guidance available. Any evidence in support of compliance with this requirement must be documented and verifiable and available for audit purposes. This may include written confirmation from HMRC. In addition to the requirement to obtain HMRC guidance, where a Primary Bidder has suitably qualified tax expertise (in-house) or external professional advisors, they should obtain and retain current written guidance from them in advance of the commencement of the relevant scheme period. Alternatively, in date copies of published latest available HMRC guidance or date stamped screen shots of the relevant HMRC web pages should be retained**.** If VAT is claimed fraudulently by a Primary Bidder their status will be withdrawn.

Total claims for reimbursement will not be permitted to exceed the total amount of funding which was allocated to a particular bidder following the scheme submission or approved scheme variation process.

Subject to the scheme variation approval process, schemes which fail to deliver the measures agreed will be required to return any unspent or mis-spent NISEP funding. In certain circumstances where a Primary Bidder has more than one scheme, the Programme Administrator may agree to the transfer of funding from an unsuccessful scheme to a successful scheme in the same category. It is the responsibility of the Primary Bidder to ensure that NISEP funding is spent as agreed and also that they recover any NISEP monies not spent on agreed measures. Allocated NISEP funding can only be spent on the approved scheme unless otherwise agreed through the scheme variation process.

NOTE: Primary Bidders are responsible for ensuring that the amount spent on scheme delivery matches what they have claimed, any amounts over-claimed are required to be repaid.

Primary Bidders must ensure that their invoicing/claims processes provide a transparent and accurate record of spend for each scheme (see below for requirements for direct and indirect costs evidence)



Primary Bidders must ensure that any indirect costs of sub-contractors or managing agents, such as administrative costs, are claimed as indirect costs. If the managing agent also subcontracts out works to an additional third party, outside of the Primary Bidder's contract, the Programme Administrator will also require these sub-contractor's invoices.

2.5 Focus on Vulnerability

The strategic objectives of the NISEP will continue to be helping customers to use energy efficiently and promoting sustainable energy supplies whilst having due regard for the needs of vulnerable (priority) customers.

Due to the current high level of fuel poverty in NI and the Utility Regulator's statutory duty to have due regard for vulnerable customers, the amount of programme funding ring-fenced for priority customers remains at 80%.

The main factor in determining financial vulnerability is low income. When assessing vulnerability, all priority schemes must include an income threshold as the primary criteria.

The income threshold was previously set at £5,000 above the Affordable Warmth eligibility criteria. However, as Affordable Warmth is due to be replaced by a new statutory Fuel Poverty Scheme, *Warmer Healthier Homes*, and the final scheme criteria remain subject to change, the below income thresholds have been revised. These will continue to maintain a greater differential between the statutory Fuel Poverty Scheme and NISEP by allowing a higher upper income threshold for NISEP eligibility.

The income criteria set for **Priority Individual Measures** schemes are as follows:

- Single person household with an income/pension of less than £40,000 gross, or
- Couple or single parent family with an income/pension less than £45,000 gross

The income criteria set for **Priority No Customer Contribution 'Whole House Solution', 'WHS Innovative' and 'Social Housing Provider'** schemes are as follows;

- Single person household with an income/pension of less than £40,000 gross, or
- Couple or single parent family with an income/pension less than £45,000 gross

The income criteria set for all **Priority Customer Contribution 'Whole House Solution'** schemes are as follows:

- Single person household with an income/pension of less than £50,000 gross, or
- Couple or single parent family with an income/pension less than £55,000 gross.

Please note, household income is defined as all income / benefits received by adults living in the residence. No income/benefit should be included for those under the age of 18.

There is no income criteria set for Non-Priority Domestic, Commercial or Non-Priority Innovative schemes which includes Domestic Customer Contribution Innovative schemes.

In addition, Appendix 2 refers to a vulnerability matrix, designed to assist Primary Bidders with scoring vulnerable customers which can help ensure funding is provided to those most in need. The vulnerability matrix should be used where schemes are oversubscribed and the Primary Bidder has a waiting list. Organisations specialising in dealing with vulnerable customers can assist Primary Bidders assess vulnerable customers, via the matrix. Primary Bidders should ensure that all customers understand waiting times and that communication is clear to any person that has enquired/registered for a NISEP scheme. Primary Bidders should contact the Programme Administrator for further information if required. Should a vulnerability matrix be used to determine need for funding this information must be retained for audit review.

Primary Bidders should set out in their scheme submission how they will attempt to ensure that priority customers are directed towards the scheme that best suits their needs (whether it is a Government scheme, or a separate scheme approved under the NISEP).

For Social Housing Provider tenants, vulnerability criteria must be adhered to, as outlined above, and appropriate eligibility checks in place at application stage, as with all other priority customers. The Social Housing Provider will be expected to make declarations to confirm that all tenants have met the eligibility criteria.

Where possible, if a Priority customer meets the criteria for more than one scheme, steps should be taken to ensure that the customer is either given appropriate advice on the best scheme for their individual circumstances, (should this be delivered by another Primary Bidder) or directed to an appropriate advice-giving agency.

2.6 NISEP Priority Group Schemes

Under NISEP, the 80% of funds set aside for schemes aimed at Priority group customers will be split between ‘Whole House Solutions’ ‘Innovative’, ‘Social Housing Provider’ and ‘Individual Measures’. All approaches are described below. Priority customers are not expected to contribute financially to measures being

installed in their homes. For example, with a fully funded insulation scheme (offering both cavity wall and loft insulation measures), a property should be able to avail of both loft and cavity wall insulation at no cost to the Priority customer.

However, for Priority Whole House Solution schemes that are designed in such a way that a customer contribution is required, the contribution from a priority customer must not exceed a maximum of **40%** of the main heating measure with other measures fully funded by NISEP or a third party. NISEP and/or a third-party contribution must fund the other **60%** of the heating measure. Any customer contribution made must be shown on the Post Implementation Report (PIR) under the Customer Contribution heading.

Where a customer contribution is sought in the Priority group section, the Primary Bidder must ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to assess affordability and to ensure that due regard is given to the financial circumstances and the customers' ability to pay within the target group.

Primary Bidders must ensure that all staff are aware of all NISEP schemes available which have a similar offering and put procedures in place to ensure that where a customer contribution is sought within a priority scheme.

Those customers are always directed to the scheme which is best for them first; this may include Government, NISEP and other schemes. It will always be assumed that equivalent schemes which do not require a contribution, or which require a lower contribution are best. Primary Bidders should be aware of all NISEP schemes and other energy efficiency grants available. It is the responsibility of the Primary Bidder to ensure that the NISEP scheme offered is the most appropriate scheme for the customer; if the Primary Bidder's scheme is fully subscribed, the customer should be supported by the Primary Bidder to make an onward referral (to a more appropriate scheme). Consent must be sought from the customer in advance of transferring customer data to another Primary Bidder.

Should a Primary Bidder of an Individual Measures scheme be contacted by a customer who would benefit from a Whole House Solution scheme, the Primary Bidder must signpost the customer as appropriate, rather than accept the customer onto their scheme. However, if funding is exhausted for all Whole House Solution schemes and as a result those schemes are all closed, the customer can consent to avail of funding for the individual measures scheme instead. Surveys should capture all applicable information. Primary Bidders should also ensure their installers or sub-contractors are aware of this.

Primary Bidders should inform the Programme Administrator of the status of their schemes in relation to current funding allocation, status of applications, waiting lists etc. via the annual reporting schedule, in addition to communicating directly to the Programme Administrator if funding is exhausted and new applications cannot be received. This is to enable information to be shared across

NISEP Primary Bidders and external organisations who may refer to NISEP schemes.

No priority group customer is ever given the 'hard sell' or pressurised to take up a scheme. Should Primary Bidders use cold calling techniques to generate referrals, they must adopt a fair code of practice, which should be included with the scheme submission. For example; installers must carry identification and ensure suitable documentation is available at point of contact which states the details of the Primary Bidder, so verification of the scheme can be sought by the customer; awareness of the 'No Cold Calling' signage.

Where a customer contribution is sought, including a deposit, this must be made clear to the customer. A signed agreement must be completed by the customer, prior to any work taking place, and a copy of the agreement left with the customer. The NISEP Claim form must clearly state if a customer contribution has been sought.

The Primary Bidder must ensure that all staff who interact with priority customers have received appropriate training to engage effectively and sensitively with vulnerable customers in an appropriate manner. Staff entering customers' homes must hold a valid Access NI check. Evidence of training completed, qualifications, accreditations, and Access NI clearances must be retained and made available upon request for audit, assurance, or compliance purposes. The Primary Bidder must be able to demonstrate that training is kept up to date and reviewed periodically to ensure continued effectiveness.

Primary Bidders must ensure that schemes are designed to ensure maximum uptake of all measures; where multiple contractors are undertaking the works and where customers have availed of one measure, the Primary Bidder is responsible for coordinating the work and ensuring during post implementation quality assurance visits that all measures installed are working in coordination with each other to deliver maximum benefit to the household.

This coordination should include gas and electricity network operators. Primary Bidders must assist and support customers with the application of a gas meter connection, reconnection of a gas/electricity meter or meter alteration (if applicable).

Primary Bidders should firstly ensure NISEP funding is secured for the customer whilst this process is being undertaken and should engage with the gas and electricity network operators and the customer throughout to ensure the heating is installed or other applicable measures without unnecessary delay.

NISEP will fund where readily connectible domestic gas services are in excess of the free service length provided by the gas network operators (i.e. as outlined in their connection policy) e.g. if the gas service required is 32 meters and the gas network operator provides a free service up to 30 meters NISEP will fund the

additional 2 meters. The position of the gas service must be defined by gas network operator regulations, not customer or Primary Bidder. If the applicant is receiving a fully funded grant this charge will be fully funded by NISEP. If the applicant is receiving a part funded grant, (i.e., 60/40 scheme) 60% of the extra connection cost will be funded by NISEP. Please retain the supplier invoice and ensure to itemise the connection cost on the heating invoice.

Should a customer have a gas meter previously removed or disconnected, a reconnection charge may be applicable. If the applicant is receiving a fully funded grant this charge will be fully funded by NISEP. If the applicant is receiving a part funded grant, (i.e., 60/40 scheme) 60% of the standard reconnection fee will be funded by NISEP. Please retain the supplier invoice and ensure to itemise the reconnection fee on the heating invoice.

In addition, if a gas meter or electricity meter has to be repositioned to enable external wall insulation to be completed, charges to alter the standard meter position (position as defined by gas network operator regulations or NIE Networks, not customer or Primary Bidder) will be funded by NISEP. Similarly, if the applicant is receiving a fully funded grant the standard meter alteration fee will be fully funded by NISEP. If the applicant is receiving a part funded grant, (i.e., 60/40 scheme) 60% of the standard meter alteration fee will be funded by NISEP. NISEP will not fund the meter position alteration fee and/or reconnection fee which is non standards outlined in the network operators connection policy.

Cavity Wall Insulation for house extensions on their own may be permissible in certain circumstances and Primary Bidders should contact the Programme Administrator providing further information before the measure is installed as energy savings need to be downgraded.

For Priority Schemes targeting Social Housing Providers, vacant properties are not eligible, unless documentation can be provided to verify the tenant's name, that they are due to take residency within 2 months, and that they meet the vulnerability criteria set.

Building Control and Planning Permission costs for all Priority Domestic schemes and Non Priority Domestic schemes must be fully funded through NISEP (excluding Social Housing Provider schemes) and should be clearly stated on the invoice.

2.6.1 Whole House Solutions

32% of total NISEP funding is ring-fenced for providing whole house solutions i.e. full packages of heating systems and insulation measures, (at least 60% of which should go to schemes which do not require a customer contribution). As Table 1.1 shows, the estimated minimum funding available for whole house solutions in

qualifying homes in 2027/28 is £2,434,882 with additional £1,123,792 available for Innovative Whole House Solution schemes targeting electric heating.

Where cavity wall or loft insulation is included in a Whole House Solution package priority scheme, there is no customer contribution towards the insulation measures. Any additional measures installed (i.i.e. smart controls, HWTJs, draught proofing etc) should be fully funded by NISEP or fully funded by a Third Party contribution (i.e. there is no customer contribution). This funding arrangement should be clearly documented to ensure the customer understands how the measures are financed. Customers should be made aware of the benefits of insulation measures and reasons for not accepting these measures as part of a WHS grant should be exceptional. Primary Bidders must document any exceptional circumstances on survey paperwork to explain why measures have not been provided.

Additional measures are not mandatory but Primary Bidders must offer them as part of an overall package of NISEP measures where bids for schemes are based on providing a full package of measures and these are outlined in approved scheme submissions. Where Customers refuse to have additional measures fitted for various reasons or if they are unsuitable for the property, Primary Bidders must keep records of the reasons why they have not been installed. Explanations for uptake must be available for inclusion in the interim reports provided to the Programme Administrator. Where appropriate, customers should always be fully informed about the benefits of installing a full package of measures.

Where Primary Bidder funds additional measures (i.e. measures that are 100% supported by a third party contribution) and these have been incorporated into the scheme design to improve the cost effectiveness of bids, they must be provided where required unless the customer refuses to have them installed. Where such measures are not provided or installed, the Primary Bidder must supply clear and justified reasons.

Qualifying households will have existing electric (E7/non ERP compliant), coal heating systems, no central heating or an old inefficient (15 years+) or broken beyond viable economic repair oil, natural gas or LPG boiler. Broken beyond economic viable economic repair criteria does not apply to Social Housing Provider schemes. Other fuels not listed are ineligible for funding.

The Primary Bidder should seek prior approval from the Programme Administrator for conversions from oil to high heat retention electric storage heaters.

Customers converting from electric central heating can only convert to other forms of electric heating, including High Heat Retention Storage Heaters or Air Source Heat Pumps. Customers must be signposted on to the most appropriate schemes available, should this be NISEP or other grant schemes. A conversion to any other fuel source that is more carbon intensive is not eligible under NISEP.

Customers in 'off gas' areas with no existing central heating (where a coal fire or electric room heater is used as the primary heat source), can only convert to other forms of electric heating including High Heat Retention Storage Heaters or Air Source Heat Pumps.

To maximise the uptake of Whole House Solutions, Primary Bidders should note that eligibility for new heating systems should be based on the existing system being at least 15 years old OR broken beyond viable economic repair (NB: For Air source heat pump schemes, specific criteria may apply, please refer to Appendix 3 for further guidance).

NISEP schemes must target these qualifying properties and use appropriate vulnerability criteria to ensure that funds are used to assist those most in need.

Priority 'whole house solution' schemes, must offer the following full package of energy efficiency measures if required / suitable for the property. (See Appendix 3 for required specifications of measures.)

- An efficient central heating system with an 'A' rated oil/gas boiler conversion or upgrade (natural gas should be installed where it is available);
- Cavity wall insulation; (includes extract and refill)
- Full loft insulation;
- Hot water tank jacket;
- Draught Proofing measures;
- Low-flow/eco shower head
- Smart Controls

Please note, LED lighting and reflective radiator panels are no longer funded by NISEP. No measures outside this list are permitted for scheme design or delivery.

On scheme delivery, Primary Bidders must offer the full package of measures to eligible customers as outlined and install measures where they are required and suitable. This is to encourage greater uptake, maximise energy savings and gross customer benefit. Please note, cold water tank jackets are not considered an additional measure, if required however, they are considered as part of the overall cost of the loft insulation job and can be claimed accordingly.

Installers of heating systems must be appropriately accredited i.e. for gas central heating systems installers must be registered with Gas Safe and for oil central heating systems registered with OFTEC, renewables installers must be MCS accredited. All heating systems must be installed with appropriate heating

controls (as specified in Section 3.0 of Appendix 3) and the customer must be given proper instruction on the efficient use of these controls. Installations must meet all relevant Building Regulations and be carried out in accordance with all relevant British Standards.

For all domestic Whole House Schemes, Primary Bidders must establish a process to document the assessment of existing pipework for suitability, estimating the age of the existing plumbing and its current condition and undertake a water pressure test before installing new heating systems. This paperwork must be retained for inspection for a period of seven years after the end of the applicable NISEP year. Please see below for further guidance.

Primary Bidders are not expected to ask priority customers to sign waivers unless all the following points have been complied with:

- A water pressure test must be conducted before commissioning any upgraded system and the results of this test must be recorded including the date of completion and made available for review and sign off by the Quality Monitoring Inspector. The installation shall not be deemed compliant until the Quality Monitoring Inspector has reviewed and accepted the test results. The test documentation must include a clear outcome statement (e.g. PASS or FAIL) together with a concise summary of the results that can be readily understood by a non-technical reviewer. Where a test result is recorded as FAIL, the documentation must clearly state that the pipework is unsuitable for operation in its current condition. The installer must undertake necessary remedial works with the customers consent, including replacement of pipework where required, before retesting and commissioning proceeds.

- In addition, for systems changing from gravity feed to a pressurised system a water pressure test must be carried out before any works commence to determine if existing pipes can safely withstand higher operating pressures expected before proceeding to pressurised. The results of this test must be recorded including the date of completion and made available for the quality monitoring inspector to review and sign off. The installation shall not be deemed compliant until the Quality Monitoring Inspector has reviewed and accepted the test results. The documentation should include a clear test outcome statement (e.g. PASS/FAIL) together with a concise summary of the results that can be readily understood by a non-technical reviewer. Where a test result is recorded as FAIL, the documentation must clearly state that the pipework is unsuitable for operation under a pressurised system in its current condition. The installer must undertake necessary remedial works with the customers' consent, including replacement of pipework where required, before retesting and commissioning proceeds.

- Where any evidence of microbore is present all applicable pipework must be automatically upgraded.

- If any leaks occur within two months of installation at the property, the Primary Bidder is responsible for ensuring that the necessary additional works are carried out to ensure that the finished job meets NISEP quality standards. It is expected that the 2-month pipework waiver is only used in exceptional circumstances. Primary Bidders should be confident in the quality of their work and carry out sufficient pipework checks to ensure that the number of remedials and issues involved are therefore minimised.

- The Independent quality inspector must review and verify compliance with the requirements outlined above and provide documented confirmation of their findings. Any instances of non-compliance identified during the inspection process must be recorded and reported to the Primary Bidder, with appropriate corrective action taken and evidenced prior to quality inspector sign-off and before a claim can be submitted.

Under a Whole House Solution scheme, all installs must meet current Building Control (BC)/Planning Permission requirements and adhere to OFTEC/Gas Safe Guidance. Items such as oil tanks, radiators, TRVs and piping (central heating and domestic piping) should be replaced if broken or beyond viable economic repair, or if a water pressure test, completed on the old system or before commissioning of the new system, indicates it is not compatible with the new system, (i.e. microbore) or if there is visible evidence of deterioration which would impede the new boiler and/or system functioning appropriately or if they do not meet Building Control/Planning Permission requirements or OFTEC / Gas Safe Guidance.

The requirements necessary to maintain a warranty must be clearly explained to the customer. An acknowledgement confirming the customer's understanding of these requirements should be built into application form declaration and a copy provided to the customer, with a copy retained by the Primary Bidder for audit purposes.

In addition to guarantees and workmanship warranties, the Primary Bidder is responsible for any necessary works in relation to all piping (including domestic piping) for up to two months after installation, therefore this additional work can be claimed from NISEP. It is important that documentation is properly updated and made available, should it be required, to support costs claimed.

Please note, NISEP does not cover costs for redecoration. Primary Bidders should take this into consideration when submitting whole house solution claims. Secondary claims will not be processed for additional works relating to a NISEP heating install at the same property. Also, the total NISEP funding amount that has been awarded to a Primary Bidder, will not be increased to cover any additional works. Quotations to customers for additional works outside of NISEP

funding should be provided to customers separately and should not be conditional to receiving NISEP funding. Separate agreements with customers for any additional work should exclude the NISEP logo and quality monitoring inspections undertaken should only include measures installed under NISEP.

Primary Bidders upgrading an oil boiler in off gas areas are required to check that the new system and items such as Oil Tanks meet current OFTEC standards. The system should be made to meet OFTEC guidance and conform fully. NISEP will fund this work to ensure all installs meet this Best Practice Guidance.

Primary Bidders should contact their local Council to ensure compliance and to seek advice if they encounter installs that have never had Building Control certification. In instances whereby any additional works are required, Primary Bidders should collate information on survey forms / technical reports to support the need for additional works. This level of information will be required to process NISEP payments. E.g., should a Primary Bidder be installing a new heating system and cavity wall insulation in a property that has adequate loft insulation, if the ventilation in the roof space does not meet Building Control requirements, it should be brought up to standard as part of this whole house solution. Primary Bidders can claim for the additional vents as part of the cost of the job. In this case, the vents should be itemised on the invoice and the Primary Bidder should include a comment in the master tab of the claim template against the applicable property. Please note, NISEP cannot fund vent only jobs as funding must be targeted at activities that result in energy savings that benefit the consumer.

Heating installs must also be compliant with manufacturer's instructions. NISEP also requires minimum heating control standards to be met. Smart heating controls are the only additional heating controls to Building Control standards that can be claimed for under NISEP. If customers would like additional works beyond what is described in the points above this must be quoted for and invoiced separately and paid for separately to NISEP (and must exclude the NISEP logo/NISEP reference).

2.6.2 Priority 'Whole House Solution' Innovative Schemes

As shown in Table 1.1, up to 15% of the NISEP funding is available for the provision of Whole House Solution Innovative schemes in 2027/28 is £1,123,792.

Renewable technologies accepted under NISEP have been defined in the scheme types permitted below.

The definition of innovative schemes includes schemes which help to bring forward emerging but proven domestic or commercial technologies that provide

a better energy efficiency performance than 'standard' measures. Research and/or demonstration projects are not permitted under NISEP.

High Heat Retention Storage Heaters are considered innovative but should also be offered as part of an 'All of Northern Ireland' Whole House Solution schemes. Some renewable technologies are considered as Innovative. Please note, Hybrid heat pumps and systems are currently not offered under NISEP, see Appendix 3 for further detail.

Primary Bidders developing Innovative Air Source Heat Pump schemes should build in costs for a 'before' and 'after' EPC to all schemes. This will be a requirement for all NISEP heat pump schemes so that the 'before and after ratings can be collated. Before and after EPC data may be requested at Audit stage. Primary Bidders should include costs for these EPCs in their bid submissions and ensure they can fulfil this requirement upon scheme delivery if schemes are approved. In addition, the bid submission must also include costs for installing Solar PV panels. Bids will not be accepted for installations of air source heat pump only in this category.

Primary Bidders developing Innovative schemes installing Solar PV must include costs for bird proofing each installation.

The following scheme types are permitted in this category:

Option 1: Priority 'whole house solution' innovative schemes, must offer the following full package of energy efficiency measures if required / suitable for the property.

(See Appendix 3 for required specifications of measures.)

- Air Source Heat Pump and Solar PV installation (system will be sized per property requirements as defined by Primary Bidder and included in technical survey);
- Cavity wall insulation (includes extract and refill);
- Full loft insulation;
- Hot water tank jacket;
- Draught Proofing measures;
- Low-flow/eco shower head;
- Smart Controls.

No measures outside this list are permitted.

Option 2: Priority 'whole house solution' innovative schemes including Solid Wall Insulation, must offer the following full package of energy efficiency measures if required / suitable for the property.

(See Appendix 3 for required specifications of measures.)

- Solid wall insulation (includes CWI and extract and refill where required);
- An efficient central heating system with an 'A' rated oil/gas boiler conversion or upgrade (natural gas should be installed where it is available and electric option must be offered on scheme delivery where the existing heating system is electric);
- Full loft insulation;
- Hot water tank jacket;
- Draught Proofing measures;
- Low-flow/eco shower head;
- Smart Controls

No measures outside this list are permitted.

Option 3: Priority 'whole house solution' innovative schemes including High Heat Retention Electric Storage Heaters, must offer the following full package of energy efficiency measures if required / suitable for the property. (See Appendix 3 for required specifications of measures.)

- High Heat Retention Electric Storage Heaters;
- Cavity wall insulation (includes extract and refill);
- Full loft insulation;
- Hot water tank jacket;
- Draught Proofing measures;
- Low-flow/eco shower head;

No measures outside this list are permitted.

2.6.3 Priority Individual Energy Efficiency Measures

As shown in Table 1.1, up to 25% of the NISEP funding is available for the provision of individual measures in qualifying homes in 2027/28 is £1,872,987.

This is in recognition of the fact that the properties may have inadequate levels of cavity wall, loft, or hot water cylinder insulation. Additional measures listed below are to be included in schemes but only when being provided with cavity and loft insulation measures.

Dwellings receiving measures under this category must be inhabited by Priority customers.

Priority 'individual measure' schemes must offer a package of the following energy efficiency measures if required / suitable for the property. (See Appendix 3 for required specifications of measures.):

- Cavity wall insulation (includes extract and refill up to 50% of all CWI works undertaken)
- Loft Insulation
- Draught proofing measures
- Hot water tank jacket

Please note, LED lighting, reflective radiator panels or low-flow/eco showerheads are no longer funded by NISEP in this category. No measures outside this list are permitted for scheme design or delivery.

On scheme delivery, Primary Bidders must offer the full package of measures to eligible customers as outlined and install measures where they are required. This is to encourage greater uptake, maximise energy savings and gross customer benefit.

2.6.4 Priority Social Housing Provider schemes

7.5% has been ringfenced for Social Housing Provider (SHP) scheme. If this category is undersubscribed at bid stage, the funding will be allocated back into the Priority Whole House Solution / Individual Measures pots which will increase the funding available for these schemes.

As Table 1.1 shows, the estimated minimum funding available for priority Social Housing provider Schemes in 2027/28 is £561,896. This category is for individual measures, whole house solution and innovative schemes targeting social housing only. Please refer to section 2.1 for NISEP funding caps to be applied, within this category. For schemes offering innovative measures Primary Bidders should contact the Programme Administrator as part of the Call for schemes registration process, for further guidance.

Priority Social Housing Provider schemes may only include the following measures:

- An efficient central heating system with an 'A' rated oil/gas boiler conversion or upgrade (natural gas should be installed where it is available);
- Air Source Heat Pump (system will be sized per property requirements as defined by Primary Bidder and included in technical survey);
- Solar PV installation (system will be sized per property requirements as defined by Primary Bidder and included in technical survey);
- High Heat Retention Electric Storage Heaters;
- Full loft insulation and cavity wall insulation (extraction if required)
- Additional measures including; hot water tank jacket, draught proofing measures, low-flow/eco shower head and smart controls (if offered, must be included with a minimum of one of the above measures).
- Schemes may include any combination of these measures, but no measures outside this list are permitted.

2.7 NISEP Schemes for Non-Priority Customers

Outside of the main financial vulnerability focus of NISEP, 20% of the total fund is available for non-priority customer schemes.

As Table 1.1 shows, the estimated total amount of funding available for Non-Priority schemes in 2027/28 is £1,498,389. This is allocated into three separate pots as follows:

a) Funding for conventional non-priority domestic schemes (will amount to 6% of total funds i.e. an estimated £449,517.

b) Funding for domestic innovative schemes will be 7% of total funds i.e. £524,436.

c) Funding for conventional non-priority commercial / non-domestic schemes (using established energy efficiency technology) will amount to 7% of total funds i.e. an estimated £524,436.

High Heat Retention Storage Heaters and renewable technologies are considered as Innovative as long as they are a proven technology approved by the Programme Administrator, and the measures are in the customer's financial

interest. Please note, hybrid heat pumps and systems are currently not offered under NISEP, see Appendix 3 for more detail.

2.7.1 Non-Priority Domestic schemes

For Non-Priority domestic Individual Measures, Primary Bidders must design schemes to facilitate a NISEP / third party contribution of 40% of the total cost of each Insulation measure (to include ventilation and the CWI guarantee certificate) or to the maximum cap of £850 per measure (up to a maximum of £1,250 for CWI extract and refill jobs). The building control application fee must also be funded by NISEP, in addition to the 40% / £850 cap / £1,250 cap. Any additional measures offered must be funded by NISEP or by a Third-Party Contribution and should not require a customer contribution.

Non-Priority Domestic Conventional schemes must offer a package of the following energy efficiency measures if required / suitable for the property. (See Appendix 3 for required specifications of measures.):

- Cavity wall insulation (includes extract and refill up to 50% of all CWI works undertaken*)
- Loft Insulation
- Draught proofing measures
- Hot water tank jacket

No measures outside this list are permitted.

2.7.2 Non-Priority Domestic 'Innovative' schemes

For Non-Priority Whole House Solution Innovative schemes, the maximum grant for insulation measures installed will also be £850 or 40% of the total cost of the measure, to include ventilation and the CWI guarantee certificate, for CWI and loft insulation (up to a maximum of £1250 for CWI extract and refill jobs). There should be a maximum NISEP grant of 50% towards the innovative heating installation. The building control application fee /planning permission fee (if applicable) must also be funded by NISEP. Any additional measures offered must be funded by NISEP or by a Third-Party Contribution and should not require a customer contribution.

Primary Bidders developing innovative domestic Air Source Heat Pump schemes should build in costs for a 'before' and 'after' EPC to all schemes. This will be a

requirement for all NISEP heat pump schemes so that the 'before and after ratings can be collated. Before and after EPC data may be requested at Audit stage. Primary Bidders should include costs for these EPCs in their bid submissions and ensure they can fulfil this requirement upon scheme delivery if schemes are approved. On scheme delivery customer eligibility must include the property having pre-existing Solar Photovoltaics (PV), which must be MCS compliant and deemed suitable by the Primary Bidder. This requirement must be included within the terms and conditions of the application form.

Primary Bidders developing innovative schemes installing Solar PV must include costs for bird proofing each installation.

The following scheme types are permitted in this category:

Option 1: Non-Priority Domestic Innovative schemes must offer a package of the following energy efficiency measures if required / suitable for the property.

(See Appendix 3 for required specifications of measures.):

- Air Source Heat Pump only (pre-existing PV) (system will be sized per property requirements as defined by Primary Bidder and included in technical survey);
- Cavity wall insulation; (includes extract and refill);
- Full loft insulation;
- Hot water tank jacket;
- Draught Proofing measures;
- Low-flow/eco shower head;
- Smart Controls.

No measures outside this list are permitted.

Option 2: Non-Priority Domestic Innovative schemes must offer a package of the following energy efficiency measures if required / suitable for the property.

(See Appendix 3 for required specifications of measures.):

Air Source Heat Pump and Solar PV installation (system will be sized per property requirements as defined by Primary Bidder and included in technical survey);

- Cavity wall insulation (includes extract and refill);

- Full loft insulation;
- Hot water tank jacket;
- Draught Proofing measures;
- Low-flow/eco shower head;
- Smart Controls.

No measures outside this list are permitted.

Option 3: Non-Priority Domestic Innovative schemes must offer a package of the following energy efficiency measures if required / suitable for the property. (See Appendix 3 for required specifications of measures.):

- High Heat Retention Electric Storage Heaters;
- Cavity wall insulation (includes extract and refill);
- Full loft insulation;
- Hot water tank jacket;
- Draught Proofing measures;
- Low-flow/eco shower head.

No measures outside this list are permitted.

2.7.3 Non-Priority Commercial / Non-Domestic schemes

The NISEP grant should be 25% of the total direct costs for a single project with an upper limit of £35,000 per single project.

Grant funding provided to non-domestic / commercial enterprises may be considered 'State aid' or a 'subsidy' and is subject to regulation in order to avoid unfair distortions of competition. Commercial enterprises include landlords of privately rented accommodation inhabited by priority domestic customers.

For commercial schemes Building Control and Planning Permission should also be sought where applicable, and evidence to support this must be available on request. Customers should allow sufficient time for Building control /Planning permission requirements to be met and for Building control/Planning Permission approval to be obtained, reducing the risk of NISEP being unable to fund the

application. This requirement should be clearly communicated to customers and included as condition of funding on NISEP documentation provided to the customer.

All Primary Bidders who deliver schemes which offer support to non-domestic / commercial undertakings must ensure that their procedures comply with the guidance on State Aid and subsidy control provided in Appendix 7.

Separate rules apply depending on whether the funding constitutes 'State aid' or a 'subsidy'. Primary bidders should consider the guidance included in Appendix 7 to determine the rules that apply to their schemes.

It should be noted that the rules in relation to State aid do not apply to support for the production of, and trade in, agricultural, fisheries and aquacultural products in Northern Ireland above a national annual cap. For State aid awarded beyond this cap, there is also a national ceiling for the cumulative amount of de minimis State aid to the agricultural sector at EU Member State level. There is also a requirement on the UK to actively monitor the ceiling. Therefore, any Primary Bidder intending to give support to commercial enterprises in the agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture sectors should inform the Programme Administrator of how much they forecast will go to that sector this year. At the end of the year the Primary Bidder will also need to report to the Programme Administrator the actual amount given to the agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture sectors which will then be notified to DEFRA by the Utility Regulator.

It is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to keep records in accordance with the notices provided in Appendix 7.

Non-Priority Non-Domestic/Commercial schemes may only include the following measures:

- Boiler replacement
- Heat recovery
- Intelligent heating controls
- LED lighting
- Solar PV
- Steam or heated regeneration dryer
- Turbo blower
- Variable speed technologies
- Voltage optimisation

- Solar thermal
- UV led curing system
- Infra-red heating
- Refrigeration efficiency technology

Schemes may include any combination of these measures. Please speak to the programme administrator if a proposed measure is not listed above, for consideration in this category.

2.7.4 Building Control and Planning Permission Requirements

For all domestic schemes, customers must be provided with all relevant information regarding any Building Control and/or Planning application requirements (where applicable), at the earliest opportunity. This includes details of who is responsible for arranging the necessary surveys, who is responsible for funding any Building Control and/or Planning application costs, and the relevant contact details for the Building Control or Planning Office to enable the customer to arrange the final inspection.

Primary Bidders must always ensure that Building Control/Planning permission is applied for (where applicable). Building control/planning permission fees should be clearly stated on the NISEP invoice. A customer is not eligible for NISEP if Building Control / Planning permission has not been applied for (where applicable). In the event an install funded through NISEP fails a Building Control inspection, it is the responsibility of the Primary Bidder to ensure any issues are rectified to enable a Building Control Certificate to be obtained. If planning permission is required, this must be granted prior to any works commence.

2.8 Indirect Cost Assumptions

Indirect costs include all the Primary Bidder's management costs associated with implementing a scheme. (Direct costs refer only to the actual costs incurred for the installation of the measures, as evidenced by installer invoices.)

It is important that indirect spend under NISEP is clearly reported in scheme submissions. A Primary Bidder submitting a scheme will have to build the indirect costs into the overall scheme costs, breaking them down as follows:

- Scheme design and development;

- Scheme facilitation/managing agent costs;
- Grant administration;
- Marketing;
- Surveying;
- Quality Monitoring;
- Evaluation and reporting;
- Third party indirect costs.

When each submitted scheme is evaluated by the Programme Administrator, the level of NISEP funding attributed to indirect costs will be analysed to ensure that indirect costs do not constitute an undue amount of overall scheme costs and that there is no cross subsidy between indirect costs and measures costs.

For each individual scheme, a limit will be placed on the level of indirect costs allowed to be subsidised from NISEP funding. This maximum limit will be 5% of the overall NISEP funding amount requested for Direct Costs or will be based on the average cost of measures for each house/premises calculated as follows, whichever is the higher amount.

(£250 x individual household/commercial property cost) / (£1000 + individual household/commercial property cost)

Examples are shown below:

Scheme 1
Scheme 1 is a scheme installing cavity insulation in 500 properties. The insulation installations are estimated to cost **£750** per property: **£250 x £750 / £1000 + £750** = £187,500 / £1750 = £107.14 The indirect cost that is allowed per property is £107.14 The total cost of the scheme measures is £375,000 (£750 x 500) Indirect costs of up to £53,570 (£107.14 x 500) will be allowed i.e. 14.3% of the measure costs for that scheme.
Scheme 2
Scheme 2 is a whole house scheme (heating system plus insulation) costing **£4,200** per property and will provide measures for 80 households: **£250 x £4,200 / £1000 + £4200** = £1,050,000 / £5,200= £201.92 The indirect cost that is allowed per property (heating + insulation) is £201.92 The total cost of the scheme measures is £336,000 (£4,200 x 80) Indirect costs of up to £16,153.60 (£201.92 x 80) will be allowed i.e. 4.81% of the measure's costs for that scheme.
Scheme 3
Scheme 3 is a commercial scheme aimed at a single large user costing **£10,000**: **£250 x £10,000 / £1000 + £10,000** = £2,500,000 / £11,000 = £227.27 The total cost of the scheme measures is £10,000 The indirect costs for the single property are £227.27 i.e. 2.27% of the measures cost.

This calculation is provided only as a guide to the maximum limit allowed and should not be used to calculate the indirect costs for a particular scheme. A full and justifiable breakdown of the estimated indirect costs, as illustrated above, must be provided within the scheme submission.

Note: the limit on indirect costs is a limit on how much the NISEP funding will contribute to indirect costs. If indirect costs are higher but a Primary Bidder or scheme partner wishes to contribute some of the costs, they may do so i.e. the indirect costs may exceed the limit as long as NISEP funding is not paying for the extra amount.

In cases where a Primary Bidder's indirect costs are unavoidably greater than the level allowed, for example, in very small schemes, or bespoke innovative schemes or where it is not possible to lever-in indirect costs from other partners, representation must be made to the Utility Regulator via the Programme Administrator, for 'one-off' consideration. All relevant information must be included to justify the level of indirect costs and evidence (e.g. letters from third parties) provided that indirect costs are not available from other sources.

The indirect cost calculation applies at the initial submission stage, Scheme Variation stage, final end of year claims and Post Implementation Report stage. Primary Bidders should monitor indirect cost spend throughout the NISEP year to ensure the cap is not exceeded. Primary Bidders should also confirm when submitting claims, that the indirect costs remain within the cap, in particular relation to claims made towards the end of the NISEP year where the Primary Bidder is claiming the final approved amounts.

In exceptional circumstances, the Utility Regulator is permitted to adjust the cap at their discretion; whether this is to the total requested for indirect costs or to an individual category listed above, this would be subject to a full explanation by the Primary Bidder.

2.9 NISEP Branding

Primary Bidders are expected to conduct targeted and inclusive marketing campaigns to encourage a high level of scheme uptake across all regions of Northern Ireland (where applicable), ensuring that funding and benefits from the programme are equitably distributed and accessible to communities in both urban and rural areas. Where applicable, marketing efforts should focus on achieving a good geographical spread to avoid concentration in any single area and to maximize the impact of the NISEP schemes throughout Northern Ireland. Evidence of marketing activity may be requested by the Programme Administrator in-year and Primary Bidders may be asked to consider reviewing the effectiveness of their current techniques where continued feedback suggests geographic spread remains limited. It is also essential to ensure that consumers benefiting from NISEP schemes are aware of the origin of their funding. To maintain consistent visibility and recognition of NISEP across the region, NISEP branding should be prominently used by:

- Primary Bidders;
- Scheme partners/sub-contractors/and other persons authorized by Primary Bidders to market NISEP schemes; and
- Programme Administration.

The NISEP logo should be used on all literature, including application forms, invoices and publications in respect of sustainable energy schemes that are wholly or jointly funded by NISEP. The use of the logo on these documents is an acknowledgement that the scheme has received funding from NISEP. All paperwork submitted for claim processing or audit must be fully legible with the logo (where applicable) clearly displayed. For invoices NISEP must be stated, a logo is not required.

The use of the NISEP logo should only therefore be used by the groups identified above and only applied to acknowledge the source of the funding. If any other groups wish to use the NISEP logo, written consent must be obtained from the Utility Regulator. NISEP is not an accreditation scheme and neither the Utility Regulator nor the NISEP endorses or approves installers. The NISEP logo must not be used to indicate endorsement or approval of a supplier, product or scheme. The NISEP logo is not a quality mark/ guarantee mark/ safety mark and must not be used to suggest such.

Exclusive use of a NISEP URL/domain name is not permitted. The NISEP logo must be used on all scheme documentation and all other publicity materials produced by those previously listed in respect of sustainable energy schemes and programmes, which are wholly or jointly funded by NISEP. Sole use of the NISEP logo is permitted or alternatively it may be used in conjunction with a scheme participant's logo. For specific guidelines on the colour, size, and placement of the NISEP logo, please refer to the branding guidelines:

Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme Branding Guidelines - Utility Regulator (uregni.gov.uk)

3. OVERALL ENERGY SAVINGS

3.1 Energy Savings from Schemes

BREDEM[3] has been the main source of assessing the energy savings from insulation and heating measure schemes in the past. The model calculates the energy requirements of domestic dwellings and estimates the likely savings resulting from energy efficiency improvements. In 2019 the methodology was updated and changed to Energy Saving Trust's Dynamic Engine (DE) which is a SAP based model that is used to calculate all of Energy Saving Trust's savings, energy consumption calculations and evaluations. Although related to the BREDEM model, the DESAP based model is updated annually with the latest assumptions to ensure it is accurate as possible for a given year. It is validated and is based on a Government approved methodology in the UK and when aggregated over all users, has been shown to accurately predict national domestic energy consumption.

The energy savings accredited under NISEP will be expressed in terms of gigawatt hours (GWh) and also in terms of the monetary benefits to the consumer in terms of reduced bills. 100 per cent of the additional energy savings arising from a scheme will be accredited to the NISEP, unless funding is secured from other sources, whereupon savings may be apportioned.

In line with best practice for carbon accounting, Energy Saving Trust uses a new methodology which means that all greenhouse gases, (Carbon Dioxide, (CO_2), methane and Nitrogen Oxide for scopes 1, 2 and 3 (scope 1, 2 and 3 (scope 1 refers to direct emissions, scope 2 refers to energy indirect emissions and scope 3 refers to other indirect emissions) are incorporated into the scheme submission spreadsheet. This means that savings generated from carrying out energy efficiency measures includes those savings from all greenhouse gases and not just CO_2, which is known as carbon dioxide equivalent emissions or CO_{2e}. This model is providing an accurate picture of the impact of all greenhouse gas emissions. Historically scope 1 CO_2 emissions was the primary metric for carbon accounting, however, since then, carbon accounting has moved on to include all the other greenhouse gas emissions and all scopes (1 to 3), as it was found they have a significant impact on how they impact the climate.

Below is a full list of all the standard domestic energy saving measures that are built into the scheme submission spreadsheet. Please contact the Programme Administrator for any energy saving measures that are not listed. The Primary Bidder is required to provide evidence to prove the non-standard measure has energy savings, financial savings and carbon emission savings, including calculations and sources of data, for consideration under NISEP. Savings figures

submitted are subject to change after a review of the calculations and data sources are complete.

Table 3.1 Domestic Measures built into the scheme submission spreadsheet

Measure*
Cavity wall insulation extract and refill
Cavity wall insulation full fill
Cavity wall insulation partial fill
Draught proofing (whole house basis)
High heat retention storage heaters
Fuel switch from an oil boiler to gas boiler (excluding communal and district heating systems)
Air source heat pump, from a gas boiler or oil boiler (excluding communal and district heating systems)
Loft insulation
Low flow/eco showerhead (water widget)
Oil boiler upgrade (excluding communal and district heating systems)
PV system
Smart heating controls
Solid wall insulation
Hot Water Tank insulation

*Subject to change

3.2 Savings based on 'Accredited Discounted Lifetime Energy Savings' (i.e. agreed and verified by the Programme Administrator)

In order to compare the cost of saving energy with the cost of energy supply, savings should be multiplied by the discount factor to give 'discounted lifetime energy savings'. A discount factor, as per the standard in the Treasury Green Book, of 3.5% is used.

It should be noted, however, that the actual year-on-year energy savings will consequently be greater than the figures shown in this Document. For example, a discounted lifetime financial saving of £11,517 could in fact represent an annual saving of £1,000 for 15 years (£15,000 lifetime saving without a discount rate).

3.3 Fuel Standardisation

The fuel standardisation factor (FSF) is no longer applied to the energy savings. This methodology is no longer needed as part of the bidding process and has been removed.

3.4 Lifetime of Sustainable Energy Measures

In line with the Government's Climate Change Programme, and as has been the case with EEL/NISEP projects since 2001, the energy saving benefits will be assessed over the full lifetime of the measures. The considered lifetimes of the various measures, which will be used in calculating the energy saving benefits, are shown in Table 3.4 below:

Table 3.4 Lifetimes of Domestic Measures

Energy Efficiency Measure	Lifetime (years)*
Air source heat pump	17
Cavity wall insulation	42
Chimney draught excluder	10
Draughtproofing (windows and doors)	10
Efficient boiler	16
Smart heating controls	12
High heat retention storage heaters	20
Hot water cylinder insulation	10
Internal/external solid wall insulation	36
Loft insulation	42
Low flow/eco showerhead	10
Pipework insulation	15
PV system	25

**Sourced from various sources such as the Energy Companies Obligation scheme and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.*

3.5 Cost of Measures (for information/guidance only)

Table 3.5 Average Costs of Domestic Measures

Energy Efficiency Measure	Average Cost of measure*
Switching to an air source heat pump (ASHP)	£17,000
Cavity wall insulation (full fill)	£1,100
Cavity wall insulation (partial fill)	£1,400
Cavity wall insulation (extraction and refill)	£2,700
Draughtproofing (windows, doors and chimney draught excluder, whole house)	£250
Switching to an efficient gas boiler (A-rated)	£5,500
Upgrading to an efficient oil boiler (A-rated)	£6,300
Smart heating controls	£210
High heat retention storage heaters (whole house)	£8,900
Hot water cylinder insulation	£25
Internal/external solid wall insulation	£19,000
Loft insulation (virgin, 0mm to 300mm)	£1,500
Loft insulation (top-up, 150mm to 300mm)	£1,500
Low flow/eco showerhead	£19
PV system (4.5kWp)**	£5,000

*Costs are based on average costs from the 2025-26 NISEP PIR data, therefore costs may seem higher or lower than expected due to some measures mostly being installed into smaller or larger house types for that given NISEP year. Costs include Building Control fees and VAT where it has been applicable.

** PV system costs are calculated from MCS data.

3.6 Customer Financial Savings

Customers who benefit directly from sustainable energy measures do so in two principal ways:

- Reduced energy consumption leading to lower bills
- Improved comfort

The total benefits to customers should therefore consider both the direct cost savings on fuel bills and the value of the savings taken up in improved comfort levels. These should be valued at the same rate as the energy savings. Thus, the total benefit to customers is simply the potential energy saving before comfort is accounted for, multiplied by the appropriate unit price.

When calculating the benefits that result from NISEP schemes, the fuel prices illustrated in table 3.6 should be used:

Table 3.6 Cost of Fuels (Source Energy Saving Trust, correct as of July 2026***)

Fuel type	Domestic cost per kWh*	Commercial cost per kWh**
Electricity standard rate (lighting measures)	34.70 p/kWh	23.88 p/kWh
Electricity off-peak rate (heating or insulation measures)	18.25 p/kWh	N/A
Gas	7.91 p/kWh	5.17 p/kWh
LPG	11.98 p/kWh	11.98 p/kWh***
Oil	7.74 p/kWh	7.74 p/kWh***
Coal	6.66 p/kWh	6.66 p/kWh***

*Domestic prices were updated September 2026.

**For schemes targeting large commercial energy users (over 70kVA) the Programme Administrator may decide it is more appropriate to use the price actually paid by the customer.

***Due to lack of official data, domestic prices are used.

The Programme Administrator will review these prices on an annual basis, and update if necessary, so that an accurate picture of the financial benefits realised by customers benefiting from NISEP can be derived.

The customer financial savings of schemes, on an aggregate basis, will be used as a performance indicator in assessing the overall success of the NISEP for a particular year and the benefits it has produced for society. At an individual level, the customer financial savings of a particular scheme will be used in analysing the success of that scheme and assessing whether similar schemes should be approved in the future.

3.7 Carbon Savings

The Energy Saving Trust recommends that the carbon emission factors for the different types of fuels detailed in Table 3.7 are used when reporting the carbon savings resulting from NISEP schemes. These factors are source from the official

government source for company reporting in the UK which include Northern Ireland.

The carbon factors for natural gas, LPG, oil and coal are sourced from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2024. The electricity carbon factor is supplied by the Northern Ireland Utility Regulator each year. All the carbon figures and carbon factors refer to carbon dioxide equivalent (kgCO2e/kWh), except were stated otherwise. This means that they include all greenhouse gases associated with that fuel type.

Table 3.7 Carbon Intensity of Fuels

Fuel type	Carbon factor (kgCO2e/kWH)
Electricity standard rate (lighting measures)	0.170
Electricity off-peak rate (heating or insulation measures)	0.170
Gas	0.213
LPG	0.240
Oil	0.298
Coal	0.404

The financial and carbon savings resulting from schemes will be calculated automatically by the scheme submission spreadsheet developed by the Energy Saving Trust. The carbon savings of schemes, on an aggregate basis, will be used as a performance indicator in assessing the overall success of the NISEP for a particular year and the benefits it has produced for society and the environment. At an individual level, the energy savings of a particular scheme will be used in analysing the success of that scheme and assessing whether similar schemes should be approved in the future.

4. PROCEDURES FOR SCHEME SUBMISSION

4.1 Submitting a Bid

The Programme Administrator will issue full guidance on the complete scheme submission process, following receipt of a Primary Bidders 'Call for Schemes' registration form. Primary Bidders must adhere to this process.

Approved schemes may run for two full NISEP years, subject to satisfactory performance in year 2027/28 and criteria defined in this Framework Document being met. Therefore, there will be no 'Call for Schemes' for the 2028/29 NISEP year.

A 'Call for Schemes' is issued in October 2026 to all registered Primary Bidders. Primary Bidders who intend to bid for funds must return the registration form to the Programme Administrator by mid-October 2026 (date to be confirmed in the Call for Schemes notification). The Programme Administrator will then send out a 2027/29 scheme submission pack which will contain detailed guidance on the process. Final and complete scheme submissions must be submitted to the Programme Administrator by 15 December 2026 at the latest.

Any bids received after 15 December 2026 will not be considered for funding and will be rejected automatically. Bids received within the appropriate time period, but which are incomplete, of insufficient quality or do not meet the criteria for funding may also be rejected.

There will be no opportunity to resubmit bids for approval after 15 December 2026.

Primary Bidders will have sole responsibility for any contractual arrangements or agreements in relation to the scheme submitted.

Following the bidding period, Primary Bidders should be informed by the beginning of March 2027 if their bids have been successful or otherwise.

Electronic copies of bids for funding must be sent to the Programme Administrator at the following email address:

nisep@est.org.uk

4.2 Scheme Referencing

Each NISEP scheme submitted must have a specific reference number.

The format of this number shall be made up as follows:

Primary Bidder ID / Year / Scheme Number / Scheme Measure Type / Customer Type

The Primary Bidder ID consists of 3 or 4 letters that clearly identify the Primary Bidder and will be allocated by the Programme Administrator.

The year should be shown as the last two digits of the financial year in which the scheme is to be implemented.

The scheme number should consist of two digits. Should a Primary Bidder submit more than one scheme in a given financial year, the scheme number should increase sequentially for each scheme, e.g., 01, 02 etc.

The scheme measure type should be shown as follows:

H = Heating (Including boilers and controls) only

I = Insulation only

M = Mix (e.g. a heating, insulation & lighting scheme)

R = Renewable Energy

O = Other measures not covered by the above

IV = Innovative

The customer type should be shown as follows:

P = Priority group customers

NP = Non-Priority group customers

To illustrate an example, if 'Green Energy' submitted one scheme to be undertaken in the 2023/24 financial year, and that scheme was an insulation scheme aimed at non-priority customers, the scheme reference number would be:

'GRE 23 01 I NP'

4.3 Scheme Submission Costs

Initial survey costs should be incorporated into the 'cost of measure' with post installation surveys and quality monitoring inspected inserted as indirect costs. The exception to this, is where a managing agent or partner is employed to carry out the surveys and then these jobs are subcontracted out to installers. This managing agent/partner survey fee should then be included as an indirect cost, as issued to the Primary Bidder separately to the installers invoice. The costs entered must be accurate and to the best of the Primary Bidder's knowledge at time of submission.

Any VAT costs that require NISEP funding must be clearly included and declared as part of bid submission. VAT treatment declared as part of the bid submission must be reflective of claims submitted upon scheme delivery, with the exception of where HMRC guidance has changed and a scheme variation should be submitted to document this change and its impact to costs. Should there be a variance to the treatment of VAT between bid submission and claims submitted, as a result of administration errors, it will be the responsibility of the Primary Bidder to cover this cost. It is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to seek HMRC guidance for the duration of the programme where there is any doubt or confusion regarding how to handle VAT. Any guidance issued by HMRC may require to be shown at audit.

Further information and requirements will be provided as part of the scheme submission pack.

4.4 Renewables

If the scheme submission includes renewables the calculations in the scheme submission spreadsheet uses weighted average energy savings. This means that the savings take into account the Northern Irish house type mix and fuel type mix resulting in a single energy saving for each of the three renewable types, listed below

Following scheme completion, at the post implementation report (PIR) stage, the tool will calculate the savings according to the house type, fuel type and bedroom number, allowing for more bespoke savings to be outputted. All the energy prices and carbon factors used in the tool are updated in line with main scheme submission spreadsheet assumptions.

Photovoltaic panels (solar PV, solar electricity panels)

Savings within the tool are based on a 4.5kWp system assuming the occupants are in the household from 6pm per day. The savings represent the reduction of

electricity needed to be imported in from the electricity grid, it does not include any export payments.

Air source heat pumps

Savings are based on modelling that assumes an SPF of 3.09. The oil or gas heating system being replaced by an air source heat pump is assumed to be an F or G rated boiler (75% efficiency).

4.5 Scheme Approval / Rejection

While cost-effectiveness of bids is the main assessment used for scheme approval, and bids will still be ranked in order of cost-effectiveness, the Programme Administrator will, to ensure the best use of funds and equality of opportunity, take the following into account:

- **Previous Years' Success:** Spend and committed funds for 2026/27 to the end of Q3 will be reviewed and taken into consideration for approval of 2027/28. Spend should be over 75% committed at the end of Q3.
- **Audit Recommendations:** The last completed audit (2024/25 NISEP year) will be reviewed. Any specific issues highlighted by the auditor, including collaboration with the auditors' requests, will be considered.
- **Quality Monitoring and Customer Satisfaction Results:** The results from the last completed NISEP scheme year (2025/26) will be considered from the information provided in the 2025/26 12 month summary report.

For new Primary Bidders, the above does not apply; however, funding allocation is capped at £300,000.

The Programme Administrator on behalf of the Utility Regulator continues to reserve the right to accept less cost-effective schemes, e.g., where they provide good additionality or where geographic spread, or specific target groups are relevant. In the case of two schemes having the same cost-effectiveness but insufficient funding to cover both, the Programme Administrator on behalf of the Utility Regulator reserves the right to award the funding to the scheme with a previous record of success (if relevant). The Utility Regulator also reserves the right to award part-funding to schemes that have had scheme performance issues identified in previous years or which have had significant underspend, or which have had a limited geographical spread within NI.

Rejection Criteria

Bids will be rejected due to incompletion or significant errors. This will be defined as any error which could reasonably be said to result in incorrect or misleading information being used to evaluate schemes. This will include but may not be limited to the following:

(i) Bids submitted where energy savings (i.e. not standardised by Energy Saving Trust) manually entered do not reflect the supporting evidence.

(ii) Bids submitted with no supporting documentation to verify costs entered for commercial schemes and manual data entry of energy savings (i.e. not standardised by Energy Saving Trust).

(iii) Bids not submitted by the due date.

(iv) Bids which don't meet the eligible initiatives section 2.1 of the Framework Document.

(v) Bids where scheme submission documents are required but not sent or are incomplete i.e. applicable sections left blank.

(vi) Bids received where the total exceeds the £2m cap and/or cap advised by Programme Administrator will result in the Primary Bidder being rejected.

Bids will be accepted if minor clarifications points are required. Minor clarifications accepted will include:

(i) Typos in scheme reference

(ii) Target audience query

(iii) Primary Bidder summary file does not match the scheme submission spreadsheet.

Scheme submissions must be developed in compliance with the operational rules and procedures of the NISEP as set out in this Framework Document. If a scheme is approved on the basis of inaccurate or inappropriately compiled information, the Utility Regulator reserves the right to take remedial action.

The Programme Administrator assesses all bids on an equal basis. Schemes must fulfil the objectives of the NISEP; the information provided at submission stage must be accurate and complete at the time of submission and be in compliance with the Framework Document. The Programme Administrator is able to clarify minor points with Primary Bidders, however the Primary Bidder will not be able to resubmit the Scheme Submission Spreadsheet to make changes to their bid.

The Programme Administrator will also take into consideration the performance of a scheme in a previous year, if applicable. If the Programme Administrator is satisfied that the relevant criteria have been met, it will recommend schemes (within the funding limits) to the Utility Regulator. It is at the discretion of the Utility Regulator whether or not to approve a scheme.

In the case of bids in a particular category exceeding the level of funding available, the more cost-effective schemes will be approved. However, to ensure the best use of funds and also equality of opportunity considerations, the Utility Regulator reserves the right to accept less cost-effective schemes, e.g. where they provide good additionality or where geographic spread or specific target groups are relevant. In the case of two schemes having the same cost-effectiveness but funding being insufficient to cover both schemes, the Utility Regulator reserves the right to award the funding to the scheme which has a previous record of success (if relevant). The Utility Regulator also reserves the right to award part-funding to schemes that have run in previous years and have had significant underspend and to schemes that have a limited geographical spread within NI.

Primary Bidders will be notified of final approval in writing from the Utility Regulator. Schemes **must not** commence until final approval has been granted and confirmed by the Utility Regulator.

The award of funding takes into consideration a number of factors, including but is not limited to;

- cost effectiveness, (that is the amount of energy saved per NISEP pound spent; however, it will depend on measure cost, indirect costs and other party funding, as opposed to fuel, property and measure split. These will now be standardised as described above to give a fairer more equal representation across all domestic scheme submissions;

- geographical spread, schemes targeting 'on gas' areas only will be assessed in one specific category and schemes targeting both 'off gas' and 'on gas' areas, therefore covering all of Northern Ireland, will be assessed within a separate category. Properties passed data will be provided to the Programme Administrator by the Utility Regulator to identify the ringfence for 'gas only' schemes.

- targeting specific groups.

- Depending on the number of schemes submitted, schemes will then be apportioned funding based on their cost effectiveness ranking and availability of funds within each category.

The Utility Regulator reserves the right to take other factors into consideration; such as first time bidders and successful track record of delivering on NISEP spend but also on the successful administration of schemes, all of which are

subject to the limits in the Framework Document. The Utility Regulator and the Programme Administrator are unable to provide the specific details of the Scheme Submissions that relate to the award of funding to any one Primary Bidder.

Primary Bidders should note that the Utility Regulator's written approval for a scheme acts as an agreement between the Primary Bidder and the Utility Regulator to undertake the scheme in accordance with the rules of the Framework Document and their submission. The approved schemes will become a schedule to the signed Accedence Agreement.

To ensure scheme recipients are informed that funding has been obtained from the NISEP, the scheme must incorporate the NISEP logo in accordance with branding guidelines, in conjunction with the scheme participant's logo if required, on scheme documentation, publications and any other publicity material. (See Section 2.9)

4.6 Additional Funding In Year

NISEP in-year underspend will be offered to a Primary Bidder in the same category in the first instance or offered to where there is highest demand.

Additional funding from an alternative source (e.g. DfE) may be allocated differently as it is separate to the main NISEP funding pot. The allocation of additional funds will be agreed by the applicable funder and the Utility Regulator in advance and whilst allocation criteria will follow the 'approval of schemes' as set in the Framework Document, the Funder will outline where additional funding is to be targeted in the first instance and may include their own criteria consistent with Government policy. See also section 1.8 Additional Government Funding for NISEP.

Alternative sources of funding may also have additional terms, conditions and require additional reporting schedules and these will be agreed in advance with the funder.

Please note, only Primary Bidders operating approved schemes will be offered additional funding if it becomes available and the Programme Administrator will engage with Primary Bidders as appropriate. The Utility Regulator may also approve additional funding for Primary Bidders who have not yet been audited under NISEP but have proven successful delivery. The Utility Regulator's decision on funding allocations is final.

Where additional funding is awarded to a Primary Bidder, a Letter of Offer will be issued and must be signed by both the Primary Bidder and Utility Regulator in

advance of commencement. There is no guarantee that additional funding will be available for 2027/29 NISEP schemes.

4.7 Scheme Variation

Primary Bidders must deliver schemes in accordance with the Framework Document and in accordance with the approved scheme submissions. If there is a variation to a scheme, including changes to predicted energy savings, or types of measures installed, please contact the Programme Administrator who will then advise if a scheme variation form should be submitted for approval.

Primary Bidders must submit a scheme variation to request the transfer of funding from direct to indirect costs, regardless of % of NISEP funding. This type of transfer will require clear justification and approval from the Utility Regulator.

As the schedule of works will potentially be in place for a two-year period, covering 2027/29, Primary Bidders should make provision for pricing that reflects the full range of installation scenarios that may arise during the scheme. This should include consideration of higher-cost installations, such as those at rural or hard-to-reach premises.

Scheme variations will not be permitted in year to request an increase in measure cost as the Primary Bidder is held to the costs within their approved submission including the schedule of works; however, scheme variations will be accepted if there are unforeseen costs such as a change in law or regulation to be considered i.e. VAT changes should they come into effect mid-year, or other regulation changes.

Primary Bidders must submit a scheme variation to the Programme Administrator for review before any costs are incurred. The Utility Regulator will also review cases of exceptional and outstanding circumstances where socio-economical / political events (e.g. Covid Pandemic, War in Ukraine or Iran,) have caused an unprecedented increase to costs impacting all Primary Bidders involved in NISEP. Please note, exceptional circumstances do not include high inflation rates or associated minimum wage increases. Primary Bidders should consider inflation and minimum wage estimates in their 2027/28 scheme submission bid for funding.

Primary Bidders must submit a scheme variation if there is a change to delivery structure from the approved scheme submission, for example where there is procurement of additional contractors, or the Primary Bidder wishes to offer additional measures.

Transfer of funding/additional funding/significant variations

The Utility Regulator will not approve a transfer of funds between Non-Priority and Priority schemes. For variations of up to 5% of NISEP funding transfer between schemes, no formal approval is required, (as long as the total funding awarded to the Primary Bidder is not exceeded and the transfer is allowed within the category), however the Programme Administrator must be notified in writing. For variations of 5-10% of NISEP funding being transferred, Programme Administrator endorsement must be sought.

Any significant variations and variations above 10% funding transfer must be approved by the Utility Regulator. Within Priority WHS schemes, the Utility Regulator will only approve a maximum transfer of 15% between subcategories i.e. customer contribution schemes and non-customer contribution schemes.

Primary Bidders undertaking more than one scheme must not presume that funding can be transferred between schemes. Dependent on value (if above 5% of total NISEP amount approved), prior approval should be sought to transfer funding from an underperforming scheme to a more successful scheme. Overspend on a successful scheme will not be subsidised by NISEP unless prior approval has been given to transfer funds from an underperforming scheme or additional funds have been granted.

Where a Scheme Variation relates to a change of measure cost (to approved scheme submission) in an exceptional circumstance, the figures entered in the Scheme Variation Form template, should be the figures that will be claimed from NISEP. Any VAT costs that require NISEP funding must be clearly included in the figures entered in the Scheme Variation Form with a note included to that affect.

Notification of a scheme variation must be submitted within a reasonable timeframe (and no later than the end of February of the applicable NISEP year if to be approved by the Utility Regulator and no later than the end of April of the applicable NISEP year if only PA approval/notification is required up to 5%), to allow the Programme Administrator and /or the Utility Regulator to review before completion of the NISEP year. Failure to do so may result in the Scheme Variation not being approved.

Primary Bidders will be notified in writing if the change/variation has been approved.

In the event that scheme variations exceed the accepted tolerance levels and/or the total amount of NISEP funding awarded, and approval has not been granted by the Utility Regulator, any relevant costs will be required to be borne by the Primary Bidder.

Turnaround times for the approval of scheme variations will depend on the time taken to resolve any queries or requests for further information, however, the

Programme Administrator will initially assess any scheme variation within 10 working days of receipt and decide on the appropriate action to be taken. Once all the necessary information has been received, the Programme Administrator will have a further 5 working days to consider and approve the Scheme Variation or forward to the Utility Regulator, as appropriate. The Utility Regulator will endeavour to give written approval or reject the Scheme Variation within 5 working days of receipt of the form endorsed by the Programme Administrator or on receipt of the answer to any further queries.

The Utility Regulator reserves the right to invoke the scheme variation process to withdraw funds from an underperforming scheme at the 8-month reporting stage, to a scheme that has had a more successful uptake and high demand, if it reported that there is not sufficient committed funding.

4.8 The NISEP Programme Timetable:

Whilst bids received will be in respect of the two year programme, a 12 month summary report will need to be completed annually on the basis of measures installed by 31 March each year. Primary Bidders must ensure that they do not overspend their year one allowance, unauthorised year-end overspends will not be covered by NISEP. Please refer to section 5.1 for further details on year 2 allocation.

The NISEP timetable is set out in Figure 4.1.

- In October a Call for Schemes is published and open to all registered Primary Bidders.
- Primary Bidders return the call for schemes registration form by **23 October 2026**.
- Accedence Agreement must be signed and submitted to the Programme Administrator by **12 November 2026**.
- All bids for schemes commencing 1 April 2027 are to be received by the Programme Administrator by **15 December 2026.**
- Primary Bidders will be informed at the start of March of the outcome of their bid(s) (please note that this will be subject to the timely provision of any further information requested on scheme submissions and the resolution of any queries).
- Schemes to commence in Q1.

- At the start of July (after three months) the Programme Administrator should be notified on progress and whether or not the scheme will run as planned via the 3 Month statement, to include scheme status, delivery structure such as procured contractors and waiting list information. Progress reports and Quality Monitoring results are to be submitted after five months (in September) and eight months (in December). Potential under-spend should also be flagged so that reallocation of funding can be completed if needed.

- All work should be completed by 31 March of applicable NISEP year. All quality monitoring inspections including any required remedial works, re-inspections and final sign off, must be completed by the end of April to enable submission of the final claim for the applicable NISEP year, due 4th working day of May.

- Final Payment Claims will need to be submitted by the 4th working day of May for the applicable NISEP year. It is expected all claims will be finalised and paid by end of June.

- If the Programme is to run for the two year period, i.e. 2027/29, a 12-month summary report must be completed by the Primary Bidder in June/July following completion of 2027/28. This will include an update on measures installed, yearend total spend, quality monitoring, customer satisfaction etc.

- A Post Implementation Report must be completed in June/July by the Primary Bidder following completion of the two-year programme or after 2027/28 whichever is appropriate.

- Scheme audits of all schemes will be carried out in September / October following completion of the programme.

- Post-Implementation Report Approval Letters will be sent out following completion of the programme subject to the satisfactory completion of reports and provision of any follow-up information requested and also to satisfactory audit. This letter will signify the end of the scheme process. The Accedence Agreement will then terminate after 20 days of the date of this letter.

Please note, a one year break clause is in place - see 2.3 of the Accedence Agreement, however, the NISEP timetable is based on two year delivery and is subject to change.

SCHEDULE

Figure 4.1 NISEP Operational Timetable (based on two years of operational delivery and is subject to change)

Year 1 Activity (April 2027 - March 2028)	Target Date	Responsibility
Commencement of 2027/28 approved schemes	Start April	Primary Bidder
2026/27 NISEP final payment claims submitted	Start May	Primary Bidder
Individual meetings held with successful 2027/28 Primary Bidders	End Q1	Programme Administrator
Processing 2026/27 NISEP final year end payment claims	End Q1	Programme Administrator
Submit 3-month update statement confirming 2027/28 scheme commencement and notification of delivery structure including named Managing Agent/Sub-Contractors and waiting list information	Start July	Primary Bidder
Confirm underspend from 2026/27	End July	Programme Administrator
Collate 2027/28 3-month statements provided by Primary Bidders and provide summary statements to the Utility Regulator (including schemes funded by additional funding from alternative sources if applicable)	End July	Programme Administrator
Post-implementation reports (PIRs) submitted for 2025/27 schemes (including schemes funded by additional funding from alternative sources if applicable)	Mid August	Primary Bidder
2027/28, 5-month interim reports submitted	Start September	Primary Bidder
Undertake Audit of 2025/27 schemes (including schemes funded by additional funding from alternative sources if applicable)	End Q3	Programme Administrator
Review 2027/28, 5 month interim reports provided by Primary Bidders and provide a summary report to the Utility Regulator, including risk of potential underspend (including schemes funded by additional funding from alternative sources if applicable)	End October	Programme Administrator

Year 1 Activity (April 2027 - March 2028)	Target Date	Responsibility
2027/28, 8-month interim reports submitted and underspend on current schemes reported	Start December	Primary Bidder
Review 8 month interim reports provided by Primary Bidders and provide a summary report to the Utility Regulator, including recommendations for underspend reallocation and 2027/28 funding allocation based on criteria (including schemes funded by additional funding from alternative sources if applicable)	End January	Programme Administrator
Physical inspections carried out for 2025/27 measures installed and final report submitted to Utility Regulator (and where applicable 2026/27 inspections of schemes that received additional funding from alternative sources)	End January	Programme Administrator
Final Audit report for 2025/27 submitted to the Utility Regulator (including schemes funded by additional funding from alternative sources if applicable).	End February	Programme Administrator
2025/27 Final Post-implementation reports submitted to Utility Regulator (including schemes funded by additional funding from alternative sources if applicable)	End February	Programme Administrator
2025/27 Post-Implementation Report Letter sent to Primary Bidders	End March	Utility Regulator
Letters sent to Primary Bidders approving 2027/28 schemes (to include audit recommendations if applicable)	Start March	Utility Regulator
Annual Report for 2025/27, submitted to Utility Regulator (and where applicable 2026/27 annual report for schemes that have received additional funding from alternative sources) and including a report on the overall energy savings both in terms of lifetime energy savings and the gross calorific annual energy savings (TWh) as required by the Energy Efficiency Directive.	End March	Programme Administrator
Completion of 2026/27 current schemes	End March	Primary Bidder
Payment notices sent to NIEN Ltd for 2028/29 schemes	End March	Utility Regulator

Year 2 Activity (April 2028 - March 2029)	Target Date	Responsibility
Commencement of 2028/29 approved schemes	Start April	Primary Bidder
2027/28 NISEP final payment claims submitted	Start May	Primary Bidder
Processing 2027/28 NISEP final year end payment claims	End Q1	Programme Administrator
3-month update statement confirming current 2028/29 schemes will go ahead and notification of delivery structure including named Managing Agent/Sub-Contractors	Start July	Primary Bidder
Confirm underspend from 2027/28 to the Utility Regulator	End July	Programme Administrator
Collate 2028/29, 3 month statements provided by Primary Bidders and provide summary statements to the Utility Regulator (including schemes funded by additional funding from alternative sources if applicable)	End July	Programme Administrator
12 month summary report submitted for 2027/28 schemes	Mid August	Primary Bidder
2028/29, 5-month interim reports submitted	Start September	Primary Bidder
Audit of additional funding from alternative sources including physical inspections (if applicable)	End Q3	Programme Administrator
Review 2028/29, 5 month interim reports provided by Primary Bidders and provide a summary report to the Utility Regulator. including risk of potential underspend (including schemes funded by additional funding from alternative sources if applicable)	End October	Programme Administrator
2028/29, 8-month interim reports submitted and under-spend on current schemes reported	Start December	Primary Bidder
Audit and physical inspections report for additional funding from alternative sources only completed for 2027/28 (if applicable), submitted to Utility Regulator	End January	Programme Administrator
Review 2028/29, 8 month interim reports provided by Primary Bidders and provide a summary report to the Utility Regulator, including recommendations for underspend reallocation	End January	Programme Administrator

Year 2 Activity (April 2028 - March 2029)	Target Date	Responsibility
2027/28 Post-implementation reports (for additional funding from alternative sources if applicable) submitted to Utility Regulator	End January	Programme Administrator
2027/28 Post-Implementation Report Approval Letter (for additional funding from alternative sources if applicable) sent to Primary Bidders	End February	Utility Regulator
Annual Report for additional funding from alternative sources completed for 2027/28 submitted to Utility Regulator (where applicable)	End March	Programme Administrator
Completion of all 2027/28 schemes	End March	Primary Bidder

Year 3 Activity – April 2029– March 2030 (please note this is subject to change should a breakout clause be implemented relevant dates will be April 2028- March 2029)	Target Date	Responsibility
2028/29 NISEP year final payment claims submitted	Start May	Primary Bidder
Processing 2028/29 NISEP year payment claims	End June	Programme Administrator
Confirm underspend from 2028/29 to the utility Regulator	End June	Programme Administrator
Post-implementation reports (PIR) submitted for 2027/28 and 2028/29 schemes (and where applicable PIRs for 2028/29 schemes that received additional funding from alternative sources)	Mid August	Primary Bidder
Audit of 2027/29 schemes (and where applicable 2028/29 audit of schemes that have received additional funding from alternative sources)	End December	Programme Administrator
Physical inspections carried out for 2027/29 measures installed and report submitted to Utility Regulator (and where applicable 2027/28 inspections of schemes that received additional funding from alternative sources)	End December	Programme Administrator
Audit report completed for 2027/29 and submitted to the Utility Regulator (and where applicable 2028/29 audit report submitted to UR for schemes that have received additional funding from alternative sources)	End December	Programme Administrator
2027/29 Post-implementation reports submitted to Utility Regulator (and where applicable 2028/29 PIRs for schemes that have received additional funding from alternative sources)	End January	Programme Administrator
2027/29 Post-Implementation Report Approval Letter sent to Primary Bidders (and where applicable 2028/29 Approval Letters for schemes that have received additional funding from alternative sources)	End January	Utility Regulator

Year 3 Activity – April 2029– March 2030 (please note this is subject to change should a breakout clause be implemented relevant dates will be April 2028- March 2029)	Target Date	Responsibility
Annual Report for 2027/29, submitted to Utility Regulator (to include where applicable schemes that have received additional funding from alternative sources) and including a report on the overall energy savings both in terms of lifetime energy savings and the gross calorific annual energy savings (TWh) as required by the Energy Efficiency Directive.	Start March	Programme Administrator
Evaluation Report submitted to the Utility Regulator on the overall success of the programme to include metrics on the various measures installed, financial benefits to customers and the associated energy and carbon savings. This report will also include an overall assessment of the programme and customer satisfaction along with lessons learned for future energy efficiency schemes.	Start March	Programme Administrator
Complete programme close out activities.	End March	Programme Administrator

5. SCHEME REPORTING

5.1 Interim Progress Reporting and success criteria

Primary Bidders who have schemes approved must notify the Programme Administrator and the Utility Regulator after three months (i.e. in July) whether or not the scheme will proceed in a timely manner and as originally submitted. If this notification is not received the scheme approval may be cancelled.

Primary Bidders undertaking schemes must submit interim reports, on time, using the template provided, (applicable to the NISEP year) to the Energy Saving Trust after 5 months, due in September and again after 8 months, due in December. These reports must provide details on a scheme-by-scheme basis of the progress of schemes including the current NISEP spend to date and the forecast final NISEP spend. Details on quality monitoring, customer satisfaction, whole house solution uptake, and significant issues should also be included within these reports. Quality Monitoring results including details of **all** remedials and actions taken, must also be provided in a separate section of the 5 month and 8-month interim report. This is to ensure that all NISEP remedial work has been completed and reinspected. Quality Monitoring results must also be signed off by the independent qualified Quality Monitoring Inspector at the 8 month stage. These results cannot be changed once submitted.

Should Primary Bidders be delayed in submitting interim reports to the Programme Administrator this will be deemed as poor record keeping and may affect the allocation of future funding.

Primary Bidders should implement appropriate controls to verify, agree and reconcile all customer details and supporting documentation thereby improving the accuracy, consistency and reliability of reporting.

The interim reports must provide details on a scheme by scheme basis to include;

- Current NISEP spend to date and the forecast final NISEP spend
- No. of customer applications approved
- NISEP funding committed for approved applications
- No. of customer applications on waiting lists
- No. of quality inspections completed and any remedial works listed including action taken to resolve
- Estimated NISEP costs associated with waiting lists

- Status of scheme i.e. if no longer taking new applications, this detail should be included

- Customer complaints received throughout the NISEP year should be fully detailed.

- Primary Bidders are required to provide additional detail on scheme delivery to include issues, concerns, observations, corrective actions undertaken during scheme delivery etc and any other points of note in relation to the delivery of the scheme.

(Please note, this list above is not exhaustive and additional information may be required on request).

Should any complaints be related to the quality of installations, the Primary Bidder must ensure that the NISEP install is re-inspected by the independent quality inspector, who will verify that all issues are resolved and there are no quality concerns.

Quality Monitoring results including details of all remedials and actions taken, must also be provided in a separate section of the 5 month and 8 month interim reports. This is to ensure all NISEP remedial work has been completed and reinspected. Primary Bidders must provide details to capture reasons where insulation is not being claimed as part of a WHS package; or where in an individual measures scheme, only one insulation measure is being claimed, as opposed to two. Final Quality Monitoring results must also be signed off by the independent qualified Quality Monitoring Inspector and submitted along with the Post Implementation Report and cannot be changed retrospectively. The original email from the inspector to the Primary Bidder with these results must be submitted. Quality monitoring reports should state how well the range of measures on offer have worked as a package, including that there is adequate ventilation given the range of measures.

In addition, Primary Bidders must inform the Programme Administrator of any forecast underspend or uncommitted funds in their schemes in the 8-month report. At this point the Utility Regulator reserves the right to move uncommitted funds between schemes and Primary Bidders to maximise spend prior to scheme closure in March of each applicable NISEP year, especially in relation to the second year (should the break clause not be invoked) as there should be no underspend recorded on programme closure. Additionally, the UR may reduce a Primary Bidders future funding allocation based on a sub-optimal scheme performance. The Programme Administrator will forward these interim reports to the Utility Regulator. Scheme variations should be reported, as soon as they are required, in accordance with Section 4.5.

To minimise the risk of underspend, and to ensure works are undertaken in order that mitigates the risk of partially completed or non-complaint installations and

the incurrence of costs that cannot be claimed under NISEP; Primary Bidders must implement robust scheme planning and forecasting processes that take account of year-end deadlines. This should include setting realistic installation targets, conducting interim progress reviews, and establishing contingency measures to address any potential underspend as the year end approaches. Where a risk of potential underspend is likely to materialise, this should be highlighted to the Programme Administrator at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than the 8 month report. Proactive reporting will be considered by the Programme Administrator and the Utility Regulator when assessing scheme performance. If less than 50% of the allocated funding has been claimed by the end of month eight, UR reserves the right to review and reduce the funding allocation accordingly.

For non-domestic/commercial schemes, Primary Bidders should have a well-structured and robust process framework in place to proactively manage projects and minimize the risk of underspend. The Primary Bidder must have a process in place to facilitate increased customer contact and provide greater visibility, to identify cancellations earlier in the process and provide greater flexibility to reallocate any available funding.

In addition to these interim reports a 12-month summary report must be submitted to the Programme Administrator following completion of 2027/28. This will include but is not limited to; final end of year spend, number of measures installed, quality monitoring and customer satisfaction results.

Approved schemes in NISEP 2027/29 will run for two full NISEP years, subject to satisfactory performance in year 2027/28 which will be assessed from the information provided in the 8-month interim report and from any direct feedback received by the Programme Administrator on scheme delivery. The template for this 8-month report may change to allow for further feedback on delivery of 2027/28 schemes. The following will be considered:

(i) Spend and committed funds for 2027/28 to the end of Q3 will be reviewed and taken into consideration for approval of 2028/29. Spend should be over 50% committed at the end of Q3.

(ii) Customer Satisfaction / Complaints

(iii) Quality Monitoring / Remedials

(iv) Compliance with Duplicate process

(v) Compliancy with Framework Document Requirements

Overall scheme performance will be considered in the reallocation of funding. Schemes will be given a similar level of funding in this second year or will be offered a lesser amount depending on the previous years' performance as

outlined above. Scheme continuation into 2028/29 will not be approved if there are significant issues raised in-year or if there has been no uptake in 2027/28.

Please note also that it is at the discretion of the Utility Regulator whether or not to approve a scheme in 2028/29, if a scheme has been approved in 2027/28 but had no uptake or in the event that additional Government funding becomes available during the NISEP year to provide targeted support. Should there be legislative changes during a NISEP year, these will also be taken into consideration. All decisions made in relation to the allocation of funding, underspend reallocations, additional funding provided by alternative sources, are final. Please also note that the same principle applies to reduction/s in funding based on evidence of Framework Document breaches or noncompliance.

For the avoidance of doubt; significant issues may include but may not be limited to any issues which have:

- resulted in the suspension of the scheme as per the Accedence Agreement;
- had a significant detrimental effect on the overall well-being of an individual NISEP recipient (where customer has notified NISEP);
- any evidence of potential fraud, gross misconduct or negligence.

For non-domestic/commercial schemes and domestic innovative, projects may be able to commence in year 1 and complete in year 2 subject to UR approval. For those projects, the Programme Administrator must be notified as soon as Year 2 has been approved (which will be on or before 30 September 2027) of any potential projects that may not be completed by 31st March 2028 or at such other later date in year 1 when it is identified that any project may potentially not be completed by 31 March 2028. Full NISEP costs will need to be submitted to the Programme Administrator for consideration for reallocation to Year 2, to allow these projects to continue. Should the Utility Regulator invoke the 1 year break clause, there can be no facilitation of the extension of large projects and all installs must be completed by 31 March 2028.

For domestic innovative schemes only, any underspend may be carried forward where the remaining funding is insufficient to provide the full package to a customer in Year 1, ensuring the funding remains within the innovative category and can be used to support that customer in Year 2 subject to scheme performance. NISEP costs will need to be submitted to the Programme Administrator for consideration for reallocation to Year 2. Should the Utility Regulator invoke the 1 year break clause all installs must be completed by 31st March 2028.

5.2 Scheme Completion Reporting

After the two NISEP Years 2027/28 and 2028/29, Primary Bidders are required to complete a post-implementation reporting (PIR) pack which must be submitted via the secure File Transfer Service, together with other documentation, to the Programme Administrator by 28 July 2029. The format of the PIR may be subject to change and Primary Bidders will be notified accordingly.

The documentation submitted must include:

- PIR spreadsheet containing final outturn data. All information to be quoted on the post-implementation form tab can be derived from the tabs within the PIR spreadsheet.

- Results of customer satisfaction. Primary Bidder to provide results to support % figures entered on PIR form tab. This should detail, number of surveys sent and returned, and where applicable, reasons for unsatisfied customers and actions taken to resolve any issues. Primary Bidders are requested to submit the customer satisfaction information available at that time. If further responses are received after submission of PIR, and numbers should change, the latest figure should be provided at audit stage.

- Results of Quality Monitoring. Final Quality Monitoring results must be signed off by the independent qualified Quality Monitoring Inspector and submitted along with the Post Implementation Report. Where CWI has been inspected, the inspector must also complete a declaration where they will agree with the metres^2 claimed and the ventilation required (if applicable) by the Primary Bidder. The original email from the inspector to the Primary Bidder with these results must be submitted. These results must reflect the results entered into the PIR by the Primary Bidder. The Primary Bidder must include details on the number of measures inspected, the number of failed 1st and 2nd inspection, details of remedials, highlighting issues identified, dates rectified, and any subsequent action taken with installers etc. Primary Bidders are requested to submit the quality monitoring information available at that time. If information should change, any updates should be provided at audit stage.

- Fees charged, if applicable. Primary Bidder to provide details of fees charged (and not claimed under NISEP), including name of sub-contractor, confirmation of contract in place, invoice date/number, and total amount of fees charged per contractor. The reason for the charge should be clearly specified. For example, admin fees charged to sub-contractors for re-inspections and/or remedials. The total figure should be added to the 'third party indirect costs' cell in the 'Scheme Summary' Tab of the PIR spreadsheet.

- Further Breakdown Worksheet – Primary Bidders must include background calculations (including formulae) in this worksheet for all figures (not provided by the Programme Administrator), that have been manually entered such as energy savings, lifetime years etc. Primary Bidders must be able to provide sufficient evidence to the Programme Administrator to support the manual entry of energy and cost savings data at PIR stage. Where applicable, the Programme Administrator will provide further guidance at that stage.

- Completed Post-Implementation Form tab as per guidance provided by Programme Administrator, at PIR stage.

PIR Reporting requirements for air source heat pump installations (in addition to above)

- The Primary Bidder must provide the MCS certificate, and the MCS calculations for all ASHP installs which include details on the heating system before and after installation. Energy Saving Trust will populate the PIR based on the data provided by the Primary Bidder.

- To support the data provided, the Primary Bidder must ensure that;

  a) all applicable sections of the MCS Compliance certificates provided to Energy Saving Trust are completed in full.

  b) energy savings for the 'before scenario,' (i.e., the energy assumptions for the original heating system per property), are included, and that copies of customer utility bills prior to works are also provided to Energy Saving Trust

  c) energy savings for the post works heat loss calculations, following install, are included.

  d) estimated running costs for the new installation using the customers historical electricity bills as a reference for unit prices at the time of the installation in the MCS calculator sheet are included.

PIR Reporting requirements for Solar PV installations (in addition to above)

- The Primary Bidder must provide the MCS certificate for the installation

- Confirm the KWP per property

Energy Saving Trust will use the data to compare to Energy Saving Trust's most up to date utility pricing matrix. If there are significant differences, a further review will take place and further information may be required to support the

figures submitted. Energy Saving Trust may reduce the energy savings where there is a significant discrepancy.

Case Study and Testimonial Templates may be issued to the Primary Bidder for inclusion within the PIR. Primary Bidders must seek and document consent from customers for inclusion in the annual report.

5.3 Geographical and Sectoral Information

For geographical distribution this data is provided by Primary Bidders through the payment claim process. This data includes the number and types of measures installed by postcode. Primary Bidders must ensure accurate data entry of full addresses including postcodes.

This information is retained on a database. It is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to ensure that they are compliant with all relevant legislation including but not limited to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016/679 in relation to data given to the Programme Administrator.

6. SCHEME MONITORING AND AUDITING

6.1. Customer Satisfaction Monitoring

Primary Bidders are required to undertake and report on the monitoring of customers' satisfaction with the scheme, the measures installed and the installation process.

The Primary Bidder shall survey for customer satisfaction a minimum of:

- 10 per cent of all homes receiving individual measures costing less than £3,000;
- 100 per cent of homes receiving whole house solutions and individual measures costing over £3,000.

Where schemes are undertaken in non-domestic /and commercial sector, customer satisfaction monitoring should be undertaken for:

- at least 10 per cent of installations where installations –cost less than £20,000;
- at least 50 per cent of installations where the installation cost is from £20,001 to £50,000;
- 100 per cent of installations where the installation cost exceeds £50,000.

In all cases, the Primary Bidder should use their best endeavours to achieve at least a 50 per cent response rate to all customer satisfaction surveys. Primary Bidders should ensure responses can be followed up on, should there be any issues, i.e. insertion of customer details or reference numbers.

Any customer complaints are received throughout the NISEP year must be documented and reported on. Where customer complaints are related to the quality of installations, the Primary Bidder must ensure that the NISEP install is re-inspected by the independent quality inspector, who will verify that all issues are resolved and there are no quality concerns. This will be reviewed as part of the interim reporting schedule.

For further guidance, Appendix 2 of this document contains an example of a customer satisfaction survey for heating/insulation schemes.

6.2 Customer Complaints and Dispute Resolution Procedure

Purpose

To ensure that all customer complaints relating to NISEP installations are managed consistently, fairly, and in a timely manner, all Primary Bidders must implement and maintain a documented complaints handling procedure in accordance with the requirements set out below.

The Primary Bidder must make customers aware of this procedure upon request and provide clear information regarding the process available for escalation should a complaint remain unresolved.

The Primary Bidder retains overall responsibility for the management and resolution of all customer complaints relating to their scheme(s). This includes leading the investigation and handling of complaints, addressing any quality concerns arising from design, installation, or workmanship, and taking responsibility for ensuring appropriate redress and remedial actions are delivered where required.

Where significant complaints relating to a NISEP customer's health and safety, or direct or indirect damage to property, are received, the Primary Bidder must follow the Customer Complaints and Dispute Resolution Procedure regardless of when the complaint is submitted, provided the customer has complied with any applicable servicing and warranty requirements. Such complaints must be appropriately investigated and, where necessary, remedial action taken, irrespective of the time elapsed since installation. The age of the installation shall not, in itself be grounds for refusing to investigate a complaint where there is a credible allegation of harm, defect, or property damage arising from the installation.

All complaints received must be reported within interim reports to the Programme Administrator.

Stage 1: Receipt of Complaint

The Primary Bidder must establish a process for receiving customer complaints relating to any aspect of retrofit works undertaken under their scheme(s).

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Primary Bidder must:

- Record the complaint within its complaints management system, assigning a reference number.
- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing/email.

- Provide the customer with details of the complaint handling process and anticipated timescales.
- Allocate responsibility for investigating the complaint to a suitably competent individual.

Stage 2: Investigation

The Primary Bidder must undertake a thorough investigation of the complaint in line with their workmanship guarantee provided to the customer, which may include:

- Discussions with installation personnel, subcontractors and manufacturers where applicable.
- Review of photographic records and quality assurance documentation.
- A site inspection where necessary to determine the nature and extent of the reported issue.

The Primary Bidder must maintain records of all investigations undertaken, evidence considered and must complete remedial paperwork, which may be requested at audit.

Stage 3: Resolution

Following completion of the investigation, the Primary Bidder must communicate the following to the customer:

- The outcome of the investigation, which may include where the Primary Bidder determines that the issue is attributable to customer actions, misuse, lack of maintenance, or other factors outside the responsibility of the Primary Bidder.
- Any findings relating to workmanship, materials, design, or installation practices.
- Proposed remedial actions, where appropriate.
- Timescales for completion of any agreed remedial works, ensuring consent is received by customer before works commence.
- Any remedial works undertaken must be independently verified through the Primary Bidder's independent Quality Monitoring inspector to confirm that the required installation and quality standards have been achieved.

Where the complaint has been resolved, the Primary Bidder will send a communication to close off the complaint. A copy of these documented processes and details of the actions undertaken to resolve the complaint may also be requested at audit.

Where a complaint is unresolved, the Primary Bidder must take all reasonable steps to rectify the matter in a timely manner. The Primary Bidder retains full responsibility for addressing quality concerns, delivering appropriate remedial actions, and ensuring that NISEP installations comply with all programme quality requirements, in line with their workmanship warranty. Any remedial works undertaken must be independently verified through the Primary Bidder's independent Quality Monitoring inspector to confirm that the required installation and quality standards have been achieved.

Stage 4: Unresolved Complaints: Escalation to a Guarantee Provider and Programme Administrator

Where the installation is covered by an IAA / SWIGA (or equivalent) Guarantee (CWI and Solid Wall Insulation) and:

- The Primary Bidder is unable to resolve the complaint, and the matter relates to works covered by a Guarantee;
- The customer remains dissatisfied with the proposed resolution by the Primary Bidder in relation to a matter within the scope of the Guarantee; or
- The Primary Bidder ceases trading,

The customer must be advised by the Primary Bidder that they may refer the matter to the relevant Guarantee Provider, subject to the terms and conditions of the Guarantee, and be directed to the Programme Administrator for assistance with this process.

In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved by the Guarantee Provider, Primary Bidder/Installer relating to CWI or Solid wall Insulation the Primary Bidder must advise the customer that the matter will be referred to arbitration / dispute resolution service provided by the Guarantee provider.

The Primary Bidder must:

- Provide access to all relevant project documentation.
- Support site inspections where requested.
- Cooperate fully with the independent assessment process

Stage 4: Unresolved Complaints: Escalation to the Programme Administrator if there is no guarantee

Where the installation of a measure is not covered by an IAA (or equivalent) Guarantee (Loft Insulation, heating replacements and renewables) and:

- The Primary Bidder is unable to resolve the complaint, and the customer will no longer engage with the Primary Bidder;
- The customer remains dissatisfied with the proposed resolution by the Primary Bidder
- The complaint is not covered under the Primary Bidder workmanship warranty or manufacturer product warranty

For Loft Insulation and heating replacements the customer must be advised that the Primary Bidder will refer the matter to the Programme Administrator in writing.

For renewable installations the customer must be advised by the Primary Bidder that they may refer the matter to MCS and be directed to the Programme Administrator for assistance with this process.

To escalate to the Programme Administrator the Primary Bidder must:

- Provide the Programme Administrator and the customer (if requested) access to all relevant project documentation and copies of all correspondence and communication with the customer relating to the complaint (if applicable).
- Support site inspections arranged by the Programme Administrator where requested.
- Cooperate fully with the independent assessment process.

Stage 5: Determination and Remedial Action

Where the installation is covered by an IAA /SWIGA Guarantee (or equivalent) (CWI and Solid Wall Insulation):

Following completion of the review, the Guarantee Provider should communicate its findings to the relevant parties.

Where a valid claim is upheld and remedial works are deemed necessary under the terms and conditions of the Guarantee, such works should be undertaken in

accordance with the requirements of the Guarantee and Scheme Rules. The final resolution and closure should be documented, and a closing letter will be sent by Energy Saving Trust to the Customer with Primary Bidder copied in.

Primary Bidders must retain records relating to all complaints. A copy of these documented processes and details of the actions undertaken to resolve the complaint may also be requested at audit.

Where the installation of a measure is not covered by an IAA /SWIGA Guarantee (or equivalent), (LI, heating replacements and renewables):

Following completion of the review, which may include an Independent Expert Witness report, the Programme Administrator will communicate the findings to all relevant parties.

Where a valid claim is upheld and where liability is established as per the Utility Regulators determination which will take into account any independent inspection, and remedial works are deemed necessary, the Primary Bidder shall be responsible for undertaking the required remedial works and meeting all associated costs.

If the customer refuses to allow the Primary Bidder to carry out the remedial works, the Primary Bidder shall remain liable for the reasonable costs of completing the necessary remedial action through an alternative arrangement.

Primary Bidders must retain records relating to all complaints. A copy of these documented processes and details of the actions undertaken to resolve the complaint may also be requested at audit.

Customers must be informed that if any issue arises with the heating system within 12 months of installation, the original installer must be first given the opportunity to resolve the matter. Engaging a different company before allowing the original installer to address the issue will invalidate guarantees and warranties associated with their NISEP install and could affect the customer's eligibility for support from the programme. NISEP bears no responsibility or liability for any problems, costs, or consequences associated with work undertaken by non-NISEP installers as they are outside the remit of the programme.

6.3 Quality of Installation Monitoring

It is important that high standards are maintained and form part of a 'quality culture' adopted by all Primary Bidders. Accordingly, Primary Bidders must have a quality assurance (QA) procedure in place that they will adopt when

undertaking their NISEP scheme. This procedure should comply with all requirements as outlined in this Framework Document.

The Quality Assurance procedure must address issues such as the quality of materials used and products installed. However, for appliance schemes, assuming that all products used have relevant CE marking, and have an energy performance rating of A, there are no additional quality monitoring requirements.

Technical surveys to assess NISEP measures required should be carried out by a suitably qualified person (at least as qualified, to the installer of the measures). Quality monitoring should be carried out by a suitably qualified, independent person (from a different company, at least as qualified, to the installer of the measures), who should check whether or not the measures have been installed in line with the requirements in Appendix 3 and the current approved British Standards, etc. (Supporting documentation of accreditation will be checked at audit). The Quality Monitor appointed for a NISEP scheme cannot be the Primary Bidder and must be completely independent to the scheme. A Primary Bidder is also unable to be the Quality Monitor under any other NISEP scheme. The Quality Monitoring contract should be between the Primary Bidder and the Quality Monitor directly and not held by a subcontractor or a managing agent on the Primary Bidders behalf. It remains the Primary Bidder's responsibility to appoint the Quality Monitor.

Post-installation quality inspections should be scheduled to take place when all the work is fully completed and operational.

Inspection documentation must include the following:

- For all applicable schemes, all quality monitoring paperwork for cavity wall insulation and loft insulation must include a fully completed and detailed ventilation assessment section. The section must:

  a) Confirm that ventilation requirements have been assessed and documented, including internal and external (GPS tagged) photos of core vents to support correct installation

  b) Clearly outline the ventilation requirements where ventilation is deemed necessary for the property.

  c) Where ventilation is not required, the surveyor must provide a clear, evidence-based justification explaining why ventilation is not necessary for the specific property and measure.

d) Confirm compliance with all relevant standards and guidelines outlined in the NISEP 2027/29 Framework Document to include but not limited to documents published by Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency (CIGA); Technicians guide to best practice: Flues, chimneys and combustion air ventilators as listed in Appendix 3 section 1.2.

- For loft installs completed, confirm that the loft displays a completion certificate which should include (but not limited to) the following information;

  a) name of grant programme

  b) total m^2 insulated

  c) Insulation depth installed i.e. 200-300mm (100mm), 100-300mm (200mm)

  d) no. of vents/type installed

  e) installer name/primary bidder name

  f) batch no. of material

  g) name of manufacturer of material

  h) applicable warning safety/thermal

The quality monitoring inspector must record full details of the measures installed (which should match the measures being claimed) and how well the measures installed are working as a package (e.g. does the property have adequate ventilation given the range of measures installed, are the heating controls working correctly etc). This includes all additional measures installed, e.g. hot water cylinder jacket/ draughtproofing measures etc. For Whole House Solution Schemes the inspector must confirm that an assessment has been carried out to determine the suitability of the heating system, considering the systems age, property configuration and the type of boiler installed. The inspector must verify the boiler type is appropriate for the property and its heating demands.

If radiators were not replaced the inspector must also confirm that the existing radiators meet current standards and do not restrict or impair the performance of the heating system. The documentation as outlined above must be dated and signed by the inspector and the applicant. Unsigned paperwork will not be accepted as proof of completion. If the applicant is not available at the inspection appointment the paperwork must be signed by an appropriate adult at the property (on the basis consent has been provided) and the relationship stated between the applicant and signatory i.e. the applicant's brother. Applicants

should not be pressurised to sign inspection paperwork. Should comments be provided by the applicant in relation to the quality of the installation or operation of the measure this should be included on the paperwork and signed by the applicant.

Additionally, Primary Bidders must quality assure working practices. For all domestic schemes there is a requirement to survey and report on the quality of installation in a minimum of:

- 25% of homes receiving cavity wall insulation and 5% of homes receiving loft insulation measures. The Primary Bidder must ensure that there is an equal split of inspections across all Primary Bidder and sub-contractor installs, apportioned to the number of measures installed. Quality Monitoring must be carried out monthly so any issues identified can be addressed promptly and appropriate action taken. Where a property receives both measures and has been selected for inspection the quality monitoring inspection must occur after both measures have been installed.

- 100% of properties receiving a Whole House Solution, where heating measures are installed and if applicable where insulation measures are installed alongside heating if required. The quality inspection should comment on **all** measures installed (including heating and insulation) and how well the measures are working as a package (e.g. does the property have adequate ventilation given the range of measures installed). Quality Monitoring should be completed before monthly claim submission.

- 100% of properties receiving innovative measures.

For all non-domestic / commercial sector schemes, there is a requirement to survey and report on the quality of installation in a minimum of

- at least 10 per cent of projects where projects –cost less than £20,000;

- at least 50 per cent of projects where the price is from £20,001 to £50,000;

- 100 per cent of projects where the installation cost exceeds £50,000.

Primary Bidders must ensure that measures installed using NISEP funding conform to appropriate high-level quality standards and that quality monitoring procedures are followed, as outlined in the Framework Document. Please note that it is the responsibility of the Primary Bidder to ensure that any work carried out by a third party/sub-contractor meets the required quality standards and that, where necessary, remedial works are undertaken.

Any deficiencies identified in the quality monitoring process must be rectified and re-inspected promptly to ensure timely completion of any required remedial works and reinspection. Paperwork recording this must be signed off and dated

by both quality inspector and customer. Primary Bidders must implement appropriate controls to ensure that any installation failing at initial inspection, or requiring reinspection, is fully documented and that all remedial work is completed. All related documentation must be retained for audit purposes and made available upon request.

Desktop inspections are appropriate on some occasions, such as, if labels are missing, a photograph will confirm that they have been added, in these circumstances, the Programme Administrator will accept confirmation that the Primary Bidder has checked that the customer is satisfied with the remedial action. Photos taken of all remedials should be GPS stamped to show the date and location of the photo.

For insulation installs the inspector must assess the accuracy of the metres2 of the property against the metres2 claimed under NISEP, to ensure no over-measuring takes place. Should any over-measuring be highlighted by the quality inspector, the Primary Bidder must notify the Programme Administrator within 10 working days. If the claim has been made and paid, a refund will be requested for the difference in measurement. If primary bidders become aware of consistent over-measuring by any subcontractor or installer, they must take appropriate action and detail this via the interim reporting schedule.

The inspector should also check that the property has adequate ventilation and meets the required standards. Primary Bidders should ensure that as part of the Quality Monitoring process for both heating and insulation fully funded schemes that customers are asked if any financial contribution has been sought. Please report on these findings as per the reporting schedule.

It is the responsibility of Primary Bidders to inform relevant bodies (i.e. BBA, KIWA, IAA, Gas Safe, OFTEC, MCS) of quality monitoring results where there have been significant failures or where concerns have been raised. Please ensure to make these terms transparent to sub-contractors before work commences under NISEP.

For domestic schemes, first-time inspection pass rates, which should be completed per measure, must be at least 90% where there are fewer than 100 installations of the measure being inspected and at least 95% where there are 100 or more installations of the measure being inspected. Inspection rates are reported for each measure undertaken within any given scheme. This does not apply to additional measures. The same requirements apply to non-domestic/commercial schemes; however, compliance is assessed at an individual project level rather than on a per-measure or installation basis.

These first-time inspection pass rates are based on annual volumes rather than the cumulative total across the two-year programme.

For the avoidance of doubt, no health and safety failures are acceptable. If any health and safety issues are identified through quality monitoring inspections, the Primary Bidder must notify the Programme Administrator immediately and provide details of the remedial action required. Full details of the issue, including any relevant photographic evidence, must be recorded before remedial work begins.

In addition, the Primary Bidder must undertake appropriate due diligence to satisfy itself, and demonstrate to the Programme Administrator, that the issue is not systemic or widespread. The Primary Bidder must also outline the corrective actions taken, or which need to be taken, to prevent a recurrence of the issue.

If there are high levels of inspection failures, the Primary Bidder will have to provide assurances that all installs meet required standards. Quality monitoring is the responsibility of the Primary Bidder. Failure to meet the target pass rates and/or if there are significant customer complaints received may lead to a proportion of funding being withheld until the Primary Bidder can provide sufficient evidence to both the Programme Administrator and the Utility Regulator to show that the situation has been rectified and quality requirements are being met.

Where quality inspections pass rates are lower than the required percentage thresholds outlined above, the Utility Regulator reserves the right to withdraw funding from a Primary Bidder or reject a Primary Bidders request for future funding.

NISEP can only be used to fund the initial Quality Monitoring inspection. If there are additional works required to meet standards that have been identified at initial inspection, these works can be funded under NISEP. NISEP funding cannot be claimed for either re-inspections of remedials (due to poor quality installations), as these works should have been carried out to standard at time of initial install, or for any repairs (e.g. damage as a result of poor-quality installations). It is the responsibility of the Primary Bidder to ensure that re-inspection or repair fees, as a result of poor-quality installations, are covered, via the Primary Bidder themselves or their sub-contractor/managing agent. Primary Bidders should ensure sub-contractor / managing agent are aware of these costs. If costs are to be charged, invoice descriptions used should be transparent. It is also expected that this is included in any contractual arrangements.

The Utility Regulator reserves the right to investigate any matters where Quality Monitoring results indicate health and safety issues; where there are high levels of remedial works due to poor workmanship; or where a serious customer complaint has been raised. In such cases, the Utility Regulator may instruct the Programme Administrator to carry out additional inspections, which will be conducted by an independent third party. The Primary Bidder will have no role in these inspections, as they must be fully impartial and free from influence. Once

the Primary Bidder has been notified that an investigation is underway, they must not revisit the identified property or properties unless specifically instructed to do so. The Primary Bidder must continue to comply with all requests for information and meet any deadlines reasonably set by the Utility Regulator.

Primary Bidders must refer to the above points in the Quality Monitoring section of the scheme submission form, and detail how this will be actioned with individual schemes.

Primary Bidders should make it part of the customer terms that customers are required to provide access to the property for quality monitoring inspections as well as for third party audit inspections. It should also be made clear that failure to do so by the customer may require the customer to repay all or part of the NISEP funding that was provided.

Should bidders undertake schemes in conjunction with other organisations, such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), then while, quality monitoring remains the responsibility of the Primary Bidder; it may be the case that these organisations will undertake the quality monitoring. Should this be the case, Primary Bidders must provide an outline of the quality assurance procedure adopted by the partner organisation for the scheme. Likewise, Quality Assurance procedures adopted by other nominated scheme partners may be used if suitable and agreed.

6.4 Scheme Auditing

Completed projects implemented under the NISEP will be subject to audit. The audit for both 2027/28 and 2028/29 NISEP years will commence in quarter 2 of 2029.

All Primary Bidders are expected to co-operate fully with the NISEP audit process. The Primary Bidder must participate in the audit and have all the required paperwork/records available and ready for inspection. The purpose of the audit will be to check that the scheme has been implemented in the manner approved by the Utility Regulator, and that the funding has been utilised as reported by the Primary Bidder. Primary Bidders are required to retain all paperwork relating to the scheme operation, procurement, indirect costs, additionality, performance and monitoring and make it available for audit inspection. This information shall be retained by the Primary Bidder for at least **seven** years after the scheme has been completed.

Primary Bidders have a responsibility during the audit to provide adequate and reasonable assurance in respect of the proper administration of the scheme(s) and ensure that any NISEP funding is claimed in an accurate and timely manner. Continued failure to provide the auditor with information or evidence will be

considered in the context of section 1.4 of the Framework Document, Sub heading review and withdrawal of Primary Bidder Status, which includes a reference to poor record keeping. Primary Bidder must ensure all procurement documentation is retained and made available for audit when requested. Commercial sensitivity must not be used to refuse provision of evidence. The auditor will provide secure mechanisms for document submission, which Primary Bidders must comply with.

The auditor will provide feedback to the Utility Regulator should Primary Bidders not adhere to audit deadlines. The auditor will issue a final observation log to the Primary Bidder. Following receipt of the log, the Primary Bidder will have one week to review and respond to the auditor, including the opportunity to submit any outstanding information or clarification, before the audit results are finalised., Primary Bidder's approval letters may also contain recommendations from the Auditor which are based upon the previous year's audit. Should a Primary Bidder either not adhere to timelines set, or fail to address any recommendations on scheme delivery, the Utility Regulator will take this into consideration for the approval of funding or level of funding future NISEP years.

The following information is likely to be reviewed during the audit:

Financial Information:

The scheme costs, including but not limited to, evidence of cost of measure, Building Control/Planning Permission receipts, indirect costs (where applicable), and the customer/third party/Primary Bidder contributions to the scheme will be established, and checked against those claimed in the scheme's post implementation report. Invoices must be retained by the Primary Bidder and may be viewed to verify costs as part of the sample address checking.

The key aim will be to confirm the amount of NISEP funds spent by the Primary Bidder on the approved scheme.

Procurement:

The audit will check that procurement processes used to engage sub-contractors (such as scheme managers, installers, inspectors) and suppliers of measures are designed to ensure best value use of NISEP funding. All Primary Bidders should ensure that they retain an accurate record of their procurement process (see section 1.6 of this document for additional guidance and details).

Best Value for Money:

The audit will check that the NISEP funds claimed are according to the principles of best value for money.

Applicant Eligibility

The audit will review a sample of application forms to verify that appropriate evidence has been recorded to demonstrate that customers meet all programme eligibility requirements and that the information recorded on the application forms complies with NISEP requirements.

Installation of Measures:

The audit will check that the types of measures installed are consistent with the approved scheme submission/variation. With regard to completed schemes, it will be necessary for the Primary Bidder to provide evidence that the numbers and types (including property types) of measures claimed in the PIR are correct and match records compiled across the two years (2027/28 and 2028/29). There will be a 5% sample address check carried out on those schemes being audited (over and above any in-year address checks already made by the Programme Administrator).

The Auditor may check (not limited to):

- That all new oil and gas central heating systems include a condensing boiler and appropriate heating controls.
- Documented evidence that surveys are assessing the existing pipework for suitability of the new system and that a water pressure test has been conducted in relation to heating upgrades prior to commissioning of the system (refer to section 2.6.1 for further guidance).
- That oil tanks have been disposed of safely in line with DAERA guidance.
- Evidence that where oil, LPG, or natural gas boilers have been replaced, they were over 15 years old **or** broken beyond viable economic repair.
- Fuel switch has been recorded from existing to new.
- That the age and type of the property has been recorded for each address
- The depth of loft insulation has been recorded for each address; previous levels of insulation should also be noted at survey stage.
- That lighting products delivered are EU A-rated for energy consumption (applicable to non-domestic/commercial schemes only).
- That appropriately trained/accredited installers and accredited products have been used.

The audit will involve physical inspection of the installations in a sample of properties.

Delivery Mechanisms:

The audit will check that the delivery mechanisms and terms under which a scheme is offered to customers is in line with that described in the approved scheme submission/variation (as set down in section 4), including the involvement of any retailers or contractors. For priority schemes, evidence of the appropriate targeting of customers using the set vulnerability criteria will be sought. The Auditor will obtain supporting documentation from each Primary Bidder to confirm that staff interacting with priority customers will have had appropriate training to engage with vulnerable customers and that all staff entering customer homes are Access NI checked annually. The Auditor will check that the organisation has a safeguarding policy and an appeals and complaints process in place etc.

Energy Savings:

The audit will check that the scheme delivered the required energy savings and that there is supporting documentation to evidence savings achieved. Energy Savings will be calculated in accordance with the methodology used by the Programme Administrator.

Additionality:

The audit will check that there is evidence to support the statement of additionality of the scheme made in the scheme submission. Evidence of additionality will be inspected and therefore should be retained for audit purposes.

Scheme Variations:

The audit will check that appropriate approval was obtained for any variations to the approved scheme submission including (but not limited to) the schedule of works.

Monitoring:

The audit will check the methodology the Primary Bidder had in place for:

- Quality assurance, with regard to the installation of measures (including how failures were rectified, what per cent of installations were checked, who carried out these checks, whether or not measures, are of a correct specification).

- Customer satisfaction (including the per cent of customers questioned and of those who responded how many were satisfied / dissatisfied. And the audit will also check how dissatisfied customers were dealt with and that all issues have been resolved).

GLOSSARY

Carbon/Carbon dioxide emissions	Fossil fuelled power stations generate electricity by burning large amounts of fossil fuels to turn water into steam. These fuels contain carbon and during combustion this combines with oxygen to form carbon dioxide which is a greenhouse gas. Greenhouse gases are accepted as contributing to climate change.
Carbon neutral	A fuel source which captures carbon as it grows to release it during combustion may be regarded as carbon neutral since there is no net increase in carbon release.
Commercial customers	In relation to NISEP, eligibility is defined as any non-domestic premise except for fully funded public buildings (e.g. Government department buildings).
Energy efficiency	Using less energy to provide the same level of energy service. For example, insulating a home allows a building to use less heating and cooling energy to achieve and maintain a comfortable temperature. Efficient energy use is achieved primarily by means of a more efficient technology or process rather than by changes in individual behaviour.
Energy saving light bulbs	(Non domestic/commercial)–Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) are a cost-effective option for most general lighting requirements. LEDs are available to fit most fittings and are particularly good for replacing spotlights and dimmable lights, they are more efficient than CFLs and will save customers more money in the long term.
Energy services	The physical benefit, utility or good derived from a combination of energy with energy efficient technology and or with action, which may include the operations maintenance and control necessary to deliver the service, which is delivered on the basis of a contract and in normal circumstances has proven to lead to verifiable and measurable or estimable energy efficiency improvement and/or primary energy savings.
Fuel poverty	A customer is said to be in fuel poverty, or is deemed as 'fuel poor' if they need to spend more than 10% of their weekly income on energy in order to obtain an acceptable level of warmth.
'Hard to heat' or 'hard to treat' homes	These are homes which are constructed with solid walls, i.e. without a cavity between the outer external wall and the inner wall surfaces.
Non-priority domestic customers	An identified domestic customer group who are not deemed as priority generally because they have the means to pay for the energy saving measures from within their own budget.

Priority domestic customers	This is an identified domestic customer group within the energy consumer sector. They are deemed as priority because they will benefit most from targeted energy efficiency, renewable energy and heating system measures. They are vulnerable on the basis of income and their ability to pay for energy particularly during cold periods.
Public Service obligation	A Public Service Obligation (PSO) is a levy which is charged at a flat rate on all units of electricity demand and therefore paid by all electricity customers. The PSO levy is composed of a number of different components one of which is a charge for the NISEP.
Renewable technologies	Generally, technologies which produce energy without consuming or depleting a fuel, deliver heat/power by extracting energy from the environment and which are driven from sources which can be replenished. Examples appropriate to buildings would be wind turbines, air source heat pumps, hydro-electric plants, biomass boilers or solar panels for heat or electricity (PV).
SAP Rating	SAP is the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure for the energy rating of dwellings. SAP 2005 is adopted by government as part of the UK national methodology for calculation of the energy performance of buildings. It is used to demonstrate compliance with building regulations for dwellings and to provide energy ratings for dwellings.
Scheme Manager	Someone or an organisation who is contracted by the Primary Bidder to oversee the installations or programme of work.
Scheme Partner	Refers to some other party who is a main contributor to the scheme in partnership with the Primary Bidder e.g. providing additional funding, providing access to the scheme participants and/or designing or setting up the scheme.
Statutory Organisation	An organisation which exists due to a legal or government requirement.
Sub-contractor	Refers to some other party sub-contracted by the Primary Bidder (or other participant in the scheme acting on its behalf) to carry out work on the scheme e.g. installers or inspectors. This includes self-employed contractors who are not employees of the Primary Bidder or part of its organisation.
Sustainable Energy Measures	The materials and technologies which are used within homes to provide an improvement in energy efficiency. A measure could be the installation of insulation in a loft or cavity wall or a complete heating system.
Trade Association	A body which represents the constituent member organisations or individual members associated with a particular trade or activity.

ACRONYMS

BRE	Building Research Establishment
CERT	Carbon Emissions Reduction Target
DESNZ	Department of Energy Security and Net Zero
DfE	Department for the Economy
DfC	Department for Communities
DHW	Domestic Hot Water
EEL	Energy Efficiency Levy
EPoS	Electronic Point of Sale
ESR	Energy Saving Recommended
EST	Energy Saving Trust
EU	European Union
LED	Light Emitting Diode
LPG	Liquid Propane Gas
MCS	Micro-generation Certificate Scheme
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NISEP	Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme
OFTEC	Oil Firing Technical Association
ONS	Office of National Statistics
RPI	Retail Price Index
SHP	Social Housing Provider
TRV	Thermostatic Radiator Valve

APPENDIX 1

Example of Customer Satisfaction survey

NISEP Customer Satisfaction Survey – Heating/Insulation Measures

You have recently received heating and/or insulation measures through the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme. In order to evaluate the success of the programme, it would be useful for us if you could take just a couple of minutes to complete this short questionnaire.

Name			
Address			
Q1	What measures did you have installed? (*tick all that apply*)	Loft insulation	
		Cavity wall insulation	
		New heating system	
		New heating controls	
		Thermostatic radiator valves	
Q2	How satisfied were you with the quality of work undertaken by the installers?	Very satisfied	
		Quite satisfied	
		Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	
		Not very satisfied	
		Not at all satisfied	
Q3	How did you find the process to apply for NISEP funding?	Very Easy Easy Not very Easy Difficult	
		-	

		-	
Q4	Are your fuel bills lower since the energy saving measures(s) installed? (*May not be applicable if no fuel bill has been received since installation*).	Yes	
		No	
		If yes, please comment	
Q5	Were you given advice on how to control your heating system, at the same time as the work was carried out?	Yes	
		No	
Q6	How would you rate this energy advice?	Excellent	
		Good	
		Satisfactory	
		Poor	
		Very Poor	
Q7	Overall, how would you rate the energy saving scheme?	Excellent	
		Good	
		Satisfactory	
		Poor	
		Very Poor	

If you have any additional comments about any aspect of the work carried out, please use the space below.

Thank you for taking time to complete the questionnaire, this information is very useful to us to ensure we get the best out of future Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme schemes.

Please return the completed form to: (Insert scheme managers address).

APPENDIX 2

Example of Vulnerability Matrix

NISEP Vulnerability Matrix			
Householder Name:			Address:
Tel:			
Mobile:			
Nominated Third Party:			Tel:
Relationship to Householder:			
Needs Assessment			
Household Occupancy Age/s	**Rating**	**Select One**	**Additional Comments**
Referring Householder Over 75	10		
Referring Householder Aged 18-59 with Child/children 5 and under	10		
Referring Householder aged 18-59 with Child/children aged 6-18	8		
Referring Householder aged 60-74	7		
Assessment Score ( )			
Household Health	**Rating**	**Select All Approp**	**Additional Comments** **Health conditions must not be recorded.**
Verifiable (Serious) health condition (May include but not limited to: cancer, dialysis, oxygen dependent, respiratory issues, Asthma)	10		
Disability Scheme (May include but not limited to: Blue badge scheme)	9		
Property has damp/mould	8		

(Provide location and details)			
Assessment Score ( )			
Household Heating	**Rating**	**Select one**	**Additional Comments**
No heating system	10		
Economy 7/coal/LPG	7		
Heating system Broken or 15+ years old (Oil/gas)	5		
Assessment Score ( )			

Needs Assessment Continued			
Existing Insulation Measures	**Rating**	**Select Two**	**Additional Comments**
No cavity wall insulation/ Solid wall property	5		
Defective cavity wall insulation	2		
No loft insulation	5		
Defective loft insulation	2		
Assessment Score ( )			

Additional Needs /Services Required/ Onward Referrals
(For Example: Age NI, Affordable Warmth (or replacement programme), Assisted bin lift, Benefit Entitlement Check, CLARE Project, Red Cross, Fold Floating Support, Falls Prevention Team, Home Safety / Handy man, Good Morning Service, NIFRS, Environmental Health, PCSP (security measures), Winter Warm Pack, Food Banks, Connected Community Hubs)

Assessment Outcome	**Max Points Available**	**Points**	**Assessed Vulnerability Rating**
Occupancy Age	10		**Low-Medium ▫ High ▫**
Health	27		**Low-Medium 1-38 High 39-57**
Heating	10		
Existing Insulation	10		**NISEP Referral**
			Referred to: _____
Max Points Available	**57**		**Referral Date: _____**
Total Assessment Points			

Referring Agent Details	
Name: _____	**Organisation: _____**
Signature: _____	**Address: _____**
Date: _____	**Email: _____**
Tel: _____	**Tel: _____**

Appendix 3

Guidance on the Installation of Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Measures

The following provides guidance on the installation of sustainable energy measures. Where appropriate, reference is made to relevant British Standards or guidance notes. An overview of British Standards is available at the BSI website at the following address. Copies of the Standards can also be ordered through this site.

This Appendix is for guidance only and does not provide an exhaustive list of relevant Standards. British Standards and other legislation are subject to ongoing update - it is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to ensure that all relevant Standards and Legislation are followed when implementing NISEP schemes.

Primary Bidders undertaking non-domestic /commercial schemes must use products that are currently on the energy technology list wherever possible:

https://etl.energysecurity.gov.uk/.

If the Primary Bidder proposes products for installation that are not on the list, they must provide evidence to the Programme Administrator that they meet relevant safety and quality standards, as well as evidence of product performance.

1. Insulation measures

1.1 Loft Insulation

Loft insulation provided under NISEP schemes should ideally be installed to a depth of 300mm. Depths of less than 300mm will only be considered for the accreditation of energy savings where it is physically impossible or unsafe to install 300mm.

Where downlighters exist in ceilings, Primary Bidders should ensure appropriate covers are installed for fire safety compliance. Primary Bidders are able to claim for the cost of the downlighter covers as part of the cost of measure.

Removal of existing loft insulation material should only be carried out if the insulation material is defective and this activity should form part of the total cost of job. The customer is not required to remove the defective insulation prior to commencement of NISEP works. Where there is no failure of the pre-existing product, removal of any pre-existing loft insulation is not permitted solely to allow

a 0-300mm job and the associated energy savings. A Primary Bidder can only claim energy savings for the amount of new insulation that is actually required to be installed to provide a minimum of 300mm depth.

The Programme Administrator uses a measure's lifetime to gauge when a measure at a specific property address may need replaced. For example, if loft insulation was installed to required standards 3 years previous, and there has not been some specific incident causing damage, it would not be reasonable for it to be replaced after 3 years based on the measure's lifetime. Therefore, the Programme Administrator would request further documentation to support a claim. In the scenario of loft insulation top ups, again the Programme Administrator would require documentation to support a claim.

The lifetime of loft insulation is assumed to be 42 years.

Loft insulation products must be compliant with the latest version of the following British or European Standards:

BS EN 13162:2012+A1:2015 – 'Thermal insulation products for buildings. Factory made mineral wool products Specification'. This document details the standards loft insulation materials must meet to be eligible as a qualifying action under the Order.

BS 5803 Part 5:1985 – 'Thermal insulation for use in pitched roof spaces in dwellings. Specification for installation of man-made mineral fibre and cellulose fibre insulation.' This standard specifies the requirements when installing loft insulation in pitched roof dwellings.

BS 5250:2021 – Management of moisture in buildings. Code of practice:

All lofts insulated by a NISEP scheme must include, where appropriate, loft boarding in order to provide safe access to the cold water tank. When insulating lofts, the loft hatches must be insulated and draught sealed.

In addition to these requirements, good practice when insulating roof spaces requires the insulation of the cold water tank and associated pipe work. The relevant British Standard is:

BS 5422:2023 – TC – 'Thermal insulating materials for pipes, tanks, vessels, ductwork and equipment operating within the temperature range –40 °C to +700 °C.' Method for specifying:

Cases of condensation in newly insulated lofts have been identified in previous programmes. There are several factors that can lead to condensation in lofts, such as failing to draught seal the loft hatch or the blocking of loft vents with insulation. Scheme managers must ensure that their installers take care to minimise the risk of condensation when installing loft insulation.

Insulation installed to 300mm ensures that the loft has a U-value of 0.16W/m2K, based on the product installed having a lambda of 0.044W/mK. Suppliers can be accredited for installing other insulates, although the lambda will need to be verified and the thickness recorded to ensure that the loft has the U-value of 0.16W/m2K.

Primary Bidders must also ensure that where loft insulation is installed that ventilation requirements meet required standards.

Installers of loft insulation must display a completion certificate in the loft which should include (but not limited to) the following information;

- name of grant programme
- total m2 insulated
- Insulation depth installed i.e. 200 -300mm (100mm), 100-300mm (200mm)
- no. of vents/type installed
- installer name/primary bidder name
- batch no. of material
- name of manufacturer of material
- applicable warning safety/thermal

1.2 Cavity Wall Insulation

The energy savings associated with cavity wall insulation are displayed in the Scheme Submission Spreadsheet. The energy savings differ between homes constructed over the age ranges outlined in the submission spreadsheets. Installers must therefore provide the age of the property insulated when reporting to energy suppliers, to enable Primary Bidders to accurately report on their completed schemes.

A declaration from the surveyor and clear evidence must be provided, should a Primary Bidder wish to record an install different from the two scenarios above.

The lifetime of cavity wall insulation is assumed to be 42 years.

The cavity wall insulation material installed must result in a U-value equivalent to or better than 0.50W/m2K and must be certified by an appropriate UKAS accredited certification body (BBA or similar). If using an accreditation body other than BBA please provide the Programme Administrator with the relevant

information for consideration and approval. The following British Standards and must be conformed with:

BS EN 13162:2012+A1:2015 – Thermal insulation products for buildings. Factory made mineral wool products.

BS EN 16809-1:2019 - Thermal insulation products of buildings. In-situ formed products from loose-fill expanded polystyrene (EPS) beads and bonded expanded polystyrene beads. Specification for the bonded and loose-fill products before installation.

BS EN 16809-2:2017 - Thermal insulation products of buildings. In-situ formed products from loose-fill expanded polystyrene (EPS) beads and bonded expanded polystyrene beads. Specification for the bonded and loose-fill products after installation.

BS 8104:1992 - Code of practice for assessing exposure of walls to wind-driven rain.

The suitability of full fill cavity construction is dependent on the exposure of the site and the nature of the outer leaf. Further information is given in BRE's BR262 'Thermal Insulation: Avoiding Risks', NHBC Standards, and Zurich Building Guarantees Technical Manual.

Best Practice Guidelines

Installers must follow all relevant current best practice guidance, including the following documents published by the Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency (CIGA) via their sister company the Installation Assurance Authority (IAA):

Assessor's Guide: Suitability of external walls for filling with cavity wall insulation. Part 1 existing buildings

Technician's Guide to Best Practice – Installing cavity wall insulation

Technician's Guide to Best Practice – Flues, Chimneys and Combustion Air Ventilators'

These documents, and others that may be relevant are available to members via the IAA website and may be available through other membership organisations.

If a cavity wall core vent is required, it must be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and in a manner that ensures it can reasonably be expected to perform its intended function for the typical lifetime of the measure.

Partial Fill Cavity Wall Insulation

Partial fill insulation is permitted under NISEP and must meet technical standards as outlined by an appropriate body such as BBA or CIGA/IAA. Energy savings pertaining to partial fill jobs were deemed to be 25.9% of the original post-1976 full cavity wall insulation savings for all property types and fuels for partial fill jobs. However, the methodology has now changed, and the savings are now calculated using a SAP based model, which is in line with the majority of the other savings, this makes the partial fill cavity wall savings more consistent and comparable with the other savings. It is expected that all Primary Bidders offering Cavity Wall Insulation as part of their scheme will provide a partial fill if the customer requires this.

It is assumed that any property built between 1991 and 2012 and receiving cavity wall insulation will be a partial fill install and recorded as such on relevant paperwork and on PIR spreadsheets. Older properties which receive partial fill must still be declared and clearly identified on submission and PIR spreadsheet.

Properties built after 2012 should not require cavity wall insulation and therefore will not qualify for NISEP funding.

A declaration from the surveyor and clear evidence must be provided, should a Primary Bidder wish to record an install different from the two scenarios above.

CWI Extraction and Refill

Extraction and refill jobs are permitted, providing they account for no more than **50%** of cavity wall insulation measures for Priority Individual Measure schemes. The cap is not applicable to Priority Whole House Solution or Priority Innovative schemes. The costs for extraction and refill must be completed as part of the Scheme Submission Spreadsheet.

In Non-Priority schemes, the cap does not apply. The grant levels have been set for Non-Priority extract and refill works as £1,250 or 40% of the total cost of the job (whichever is lower). Where extraction and refill jobs are being carried out, they should only be done where the existing insulation material is defective, and the property is more than 20 years' old. Documented evidence is required to support these checks. Extraction and refill is not permitted solely to remove old fibre and replace with new bead where there is no failure of the pre-existing product.

Should the property be less than 20 years old, and the existing insulation material defective, prior approval from the Programme Administrator must be sought with paperwork submitted to the Programme Administrator to support the requirement for extraction before any works commence.

NISEP cannot funds works that are covered under an existing wall insulation guarantee. Primary Bidders must check with customers if a guarantee is in place

and ensure customers access the guarantee in the first instance should there be issues with their existing insulation. Appropriate checks must be in place with documented evidence to support this.

Primary Bidders must ensure best value of NISEP funding and be able to demonstrate this requirement has been met at Audit stage and upon request by the Programme Administrator.

Extraction and refill installations are required to have a cavity cleaning/cavity extraction certificate from a suitable provider which will be requested at audit along with other accreditation certificates. Operatives undertaking cavity wall insulation extraction shall be able to demonstrate competency through a recognised industry qualification in cavity wall extraction/clearance and/or membership of a recognised industry competency scheme.

Primary bidders are responsible for ensuring they remain within the cap. The cap of 50% must not be breached. Should the cap be breached, the extraction cost of a job will not be paid by NISEP, (or if paid in a previous claim, the cost of extraction will need to be refunded to NISEP). NISEP will only fund the refill element of any extract and refill job which is above the 50% threshold.

The Utility Regulator reserves the right to withhold payments should the 50% cap be breached. Any breach of the 50% cap may impact future allocation of funding and approval of future schemes.

CWI Formaldehyde Foam Extraction

Primary Bidders undertaking extraction of formaldehyde foam should follow best practice guidance, including using dust sheets, sealing gaps, cracks and service entry points, and maintaining adequate ventilation during all extraction and cleaning works.

Where applicable, sub-contractors and Primary Bidders must have Health & Safety policies and procedures in place to deal with the extraction of formaldehyde foam. These should ensure the protection of staff, customers, and the public, when working under NISEP schemes, given the risk it could present.

Customers must be asked to sign an additional declaration confirming that they understand the NISEP requirements to minimise dust migration and agree to temporarily decant their homes while the Primary Bidders undertake the extraction and cleaning of the cavity.

If a customer refuses to decant their home, they must sign a further declaration confirming they undertake and accept the risks of dust migration that these works pose.

Wall Insulation Guarantee Certificates

A valid wall insulation guarantee i.e. IAA (or equivalent) must be provided to the customer when the wall insulation work has been completed.

A copy of the certificate must also be provided to the Programme Administrator. If using a guarantee body other than IAA, please provide the Programme Administrator with the relevant information for consideration and approval.

The Utility Regulator reserves the right to review our best practice guidelines in relation to the accepted wall insulation guarantee certificates during the NISEP year. It is the Primary Bidders responsibility to ensure that the customer is left with sufficient paperwork in order to make a claim (if needed) under a guarantee.

1.3 Draught Proofing

When calculating the draught proofing energy savings, our modelling assumes that draught proofing strips and seals are not present around doors and windows. To merit the accreditation of the energy savings listed in the Submission Spreadsheet, dwellings should not already have draught proofing strips or seals present. Typically, this refers to dwellings with wooden sash windows and wooden doors, but also old uPVC windows and old uPVC doors that have original draught proofing strips that have failed, have worn out or are missing.

The lifetime for draught proofing measures is assumed to be 10 years.

The British Standard relevant to the materials used for draught proofing is:

BS 7386:1997 – 'Specification for draught strips for the draught control of existing doors and windows in housing.' This Standard specifies the requirements for products to fit the common types of installed doors and windows in housing not originally designed to incorporate draught stripping.

BS 7880:1997 – 'Code of practice for draught control of existing doors and windows in housing using draught strips.' This standard specifies the requirements when installing draught-proofing.

1.4 Hot Water Cylinder Insulation

The energy savings for cylinder insulation are calculated using the BRE model.

A lifetime for cylinder insulation is assumed to be 10 years.

The relevant British Standard for cylinder insulation is:

BS 5615:1985 – 'Specification for insulating jackets for domestic hot water storage cylinders.' This Standard specifies the performance, in terms of the maximum permitted heat loss, the materials, design and marking of jackets for cylinders to BS699 and BS1566.

1.5 Solid Wall Insulation

Energy saving figures are available from the Energy Saving Trust for a variety of different solid wall insulation products and for a range of target U-values.

Solid wall installation (internal or external) is typically installed to achieve U-values of 0.30 W/m2K.

The lifetime of solid wall insulation is 36 years.

The following technical standards and specific requirements apply and solid wall insulation materials must conform to the following British or European Standards:

BS EN 13914-1:2016 – 'Design, preparation and application of external rendering and internal plastering – Part 1: External rendering.' This standard specifies the materials, aspects of design, mixes and methods of application of cement-based renderings to all common types of new and old backgrounds. It also includes advice on the inspection and repair of defective renderings.

BS 8000-8:2023 – 'Workmanship on construction sites – Design and installation of dry lining systems. Code of practice.'

When solid wall insulation is composed of material for which no British or European Standard exists, the material must by certified by the British Board of Agrément (BBA), or another UKAS Accredited Technical Approval Body for their thermal performance.

Guidelines

Guidelines for solid wall insulation (of an existing wall) recommend an improvement to the U-value of 0.30W/m2K in line with Building Regulations. Further details are provided in the following publication:

http://www.buildingcontrol-ni.com/assets/pdf/TechnicalBookletF12012.pdf

Best practice

Retrofit internal wall insulation – Guide to Best Practice: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/614b30aad3bf7f718a54c0be/iwi-guidance.pdf

A valid wall insulation guarantee i.e. IAA or SWIGA (or equivalent) must be provided to the customer when the wall insulation work has been completed.

A copy of the certificate must also be provided to the Programme Administrator. If using a guarantee body other than IAA or SWIGA , please provide the Programme Administrator with the relevant information for consideration and approval.

2 Lighting measures

2.1 LED Lighting

Non-domestic/commercial schemes that plan to install LED lamps, products must comply with the Ecodesign requirements for light sources and separate control gear as set out in Commission Regulation (EU) 2019/2020 (as applicable in Northern Ireland), together with any subsequent amendments. Primary Bidders should contact the Programme Administrator if guidance on the suitability of specific products is required.

Commercial LED schemes should have savings calculated based on the on-site survey that will include operating hours, wattage of new lamps and wattage of old lamps etc. These should be entered manually into the electrical inputs tab, with all background calculations detailed on the further breakdown tab**.**

However, for Commercial Lighting schemes, not all lighting on a site will be used for the same amount of time so there could be many individual calculations required at a given site. Therefore, for all Commercial Lighting Schemes, lifetime years should be based on approx. running hours. For sites with broadly continuous operations: Enter energy savings over a 9-year lifetime and for sites with up to 12 hours operations per day: Enter energy savings over a 20 year lifetime. Primary Bidders must provide the rationale of site mix entered.

2.2 Other Energy Efficient technology

For schemes installing variable speed drives, compressors or other energy efficient technology, the measure lifetime entered into the scheme submission spreadsheet must be based on the manufacturer's declared lifetime (in hours)

divided by the operational hours of the site, with a maximum accepted lifetime of 15 years. For example, a site operating for 8,000h per year receiving a variable speed drive with a rated lifetime of 100,000h would claim savings over a lifetime of 12.5 years (100,000 / 8,000). Again, Primary Bidders must be able to provide background and supporting documentation for lifetime years entered. Primary Bidders should contact the Programme Administrator in advance of scheme submission for further advice and guidance on lifetime years.

3. Heating measures

3.1 Boilers

Any new boiler provided by a NISEP scheme should be gas fired wherever gas is available to fuel it. Primary Bidders must ensure that scheme criteria state that if gas is available it will be installed.

Schemes replacing old oil boilers should ensure that the make, model type and age of the boiler is recorded.

Boilers installed in schemes must be 'A' rated. A database of boiler efficiency can be found at: https://www.ncm-pcdb.org.uk/sap/searchpod.jsp?id=17

It indicates the energy efficiency of all currently available boilers. The lifetime assumed for boilers is 16 years.

Several British Standards also apply:

BS 5440-1:2023 – 'Chimneys, flue pipes and ventilation for gas appliances of rated input not exceeding 70 kW net (1st, 2nd and 3rd family gases) - Design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of chimneys. Specification'

BS 5440-2:2023 – **TC** – 'Chimneys, flue pipes and ventilation for gas appliances of rated input not exceeding 70 kW net (1st, 2nd and 3rd family gases) - Installation and maintenance of ventilation provision for gas appliances. Specification'

BS 6798:2014 – 'Specification for selection, installation, inspection, commissioning, servicing and maintenance of gas-fired boilers of rated input not exceeding 70 kW net.

BS 7671:2018+A1:2020 – Requirements for Electrical Installations. IET Wiring Regulations**.**

BS EN 14336:2004 – Heating systems in buildings. Installation and commissioning of water-based heating systems.

BS EN 12828:2012+A1:2014 - Heating systems in buildings. Design for water-based heating systems.

BS EN 12831-1:2017 - Energy performance of buildings. Method for calculation of the design heat load. Space heating load, Module M3-3.

Primary Bidders must adhere to all legislation pertaining to back boilers to which Primary Bidders are legally obligated to comply with. Please refer to the relevant Building Control legislation and the Health & Safety Executive: https://www.hse.gov.uk/services/localgovernment/boilers.htm

It is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to meet all required standards regarding the safety of back boilers.

For further guidance please refer to the guidance referred to in building control documents: https://www.buildingcontrol-ni.com/assets/pdf/TB_Part_F1_2022_On-Line_Publication.pdf

3.2 Heating Controls

The Submission Spreadsheet enables the calculation of energy savings for smart heating controls referred to as 'Intelligent Heating Controls' within the spreadsheet. The savings are calculated by entering the existing controls scenario before installation and then entering the type of heating controls installed by the scheme.

Installations must meet the standards outlined in the guidelines to the Northern Ireland Building Regulations 2012.

http://www.buildingcontrol-ni.com/regulations

In addition, heating controls must all be installed in line with:

BS 7671:2018+A2:2022 – 'Requirements for Electrical Installations. IET Wiring Regulations'.

BS EN 14336:2004 – 'Heating systems in buildings. Installation and commissioning of water based heating systems'.

BS EN 12828:2012+A1:2014 – 'Heating systems in buildings. Design for water-based heating systems'.

BS EN 12831-1:2017 – TC – 'Energy performance of buildings. Method for calculation of the design heat load. Space heating load, Module M3-3'

A lifetime of 12 years is assumed for heating controls.

The Scheme Submission Spreadsheet should be used to calculate the energy savings from heating controls.

TRVs should be fitted on all radiators in a dwelling except in rooms where there is a room thermostat. The number of TRVs that can be fitted in a dwelling is dependent on a number of factors such as the number of rooms and the number of radiators present. The savings are based on the house type and bedrooms entered.

3.3 Disposal of Oil Tanks

Where a new heating system is installed (if applicable), Primary Bidders must adhere to NIEA's guidance on 'the disposal of oil tanks in a controlled manner' which came into effect from 1st January 2020.

Primary Bidders must consider the following: if the customer wishes to keep possession of the oil tank, according to NIEA, this is accepted, as it is not being discarded as waste, with the important proviso that any residual oil in the tank is drained off for use directly as heating oil or disposed of to an authorised facility. The installer must record that the customer has opted to retain the tank and this record should also be signed by the customer and retained for audit review.

Primary Bidders should also support priority customers and signpost them to organisations to aid with the drainage of oil before the planned install date to ensure they can adhere to the guidance.

If the oil tank has already been disposed of before a gas installation, the customer may be in breach of the existing Hazardous Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, if there is no record that the tank has been disposed of to an authorised waste facility. It must then be recorded by the installer that there was no oil tank in situ when the gas installation was performed. Please seek further guidance from DAERA if this situation arises. Evidence may be requested at audit.

For guidance on the safe disposal of oil tanks, please refer to the DAERA site.

It is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to meet all required standards regarding the safe disposal of oil tanks.

4. Renewable energy schemes

This section provides information on factors considered when quantifying the benefits of installing micro generation measures. This section will not provide energy saving data for all micro generation measures. The Energy Saving Trust

undertakes field trials of micro generation measures and is continually updating energy saving assumptions based on the results.

If your scheme submission includes photovoltaic panels (solar electricity panels) or air source heat pumps, then there is a separate renewable scheme submission spreadsheet that will allow you to calculate your standardised savings and calculate actual impact during the post installation review (PIR) stage. The spreadsheet will output the savings and costs which you can copy into the main SSS where it will be added to the results.

The calculations in the renewables scheme submission spreadsheet uses weighted average energy savings in the standardisation section. This means that the savings take into account Northern Ireland's house type mix and fuel type mix resulting in a single energy saving for each of the three renewable types. The post installation report (PIR) section calculates the savings according to the house type, fuel type and bedroom number selected allowing for more bespoke savings to be outputted. All energy prices and carbon factors used in the tool are updated in line with main scheme submission spreadsheet assumptions.

Photovoltaic panels (solar PV, solar electricity panels)

Savings

Savings within the tool are based on a 4.5kWp system assuming the occupants are in the household half the day. The savings represent the reduction of electricity needed to be imported in from the electricity grid, it does not include any export payments.

Eligibility – Microgeneration certification scheme (MCS)

Actual PV installations should be sized according to the electricity demand of the household and the available space to install a PV system. Avoiding installing PV systems that face north, northwest or northeast but all other orientations are acceptable.

The Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) has been set up to ensure that the quality of micro generation products and their installation is of an appropriate standard. Micro generation products, design of systems and installation in NISEP schemes must be accredited by the MCS and they must be installed by a MCS accredited installer. Primary Bidder must retain documentation to support this requirement for review on request.

Primary Bidder Responsibility

Where Solar PV systems are installed under NISEP, Primary Bidders must ensure that customers are provided with appropriate information, guidance and support before, during and after installation.

As a minimum, Primary Bidders should:

- Provide customers with a clear explanation of how the Solar PV system operates, health and safety considerations and how to maximise the benefits of the installation and optimise self-consumption of generated electricity.

- Ensure customers receive practical instruction on the use of any associated monitoring platforms, mobile applications, web portals or control systems, including guidance on accessing and interpreting generation and performance data.

- Not assume that customers possess the digital skills or technical knowledge necessary to access or interpret system performance data and therefore provide appropriate support where required.

- Issue customers with a handover pack containing all relevant user manuals, warranty information, contact details for ongoing support and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section.

- Ensure the FAQ section includes guidance on common issues, including but not limited to app access problems, password resets, connectivity issues, unavailable generation data, system fault reporting, health and safety considerations and contact details for obtaining further assistance.

- Ensure that all required notifications, registrations and approvals associated with the installation are completed.The installer shall comply with all applicable G98/G99 connection requirements, including notification to and/or approval from NIE Networks, as required for the installed system. Where an export meter is required to facilitate the export of surplus electricity, the installer shall assist the customer in arranging these requirements. A signed acknowledgement confirming the customer's understanding of these requirements should be provided to the customer, with a copy retained by the Primary Bidder for audit purposes

- Explain any ongoing responsibilities associated with ownership of the system, including maintenance requirements and any implications for future electrical works at the property.

- Confirm that the customer has been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the operation and use of the system and understands the information provided.

Primary Bidders are responsible for ensuring that customers receive a comprehensive post installation handover and must maintain records

demonstrating compliance with these requirements. Records should be made available upon request or at audit.

Air source heat pumps

Savings

Savings are based on modelling that assumes an SPF of 3.09. The oil or gas heating systems being replaced by an air source heat pump is assumed to 75% efficient. These are assumptions for the benefit of modelling savings only and should not be used as eligibility requirements, please see the next section for all eligibility requirements.

Eligibility - For NISEP Domestic Schemes, where Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) are an offering, the Primary Bidder must comply with the following requirements. (NB: Evidence to support compliance will be requested through the payment claim process, interim reports, and at Audit Stage.)

Please note, should there be any changes to the requirements listed below, Energy Saving Trust will contact the Primary Bidder directly.

Eligibility – Heat pump type

NISEP currently only supports air-to-water heat pumps. Air-to-air, ground source and water source heat pumps are not supported. High temperature air-to-water heat pumps (i.e. those capable of providing flow temperatures above 55°C) may be supported provided evidence is provided that a standard temperature heat pump is not suitable.

Hybrid heat pumps and systems are currently not offered under NISEP, as they are currently deemed as unproven technology in terms of the likely financial and carbon savings. We are constantly reviewing new data and technologies, so this is subject to change in the future.

Eligibility – Microgeneration certification scheme (MCS)

Air source heat pump products should be listed on the European Energy Labelling Directive as well as being MCS accredited. Installers should refer to the guidance on the MCS website: https://mcscertified.com/standards-tools-library/

The Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) has been set up to ensure that the quality of micro generation products and their installation is of an appropriate standard. Micro generation products, design of systems and installation in NISEP schemes must be accredited by the MCS and they must be installed by a MCS accredited installer. Primary Bidder must retain documentation to support this

requirement for review on request. Further details on the MCS can be found at the following web link: http://www.microgenerationcertification.org

Eligibility

Property requirements for air source heat pump installations

The scheme is open to any suitable properties which is replacing or upgrading a heating system. This includes properties with oil, LPG or natural gas boilers which are 15 years old or more, or where the boiler is broken beyond economical repair. Properties with coal heating or non-ERP Compliant electric storage heaters, or properties with no existing central heating system are also eligible. Customers who have existing electric heating can upgrade to an air source heat pump.

The property will have existing or will receive correctly sized radiators, as per the MCS calculator recommendations.

A property will be deemed suitable if an MCS compliant heat loss calculation can be provided demonstrating suitability for an air source heat pump, with appropriately sized radiators and potentially upgraded cavity wall and loft insulation, as defined by the MCS heat pump calculator tool. Both CWI & Loft Insulation will be available under the NISEP scheme. Should the heat loss calculation suggest a property is suitable for a heat pump without additional CWI and/or loft insulation, these measures should still be installed if specified on the building survey.

CWI and Loft insulation (full or top up) should always be installed when the property survey suggests they are required unless there are exceptional circumstances which mean these measures are not suitable / possible. If not deemed suitable / possible, the reasons for this assessment must be clearly documented in survey paperwork and subsequent claim submission documentation.

Primary Bidder Responsibility

Primary Bidders should be knowledgeable in average running costs of each heating system / fuel type and are fully responsible for ensuring that customers, when signing up to a NISEP grant for a heating conversion, are fully aware of the typical running costs and financial implications. It is the Primary Bidder's responsibility to ensure all communication with the customer covers running costs and therefore should a customer query a negative financial benefit post install, the Primary Bidder is responsible for resolving the query, not the NISEP programme, Utility Regulator or Energy Saving Trust.

Tariffs of various fuel sources are unpredictable, however replacement of the heating equipment with an air source heat pump should aim to not leave the recipient in a situation where they have higher annual heating costs than before.

Should a heating conversion to an air source heat pump, be calculated to not bring financial benefits (but energy and carbon benefits) the customer needs to be fully aware of this. Applicants need to be aware that future fuel prices cannot be predicted and fluctuate over time therefore no guarantees can be given regarding annual running costs of the air source heat pump but their decision to avail of NISEP should be based on the lifetime benefit of the air source heat pump (12-15 years) and not in the short term.

Customer expectations, education, and support

Full transparency and managing customer's expectations is essential. Before application is approved, customers must be provided with a full and transparent comparison using the MCS calculation, so the customer is fully aware of potential cost differences from going from their pre-existing heating system to a heat pump system.

A signed document by the customer must be retained by the Primary Bidder to support that this information has been shared and understood by the customer and the customer has agreed to progress with the application. This comparison should highlight the variation in heating costs on a month-by-month basis, using a Typical Meteorological Year in Northern Ireland.

The table below indicates the proportion of heat and hot water required for these illustrations, and the pricing should use utility prices that the customer is paying at the time of the installation, and the assumption should be made that the heat pump performs at an SPF of 3.09. The primary bidder will need to retain copies of relevant bills to support their calculations (to be shared with Energy Saving Trust at PIR stage). Figures should be rounded to the nearest £5.

	Jan		F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	Dec	
Boiler	14%		12%	11%	10%	7%	5%	2%	2%	5%	9%	11%	12%	100%
ASHP	16%		14%	10%	7%	5%	4%	4%	4%	6%	7%	10%	13%	100%

Worked running costs example:

Pre-works, the heating requirement of the house is 12,000 kWh for both heating and hot water using an oil boiler @66% SEDBUK efficiency, and oil costs 7.3p/kWh from the customer's bill. If the Primary Bidder cannot ascertain a SEDBUK figure for the boiler, assume 66% efficiency for all boilers.

Post-works, the heating requirement of the house is now 9,000 kWh for both heating and hot water following insulation works, and electricity costs 36.3p/kWh from the customer's bill. Please ignore the efficiency of the heat pumps as

recorded in the MCS calculator and assume a heat pump SPF of 3.09 for all the heating and hot water requirement when doing this calculation.

In January, the figures entered would be respectively:

- Boiler: (12,000 * 14%) / 0.66 X 7.3pence / 100 = £185.82, rounded to £185
- Heat pump: (9,000 * 16%) / 3.09 x 36.3pence / 100 = £169.17, rounded to £170

Where the customer is using solid fuel (wood or coal), please speak to the Programme Administrator for guidance.

Installer must provide an explanation on the location of new equipment and changes to existing equipment locations or sizes. The installer must indicate how long it will take to do the work and how many people may be working on the installation.

Customers must be supported throughout the process in relation to converting to an ASHP, from application stage through to install and provide the necessary training on how to operate the system most effectively.

Customers must be given advice on how to use the air source heat pump at the time of the installation and how to use the heat pump control system including the impact of changing the settings on the heat pump itself.

The installer must explain how the efficiency and running cost of the air source heat pump changes with different set temperatures. Alongside a simple explanation of the factors that can increase or decrease these such as higher internal temperature targets, colder outdoor conditions and patterns of hot water use.

The customer must be provided with contact information should they have any issues with the air source heat pump or require further information on how to operate the heat pump.

Customer must be provided with thermometer strips/cards per room, giving the customer the ability to monitor their internal room temperatures so that they are well informed about how their system is performing.

The customer must be provided with an MCS compliant handover pack in a suitable quality binding that may be left with the installation to be passed on to future occupants of the house. The checklist for documents to be included can be found on the MCS website: https://mcscertified.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/MCS-Installation-Handover-Checklist-Heat-Pump.pdf

The pack should also include - a user-friendly one-page summary with Dos & Don’ts and emergency contact details, a comprehensive customer-friendly operating manual and all relevant guarantees and warranties. The servicing

requirements to maintain the air source heat pump warranty should be explained to the customer and also included in the handover pack with a list of contacts for servicing and repairs.

User friendly advice/educational material should be included that may not be covered in the manufacturer manuals. This additional material, where not covered by the manuals, should include information about:

- how to operate the system as efficiently as possible
- difference in temperature of radiators in heat pump systems vs boilers
- the approach to using either intermittent or continuous heating
- advice on domestic hot water heating that covers the requirement to inhibit legionella growth
- impact of electricity tariffs on running costs
- a clear record of the systems initial commissioned settings including the weather compensation curve, internal temperature points and TRV settings by room

Primary Bidders must carry out quarterly reviews with the customer during the first year following installation, to ensure the customer remains satisfied with the system and understands its operation. Reviews may be conducted in person, by telephone or via another agreed communication method; however, a minimum of two reviews must include visits by the installer to the customer's property. All reviews must be documented, including the date, method of review, details of personnel and customers in attendance or participating and any system updates, modifications, issues raised or actions taken.

A feedback CSAT questionnaire should be provided to the customer, for each ASHP install, allowing them to feedback to Energy Saving Trust / Utility Regulator.

In instances where a customer has raised a complaint with the Primary Bidder regarding the installation of a heat pump, for example the quality of the installation and is not satisfied with the outcome, the customer must be directed to MCS for support in the first instance by the Primary Bidder. The customer must be informed of the MCS complaints process. In these circumstances, the Primary Bidder is also required to notify Energy Saving Trust of the nature of the complaint and the process that was followed to attempt to resolve it.

QM Accreditations

The Quality Monitoring inspector must be suitably qualified to inspect all works carried out under NISEP by the Primary Bidder/Installer. Please refer to the Quality Monitoring section 6.2 and Appendix 3 in the Framework Document.

Planning permission and Building Control requirements

All installs must meet current Building Control and Planning Permission requirements.

Primary Bidders must inform the customer of the Building Control/Planning Permission process and timelines at the earliest opportunity prior to installation. The customer must be informed in writing of any requirements in relation to Building control/Planning Permission. Although the Primary Bidder/installer will make the initial application for Building Control/Planning Permission on the customer's behalf, the Primary Bidder must inform the customer of the level of information the customer must provide to support the application.

Please contact the Programme Administrator for advice on renewable energy measures that may be considered for inclusion in NISEP schemes and for guidance on their installation.

6. Guarantees and workmanship warranties

For CWI and solid wall insulation an installation guarantee that meets the requirements below, must be provided to the customer when a NISEP installation is completed. For loft insulation, heating and renewables installation appropriate warranties as outlined below must also be provided to the customer.

Guarantee and Workmanship Requirements by Measure Type

Measure type	Consumer Protection and Guarantee Requirements
Cavity Wall Insulation (partial, full fill and extract and refill)	The guarantee must: Provide cover for a minimum period of 25 years from the date of installation. Be supported by an insurer or guarantee provider authorised to operate within Northern Ireland. Include a pre-installation survey and approval from the guarantee provider. The guarantee must remain in force if the Primary Bidder ceases trading. Provide financial protection sufficient to cover the reasonable cost of remedial works, in this case a minimum of £20,000.

	An arbitration / dispute resolution service from the guarantee provider, must be available where the Primary Bidder continues to trade and a complaint between a Primary Bidder and NISEP customer remains unresolved. The Primary Bidder must advise the customer that the matter will be referred to an arbitration/ dispute resolution service provided by the guarantee provider.
Solid Wall Insulation	The guarantee must: Provide cover for a minimum period of 25 years from the date of installation. Be supported by an insurer or guarantee provider authorised to operate within Northern Ireland. Include a pre-installation survey and approval from the guarantee provider. The guarantee must remain in force if the Primary Bidder ceases trading. Provide financial protection sufficient to cover the reasonable cost of remedial works, in this case a minimum of £30,000. An arbitration / dispute resolution service from the guarantee provider, must be available where the Primary Bidder continues to trade and a complaint between a Primary Bidder and NISEP customer remains unresolved. The Primary Bidder must advise the customer that the matter will be referred to an arbitration/ dispute resolution service provided by the guarantee provider.
Loft Insulation	A guarantee from an independent assurance body is **not** required, the Primary Bidder must: Provide a minimum 12-month workmanship warranty for all installation works undertaken. Ensure the customer receives the full manufacturer's warranty applicable to the loft insulation installation.
Heating replacements	A guarantee from an independent assurance body is **not** required, the Primary Bidder must: Provide a minimum 12-month workmanship warranty for all installation works undertaken. Ensure the customer receives the full manufacturer's warranty applicable to the installed heating system and associated components.

Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Systems	From 1 April 2027, installers must comply with all applicable requirements of the redeveloped MCS Installer Scheme, including all consumer protection, complaints handling and financial protection requirements in force at the time of installation. Provide the customer with all warranties, guarantees and consumer protection documentation required under the MCS Scheme. Ensure appropriate financial protection is in place in accordance with MCS requirements for domestic installations. Ensure consumer protection arrangements remain effective in the event that the installer ceases trading, in accordance with the applicable MCS requirements. Provide a documented process for handling complaints and customer redress. Include a mechanism for addressing verified defects or workmanship faults and for escalating unresolved issues in accordance with the relevant consumer protection arrangements. Provide access to independent dispute resolution and technical assessment processes where required under the applicable MCS and consumer protection framework. Ensure all installations are registered and administered in accordance with MCS requirements.

The Utility Regulator reserves the right to review best practice guidelines in relation to the accepted installation guarantee certificates during the NISEP year. The Primary Bidder must ensure that the customer is provided with all relevant documentation relating to the installation and associated guarantee and is advised that, where a complaint or defect remains unresolved, they may refer the matter to the relevant guarantee provider, subject to the terms and conditions of the guarantee.

7. Other relevant legislation

The following legislation (not an exhaustive list) may or may not apply to works carried out during a NISEP scheme.

The legislation can be reviewed at the following website: http://www.hmso.gov.uk

It is the responsibility of each Primary Bidder to ensure that they have carried out their schemes in accordance with appropriate legislation.

Construction (Health Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1996

These regulations are aimed at protecting the health, safety and welfare of everyone who carries out construction work. They also give protection to other people who may be affected by the work.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

(HASAWA) provides a wide, embracing, enabling framework for health, safety and welfare in the UK.

Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 1994

These regulations have been produced to ensure that Health, Safety and Environmental issues are addressed during the life-cycle of a building or plant.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 1994 (COSHH)

This legislation prohibits work involving exposure to hazardous materials (chemicals, micro-organisms, gases, etc.) unless a 'suitable and sufficient' assessment of these exposures has been carried out.

Noise at Work Regulations 1989

These regulations aim to protect workers from the risk of hearing damage due to excessive noise.

Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

The purpose of these regulations is to ensure precautions are taken against the risk of death or personal injury from electricity in work activities.

Environmental Protection Act 1990

The aim of this Act is to ensure that any potential polluting process has an authorisation from either the Environment Agency or Local Authority and that control measures are in place to prevent, minimise or render harmless emissions into the surrounding environment.

Ozone depleting substances (ODS) regulation 2000

This regulation affects users, producers, applicants, maintenance and servicing engineers, and those involved in the disposal of all ODS. These include chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydro chlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), halons, 1,1,1 trichloroethane, carbon tetrachloride and bromochloromethane (CBM). These substances are mainly used in refrigeration, air-conditioning, foam blowing, as solvents and in fire-fighting.

Appendix 4

Role of the Programme Administrator and Relationship with the Utility Regulator

Appointment of the Programme Administrator

Under the terms of the Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Ltd. (NIE Networks) Licence the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (the Utility Regulator) may appoint a Programme Administrator to oversee the detailed operation of the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP). The role of Programme Administrator is defined by Condition 43 of the NIE Networks plc licence.

Role of the Programme Administrator

The existing arrangements for the administration of NISEP were previously delivered under a legacy Heads of Agreement with Energy Saving Trust. To ensure compliance with current procurement and governance requirements, these arrangements have now been formalised through a Direct Award Contract. This approach provides a clear contractual framework for the ongoing delivery of NISEP and supports the effective administration of the programme.

The Programme Administrator must carry out all the necessary tasks associated with the overall management of the NISEP, ensuring the appropriate, effective and best value use of customer's money. The Programme Administrator shall agree to undertake the following services or activities; however, the Utility Regulator will retain overall responsibility for overseeing the NISEP and final approval on all significant decisions.

- General Administration and Review of NISEP

  a) Providing an annual plan, including an invoicing schedule that details the activities to be carried out and the cost for each activity (excluding additional ad hoc activity), at the start of February, to the Utility Regulator for ensuring the availability of sufficient trained staff, and appropriate administrative arrangements to deliver the service as detailed below;

  b) Developing and maintaining appropriate and detailed administrative processes and template documents for management of the NISEP, including the development of new processes and documents as required;

c) Maintaining and updating Primary Bidder and Energy Saving Trust tracking spreadsheets and the CRM system (where license fees are paid for) to contain summary information of schemes for each NISEP year. Tracking spend and unspent funds in respect of Primary Bidders to ensure there is no overall overspend of NISEP funds and that under-spend is reduced as far as possible.

d) Assisting the Utility Regulator in developing the NISEP and, if required, putting forward revisions to the rules and procedures of the programme. This will include an annual or biennial review of the operation and performance including the types of categories and schemes allowed;

e) In the instance of a whistleblowing allegation or formal investigation and/or the Utility Regulator or Energy Saving Trust have reason to believe that a fraud may have occurred, Energy Saving Trust will provide information and advice to Utility Regulator to assist in the investigation.

- Liaison with Primary Bidders and registration of new applicants to NISEP

a) Advising potential applicants on the Primary Bidder registration process and criteria to be met;

b) Processing applications for registration of Primary Bidders and keeping a record of their applications;

c) Endorsing applicants who meet the criteria for Primary Bidder registration as laid out in the Framework Document and recommending to the Utility Regulator for approval;

d) Providing ongoing advice and guidance to registered Primary Bidders throughout all stages of the design, implementation and reporting of schemes, including but is not limited to the following:

e) Providing points of clarification to ensure Primary Bidders are adhering to the Framework Document.

f) Regularly liaise or hold frequent meetings with Primary Bidders to ensure they are meeting their contractual requirements.

g) Liaising with Primary Bidders within the scheme year on quality monitoring issues.

h) Manage outside enquires from parties interested in NISEP.

i) Engage with outside stakeholders interested in NISEP such as Energy Efficiency Advisors, NEA and NIHE Energy Efficiency Grants team.

j) Deliver a seminar or host one-to-one sessions for Primary Bidders, as required, during the "call for schemes" phase to explain NISEP scheme submission requirements and processes.

- Review and Updating of Framework Document

a) Maintaining and updating the NISEP Framework Document on an biennial basis, including relevant appendices. This includes updating figures in tables as appropriate and any other updates deemed necessary to the content of the Framework Document. Maintain the standardised approach to a number of key assumptions in the Scheme Submission Spreadsheet for submitting bids through the Scheme Submission process.

- Evaluation and Monitoring of Schemes

a) Maintaining a model (the model and associated intellectual property belong to Energy Saving Trust), using Excel, for calculating energy savings and other benefits from schemes such as carbon savings and gross customer financial benefits. The model must be suitable for use by Primary Bidders to facilitate scheme development, submission and reporting and incorporate the calculation of energy savings and other benefits from schemes. The spreadsheet must be capable of calculating the energy savings in terms of discounted lifetime energy savings (GWh) as per the Framework Document but also capable of meeting the reporting requirements of the Energy Efficiency Directive[1] i.e. gross calorific annual savings (TWh). Providing a demonstration of the workings of the model to the Utility Regulator when requested to do so.

b) Providing technical advice to Primary Bidders to assist in scheme development, to include training on the use of the model spreadsheet.

c) Receiving scheme submissions from Primary Bidders with all the necessary associated documentation and information, to include a summary submission spreadsheet and scheme submission form.

d) Liaising with Primary Bidders as necessary to ensure the requirements of the Framework Document have been met in the development of each scheme.

e) Assessing against the relevant criteria and endorsing scheme submissions and associated supporting documentation with reference to criteria laid out in the Framework Document, to include verification and validation of scheme proposals, cost-effectiveness of schemes and predicted energy savings. Forwarding recommendations for award of funding to Utility Regulator for final approval (excluding assessment of VAT treatment by Primary Bidders).

f) Ongoing assessment of progress of approved schemes with reference to the Framework Document. Overseeing the scheme variation process including endorsing proposed variations that are consistent with the Framework Document and where appropriate forwarding to Utility Regulator for approval.

g) Assessing and processing monthly payment claims, with proof of work done, from Primary Bidders as outlined in section 2.4 of the Framework Document to include a sample size of 20%. (Excluding assessment of VAT treatment by Primary Bidders.)

h) Ensuring final energy savings claimed for schemes are calculated correctly and adjusted, if necessary, in line with the parameters set out in the Framework Document. Liaising as required with Primary Bidders to ensure any queries are sorted out, any duplicate claims are removed and any monies claimed in error are returned before forwarding post-implementation reports to Utility Regulator for approval.

i) Monitoring the NISEP budget and ensuring timely identification of pressures and easements.

j) Maintain the standardised approach to a number of key assumptions in the Scheme Submission Spreadsheet for submitting bids through the Scheme Submission process.

k) Undertake duplicate checks in year and across NISEP years between all NISEP schemes on a monthly and annual basis once PIRS have been submitted, liaising with Primary Bidders where relevant on duplicates found to resolve the duplicate or until a refund has been made.

l) Liaise with NIHE and Invest NI on duplicate checks between NISEP and other Government funded schemes on at least a biannual basis with NIHE and at least an annual basis with Invest NI, using a secure mode of transfer of NISEP data to the relevant bodies for checking.

- Maintaining Records, Auditing and Reporting

a) Keeping and maintaining, in an easily accessible manner, adequate records of all approved and unapproved schemes and associated documentation for the duration of the retention period. In line with the Data Sharing Agreement between the Utility Regulator and Energy Saving Trust, records and associated data for each scheme, including submissions, scheme variations, interim reports, outputs in terms of measures installed and energy savings and funding spent, will be retained for seven years from the end date of the individual scheme year. Only records within this seven year retention period will be handed over to the Utility Regulator at the end or termination of the Programme Administrator role. Following handover, the Programme Administrator will not retain any NISEP documents (as agreed with UR) outside this seven year retention period. Providing the Utility Regulator with monitoring information on the geographical spread of domestic measures funded by NISEP, reported as a percentage split of measures per District Council Area;

b) Identifying where improvements to processes, procedures, data-capture and data accuracy can be made;

c) Receiving and analyzing the three-month statement, the five-month, the eight-month interim progress reports and when required a 12 month summary report from Primary Bidders and post-implementation reports for all schemes, with associated information, ensuring schemes are delivered as per approved submission/scheme variation.

d) Engaging an independent qualified auditor or accountant to: Carry out an audit on 100% of NISEP schemes (where NISEP funding has been claimed) from each Primary Bidder on an annual/biennial basis to verify that they have been delivered in line with the approved statement of method;

(i) Prepare an audit report;

(ii) Follow up on issues arising from audits and make recommendations for improvements to future schemes; and

(iii) Provide assurance on the:

(iv) Number and scope of scheme audited and the standard to which they have been completed; and

(v) Financial and administrative processes operated by Primary Bidders

(vi) Financial and administrative processes of the Primary Bidder

e) On an annual/biennial basis, sight based physical inspections will take place on a minimum of 20 random properties. The basis of the sight based physical inspection will be proposed by Energy Saving Trust each year for Utility Regulator's agreement and will as a minimum verify that work claimed is completed.

f) Completing an annual or biennial report, in a format appropriate for publication, on the performance of the NISEP. This will include the results of all NISEP schemes implemented, a summary of overall savings achieved (as per the Framework Document), a summary of measures installed and the geographic spread of customers benefitting, an analysis of NISEP spend and details of any relevant issues that arose during the year;

g) Reporting the overall energy savings achieved by the NISEP both in terms of lifetime energy savings and the gross calorific annual energy savings (TWh) as required by the Energy Efficiency Directive.

h) Operating a zero-tolerance policy in relation to fraud in terms of both the undertaking of schemes by Primary Bidders and the administration of the Programme and maintain all necessary documents to ensure that any such incidents are identified and reported in a timely manner;

i) Provide an annual assurance to Utility Regulator that Energy Saving Trust's internal administrative processes have delivered effective controls in relation to the NISEP. This can be done through Energy Saving Trust's internal administration process.

j) Maintain the HEED (applicable to NISEP) and provide an annual update to UR and DfE.

- Final Evaluation Report

a) Completing a review following NISEP closure (after the final scheme year in 2027/28 or 2028/29) that evaluates the overall success of the Programme. The report should be forwarded to the Utility Regulator by the end of March (2029 or 2030) (and must include metrics on the various measures installed, financial benefits to customers and the associated energy and carbon savings. This report will also include an overall assessment of the Programme and customer satisfaction along with lessons learned for future energy efficiency schemes.

- Ad Hoc Deliverables:

Energy Saving Trust will undertake other related activities as reasonably required by the Utility Regulator in relation to the NISEP. Where work is additional to that carried out under this agreement and is reasonably expected to incur additional costs, this must be agreed by both parties before any costs are incurred. Some examples of what might be required as additional work activities are outlined below; this list is not exhaustive.

a) Providing additional analysis and statistics relating to NISEP schemes as reasonably required by the Utility Regulator. If data other than that which Energy Saving Trust as Programme Administrator is required to hold, is requested by Utility Regulator, this may incur additional cost which must be agreed by both parties before the data is provided;

b) Technical expert physical inspections. A technical expert can be engaged on a case by case basis and paid for separately by agreement in advance of the work being carried out.

c) Produce an Addendum to the Framework Document. Should the UR require an Addendum, Energy Saving Trust will draft as appropriate and forward to the Utility Regulator for review.

d) Duplicate checks with NIHE/Invest NI where additional investigation is required following data sharing queries (e.g., potential duplicate claims or emerging trends), beyond Step 1 of the agreed process.

e) Managing complex complaints; where complex complaints are reasonably justified and Energy Saving Trust can demonstrate complexity that goes above and beyond normal complaint /enquiry handling.

f) Unforeseen programme close out activities within the contract period.

Appendix 5

See Separate NISEP Accedence Agreement, published on the same date as this Framework Document.

APPENDIX 6

Minimum Requirements of a Fraud Policy

Fraud Policy

The statement of internal procedures and zero tolerance policy towards fraud to be supplied by Applicants as part of the registration process must include the following:

- Accountable Officer. Must be a named senior person within the organization who will have responsibility for fraud policy and procedures.
- Internal delegations. May include responsibility for prevention/detection/reporting of fraud at all staff levels.
- Identification of fraud procedures.
- Internal audit procedures and roles.
- Compliance procedures.

Internal fraud response plan to include:

- Internal reporting and investigating procedures.
- Disciplinary/prosecution policy and procedure for recovery of losses.
- Reporting requirements.

APPENDIX 7

State aid and subsidy control guidance and declaration forms

Undertakings in the Commercial Sector

All Primary Bidders operating schemes under the NISEP which benefit commercial entities (including landlords of privately rented properties) should note the following and act accordingly.

EU State Aid law

The EU's State aid regime continues to apply within Northern Ireland to measures:

- involving the trade in goods and wholesale electricity; and
- that "affect trade" between Northern Ireland and the EU.

Measures will only "affect trade" where they have a genuine and direct link to Northern Ireland and they have real foreseeable effects on that trade. In general this will include measures which:

- confer a benefit on goods trading entities which are incorporated and registered in Northern Ireland and which do not operate on a purely local market; or
- are "substantial" (e.g. over £3 million for SMEs or over £10 million for large enterprises) and which confer a benefit on goods trade entities which:
- are incorporated or registered in Great Britain;
- have (or will have as a result of the measure) a market share of 10% or more on the relevant goods market within Northern Ireland; and
- will pass the economic benefit of the measure to its activities in Northern Ireland.

Benefits given to entities which are "carrying on an economic activity consisting of offering goods or services on a given market" may be considered State aid and are subject to regulation in order to avoid distortions of competition. In principle,

this may include benefits given to commercial customers and landlords of privately rented properties.

State aid must be notified to the European Commission before it is granted unless it is de minimis or benefits from a 'block exemption'.

EU State Aid law – de minimis aid

Smaller amounts of aid does not need to be notified to the European Commission if they fall below a certain threshold. This applies where:

- the amount of aid granted to the commercial customer; and
- any previous State support granted to the commercial customer in the previous three fiscal years,

does not exceed €300,000 (or its sterling equivalent).

Going forward and before committing to providing benefits to commercial entities under the NISEP, Primary Bidders must ensure that:

- all commercial entities and landlords of privately rented properties receiving benefits ("Recipients") under the NISEP are notified that they are beneficiaries of aid under the de minimis aid Regulation (Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831, "the Regulation" (For most recent document reference please visit https://competition-policy.ec.europa.eu/state-aid/legislation/regulations_en#de-minimis-regulation;and
- recipients provide a declaration in relation to de minimis aid, to the Primary Bidder.

The required notice and declaration are set out below. They can be given and returned in either paper or electronic format. Where Primary Bidders do not have time to change application forms, these can be separate from any application documentation.

In accordance with this addendum and from the date of this notice, Primary Bidders must ensure that benefits under the NISEP are not granted to commercial undertakings without giving notice and receiving a valid declaration.

Primary Bidders should note that there are different rules which apply to some types of undertaking and the Regulation does not permit de minimis aid under the Regulation to be given to the following entities ("excluded undertakings"):

a) undertakings active in the fishery and aquaculture sectors;

b) undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products; and

c) undertakings active in the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products or agricultural products.

Primary Bidders should provide Recipients with a copy of the list of the excluded undertakings at the time of notification but will not be expected to provide advice on it.

Generally, we will not require Primary Bidders to verify the veracity of declarations. However, where information becomes available to the Primary Bidder or its partnership agent that a declaration is false, then the offer of benefits under the NISEP must be withdrawn, any work which is not contracted should be halted and the Utility Regulator and Programme Administrator must be informed.

Primary Bidders will be expected to retain records of all commercial undertakings who have received de minimis aid for at least 10 years and produce them on request by any UK public authority, the Programme Administrator or the European Commission.

In addition to the above, the Utility Regulator has decided that in order to help prevent inappropriate claims, all commercial undertakings receiving NISEP benefits will be required to declare that they have not claimed or received more than one lot of NISEP funding or benefits from any NISEP scheme in respect of the same work.

NISEP - Notice to commercial recipients

Name of Firm.....Date .....

Under the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement 2018, EU State aid law continues to apply in respect of measures which affect trade in goods or the electricity market between Northern Ireland and the EU. The applicable EU State aid law includes Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 (the "Regulation").

The support provided to you under NISEP is provided as de minimis aid for the purposes of the Regulation. The Regulation states that there is a ceiling of €300,000 (or its sterling equivalent) for all de minimis aid that can be provided to any one firm (including any linked firms) over a three year period.

The proposed gross value of benefit1 to you under the NISEP:.....

Before we can proceed in providing any funding, services or goods under the NISEP you must make and return a valid Required Declaration.

Any de minimis aid awarded to you under this offer letter will be relevant if you wish to apply or have applied for any other de minimis aid. You will need to declare this amount to any other aid awarding body who requests information from you on how much de minimis aid you have received.

You must retain this letter for at least 10 years from the date of receipt and produce it on request by any UK public authority or the European Commission.

To ensure appropriate allocation of funding under the NISEP recipients are also required to give a declaration that they have not claimed or received funding or benefits more than once under the NISEP in respect of the same work.

1. Gross value of benefit means the benefit before any deduction of tax or any other charge.

NISEP - Required Declaration from commercial recipients

(to be returned once complete)

We declare that:

1. The total amount of de minimis aid that we will receive as a result of the proposed grant under the NISEP in this and the previous two years will not exceed €300,000 (or its sterling equivalent);

2. We are not an excluded undertaking for the purpose of Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831; and

3. We have not claimed for or received more than one lot of NISEP funding, services or goods from any NISEP scheme in respect of the same work.

Signature.....

Print name.....

For and on behalf of .....(name of recipient firm)

Date.....

EU State Aid law – block exemptions

Pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 (the "General Block Exemption Regulation"), certain categories of aid will be exempt from the requirement to notify the European Commission, provided that such measures fulfil certain conditions.

In principle, funding granted under the NISEP may be eligible for exemption under the General Block Exemption Regulation. This is particularly the case where an approved scheme involves investment aid to be granted to an SME.

In order to be eligible for exemption under the General Block Exemption Regulation, the total value of the funding must not exceed certain thresholds depending on the category of aid and must not exceed certain percentages of the total eligible costs of the investment.

Going forward and before committing to providing benefits to commercial entities under the NISEP, Primary Bidders must ensure that the Utility Regulator and Programme Administrator are informed of:

a) the total value of the funding to be provided to the commercial customer;

b) the total costs of the investment project concerned; and

c) the value of any funding which will be provided by the commercial customer in relation to the grant.

EU State Aid law – Aid to the Agricultural, Fisheries and Aquacultural Sectors

Benefits given to commercial entities active in the production of, and trade in, agricultural, fisheries and aquacultural products by public authorities, or at their direction, may be considered State aid, where such measures have an effect on trade between the EU and Northern Ireland.

In principle, this may include benefits given under the NISEP. Smaller amounts of aid does not need to be notified to the European Commission where it is granted to entities active in these sectors if they fall below a certain threshold.

This applies where:

a) the amount of aid granted to the commercial customer; and

b) any previous State support granted to the commercial customer in the previous three fiscal years,

does not exceed:

a) €20,000 (or its sterling equivalent) for entities active in the production of, and trade in, agricultural products; or

b) €30,000 (or its sterling equivalent) for entities active in the production of, and trade in, fisheries and aquacultural products.

Primary Bidders must ensure that:

a) all undertakings in the agricultural production sector receiving benefits under the NISEP are notified that they are beneficiaries of aid under Commission Regulation (EU) No. 1408/2013;

b) all undertakings in the fisheries and aquacultural production sector receiving benefits under the NISEP are notified that they are beneficiaries of aid under Commission Regulation (EU) No 717/2014; and

c) all recipients provide a declaration in relation to de minimis aid, to the Primary Bidder.

The required notice and declaration are set out below. They can be given and returned in either paper or electronic format. Where Primary Bidders do not have time to change application forms, these can be separate from any application documentation.

In accordance with this addendum and from the date of this notice, Primary Bidders must ensure that benefits under the NISEP are not granted to recipients without first giving notice and receiving a valid declaration.

Generally, we will not require Primary Bidders to verify the veracity of declarations. However, where information becomes available to the Primary Bidder or its partnership agent that a declaration is false, then the offer of benefits under the NISEP must be withdrawn, any work which is not contracted should be halted and the Utility Regulator and Programme Administrator must be informed.

Primary Bidders will be expected to retain records of all undertakings who have received de minimis aid for at least 10 years from the date on which the last individual aid was granted under the scheme and produce them on request by any UK public authority, the Programme Administrator or, within a period of 20 working days, to the European Commission.

In addition to the above, the Utility Regulator has decided that in order to help prevent inappropriate claims, all commercial undertakings receiving NISEP benefits will be required to declare that they have not claimed or received more than one lot of NISEP funding or benefits from any NISEP scheme in respect of the same work.

NISEP - Notice to undertakings in the Agricultural Production Sector

Name of Firm.....Date .....

Name of Firm.....Date .....

Under the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement 2018, EU State aid law continues to apply in respect of measures which affect trade in goods or the electricity market between Northern Ireland and the EU. The applicable EU State aid law includes Commission Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 (the "Regulation").

The support provided to you under NISEP is provided as de minimis aid for the purposes of the Regulation. The Regulation states that there is a ceiling of €20,000 (or its sterling equivalent) for all de minimis aid that can be provided to any one firm active in the agricultural sector (including any linked firms) over a three fiscal year period (i.e. your current fiscal year and previous two fiscal years).

The proposed gross value of benefit1 to you under the NISEP:.....

Before we can proceed in providing any funding, services or goods under the NISEP you must make and return a valid Required Declaration.

Any de minimis aid awarded to you under this offer letter will be relevant if you wish to apply or have applied for any other de minimis aid. You will need to declare this amount to any other aid awarding body who requests information from you on how much de minimis aid you have received.

For the purposes of the Regulation, you must retain this letter for at least 10 fiscal years from the date of receipt and produce it on request by any UK public authority or the European Commission.

To ensure appropriate allocation of funding under the NISEP, recipients are also required to give a declaration that they have not claimed or received funding or benefits more than once under the NISEP in respect of the same work.

1. Gross value of benefit means the benefit before any deduction of tax or any other charge.

NISEP - Required Declaration from undertakings in the Agricultural Production Sector

(to be returned once complete)

We declare that:

(i) The total amount of de minimis aid that we will receive as a result of the proposed grant under the NISEP in this and the previous two fiscal years will not exceed €20,000 (or its sterling equivalent); and

(ii) We have not claimed for or received more than one lot of NISEP funding, services or goods from any NISEP scheme in respect of the same work.

Signature.....

Print name.....

For and on behalf of ..... (name of undertaking)

Date.....

NISEP - Notice to undertakings in the Fishery and Aquaculture Sector

Name of Firm.....Date .....

Name of Firm.....Date .....

Under the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement 2018, EU State aid law continues to apply in respect of measures which affect trade in goods or the electricity market between Northern Ireland

and the EU. The applicable EU State aid law includes Commission Regulation (EU) No 717/2014 (the "Regulation").

The support provided to you under NISEP is provided as de minimis aid for the purposes of the Regulation. The Regulation states that there is a ceiling of €30,000 (or its sterling equivalent) for all de minimis aid that can be provided to any one firm active in the fishery and aquaculture sector (including any linked firms) over a three fiscal year period (i.e. your current fiscal year and previous two fiscal years).

The proposed gross value of benefit1 to you under the NISEP:.....

Before we can proceed in providing any funding, services or goods under the NISEP you must make and return a valid Required Declaration.

Any de minimis aid awarded to you under this offer letter will be relevant if you wish to apply or have applied for any other de minimis aid. You will need to declare this amount to any other aid awarding body who requests information from you on how much de minimis aid you have received.

For the purposes of the Regulation, you must retain this letter for at least 10 years from the date of receipt and produce it on request by any UK public authority or the European Commission.

To ensure appropriate allocation of funding under the NISEP recipients are also required to give a declaration that they have not claimed or received funding or benefits more than once under the NISEP in respect of the same work.

1. Gross value of benefit means the benefit before any deduction of tax or any other charge.

NISEP - Required Declaration from undertakings in the Fishery and Aquaculture Sector

(to be returned once complete)

We declare that:-

(i) The total amount of de minimis aid that we will receive as a result of the proposed grant under the NISEP in this and the previous two fiscal years will not exceed €30,000 (or its sterling equivalent); and

(ii) We have not claimed for or received more than one lot of NISEP funding, services or goods from any NISEP scheme in respect of the same work.

Signature.....

Print name.....

For and on behalf of ..... (name of undertaking)

Date.....

UK Subsidy Control Act 2022

Where EU State aid rules do not apply to benefits given to commercial entities (including landlords by public authorities, or at their direction, because they do not affect trade between Northern Ireland and the EU, they may be considered to be a subsidy and subject to additional regulation under the UK's subsidy control regime (the Subsidy Control Act 2022). In principle, this may include benefits given under the NISEP.

Where a public authority intends to grant a subsidy, it must ensure that the subsidy complies with certain principles. The public authority must also ensure that an entry is made in the subsidy database maintained by the Department for Business & Trade in respect of the subsidy.

However, smaller amounts of financial assistance (so-called minimal financial assistance) may be exempt from certain of these requirements. This will be the case where:

- the total amount of the funding granted under NISEP; and
- the total value of public funding (including de minimis aid awarded under the EU State aid rules),

does not exceed £315,000.

Going forward and before committing to providing benefits to commercial entities under the NISEP, Primary Bidders must ensure that:

- all commercial entities receiving benefits ("Recipients") under the NISEP receive a notification which:

  a) explains that the funding will be given by way of minimal financial assistance under the Subsidy Control Act 2022;

  b) specifies the gross value amount of the funding; and

c) requests written confirmation from the Recipient that its capacity to receive minimal financial assistance will not be exceeded by receiving the NISEP funding;

- Recipients provide a declaration in relation to minimal financial assistance, to the Primary Bidder; and
- The Primary Bidder provides written confirmation to the Recipients detailing:

  a) that the Recipient has received a subsidy by way of minimal financial assistance;

  b) the date on which the subsidy is given; and

  c) the gross amount of the assistance.

The required notifications and declarations are set out below. They can be given and returned in either paper or electronic format. Where Primary Bidders do not have time to change application forms, these can be separate from any application documentation.

From the date of this notice, Primary Bidders must ensure that benefits under NISEP are not granted to commercial undertakings without giving notice and receiving a valid declaration.

Generally, we will not require Primary Bidders to verify the veracity of declarations. However, where information becomes available to the Primary Bidder or its partnership agent that a declaration is false, then the offer of benefits under the NISEP must be withdrawn, any work which is not contracted should be halted and the Utility Regulator and Programme Administrator must be informed.

Primary Bidders will be expected to retain records of all commercial customers who have received minimal financial assistance for at least 3 years.

In addition to the above, the Utility Regulator has decided that in order to help prevent inappropriate claims, all commercial undertakings receiving NISEP benefits will be required to declare that they have not claimed or received more than one lot of NISEP funding or benefits from any NISEP scheme in respect of the same work.

NISEP - Notice to commercial customers

Name of Firm.....Date .....

The Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (the Utility Regulator) offers [commercial customer] a Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022, subject to your agreement to, and compliance with, the terms and conditions set out below.

The proposed gross value of benefit1 to you under the NISEP:.....

Before conferring a benefit to you under the NISEP we require written confirmation that the benefit will not exceed [commercial customer's] MFA threshold of £315,000 cumulated over this and the previous two financial years, as specified in section 36(1) of the Subsidy Control Act 2022. This means you must confirm that you (including any group companies) have not received more than [£315,000 minus the gross value of benefit] in MFA subsidies or comparable types of subsidies (see section 42(8) of the Subsidy Control Act) during this year and the previous two financial years.

We take this opportunity to remind [commercial customer] that you are required to keep a written record of the amount of MFA you have received and the date/s when it was received. The written record must be kept for at least three years beginning on the date on which the MFA was given. This will enable you to respond to future requests from public authorities on how much MFA you have received and whether you have reached the cumulative threshold.

To ensure appropriate allocation of funding under the NISEP recipients are also required to give a declaration that they have not claimed or received funding or benefits more than once under the NISEP in respect of the same work.

NISEP - Required Declaration from commercial recipients

(to be returned once complete)

I confirm, for and on behalf of [commercial customer] that:

(i) The receipt of minimal financial assistance of [£x] from the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation will not exceed [commercial customer's] MFA threshold specified in section 36(1) of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

(ii) We have not claimed for or received more than one lot of NISEP funding, services or goods from any NISEP scheme in respect of the same work.

Signature.....

Print name.....

For and on behalf of .....(name of recipient firm)

Date.....

APPENDIX 8

NISEP Primary Bidder Code of Conduct

CONTENTS

1 Introduction

2 Unreasonable Behaviour

3 UR Response to unreasonable behaviour

4 General Unreasonable behaviours and demands

5 Aggression, rudeness, abuse and threats

6 Dealing with unreasonable behaviour and demands

7 Actions that may be taken

1 Introduction

The context

At the Utility Regulator (UR) we work hard to be open and accessible in our delivery of the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) for consumers in Northern Ireland. We work closely with the Programme Administrator, currently Energy Saving Trust (EST) as our delivery partner.

However, the behaviour or actions of some external stakeholders can make it difficult for us to do our work or to deal with customer complaints in an effective way, as their conduct can go beyond what is acceptable. When this happens, we must take action to protect our staff and those of our delivery partner, EST, and we also must consider the effect of this behaviour on our ability to do our work and provide a service to others.

2 Unreasonable behaviour

We understand that people may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. The high-pressure environment that we operate within, and the circumstances that may have led to a customer complaint or some other programme issue or the stress and inconvenience caused in trying to resolve a complaint or issue can result in the person becoming frustrated, angry, and

upset. However, it is unacceptable if this frustration turns into aggressive or abusive behaviour towards our staff or staff of our delivery partner.

Violence, aggression, verbal abuse and any form of harassment towards our staff is not tolerated. This can include behaviour or language, whether spoken, written or via social media that makes staff feel offended, afraid, threatened, or abused. For example, threats, personal abuse, offensive remarks or swearing. We also consider inflammatory statements to be abusive behaviour.

3 UR Response to unreasonable behaviour or harassment

The first instance of unacceptable behaviour displayed to either our delivery partner, EST, or UR staff will be highlighted to the individual by the UR and asked to stop. This should be viewed and communicated as a formal warning and will be recorded formally in electronic file. Should this unacceptable behaviour continue, then the second instance will result in further action being taken.

4 General unreasonable behaviour and demands

Individuals may make unreasonable demands, such as the amount of information they request, the nature or scale of the service they expect or the number of approaches they make including attempts to approach different staff with the same issue. If actions start impacting on our work, we consider them unacceptable.

This behaviour should not be mistaken with individuals appropriately escalating issues to a more senior member of staff. It is important to note that what matters is how the person who is in receipt of the unreasonable behaviour is made to feel, not whether the behaviour was intended.

Unreasonable behaviour depends on the circumstances that surround it and the seriousness of the issues raised. Some examples of unreasonable demands or behaviour:

a) refusing to accept explanations of what we can or can't do and investigate;

b) insisting the issue be dealt with in incompatible ways with our process, or in ways which aren't in good faith;

c) making unjustified complaints about staff dealing with the complaints or issues, and trying to have a staff member replaced with another staff member or manager;

d) changing the basis of the issue or complaint;

e) introducing irrelevant new information at a late stage;

f) raising many detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are all answered;

g) submitting untrue or false documents;

h) raising repeat complaints with minor changes or additions to attempt to constitute 'new' complaints;

i) continuing to chase and argue about an issue with us once we have closed it;

j) repeatedly arguing points without new data/evidence;

k) repeatedly demanding we respond within an unreasonable timescale;

l) demanding to see or speak to a particular member of staff when it is not possible or necessary;

m) insisting on a face-to-face meeting when we do not consider it necessary; and

n) visiting our offices without an agreed appointment.

Please note that this is not a complete list and is just a broad example of some of the actions and behaviours we consider unacceptable.

In summary, for the UR, there are three key areas of unreasonable behaviour:

a) Aggression, rudeness, abuse and threats;

b) excessive unreasonable persistence or unreasonable levels of contact with, or harassment of, our staff; and

c) making unreasonable demands.

5 Aggression, rudeness, abuse and threats

Unreasonable behaviour (including aggression, rudeness, abuse and threats) will not be tolerated. Examples of unreasonable behaviour include:

a) Rudeness - swearing (generally or directed at a member of staff), persistent interruption, name calling or general discourtesy;

b) Anger – shouting;

c) Aggressive behaviour - threats including threats of physical harm to person(s) or property; behaviour which indicates that harm to person(s) or property is imminent or actual physical aggression;

d) Insulting or disparaging remarks or comments (such as implying someone is not very good at their job), including protected characteristics insults;

e) Inflammatory remarks or personal remarks directed at a member of staff; and

f) Persistent, unreasonable demands.

These are examples and not a definitive list of unacceptable behaviours. There are other behaviours not included in the above which may constitute unacceptable behaviour.

Anyone displaying such behaviour through any channels of communication i.e. telephone, face to face and digital methods of contact, may be told that communication will be terminated unless more moderate language is used, that threats are unacceptable and may be reported to the police, that rude and intemperate correspondence may not be answered or returned – and if online it will be taken down, reported and potentially blocked. In some instances, special contact arrangements may be implemented.

6 Dealing with unreasonable behaviour and demands

Unreasonable behaviour may come from individuals within the companies who are Primary Bidders.

Guidance in dealing with these situations is set out below:

a) If we consider an individual's behaviour or actions from a Primary Bidder company unacceptable, we may decide to make a formal complaint via the relevant company complaints procedure or directly to a senior member of the company.

b) This will be discussed with the appropriate line manager and Director prior to a complaint being made. The staff member will be supported in this process and any subsequent investigation that may be carried out by the Primary Bidder in considering the complaint.

c) The staff member will be asked to record a detailed account of everything that has taken place, including a note of any witnesses and record this in an electronic file.

7 Actions that will be taken

Where a person behaves unreasonably during a telephone call to a member of UR or EST staff, we will ask them to change their behaviour. If they persist in doing this, we will warn them that we will terminate the call and if they persist, we will follow that through.

The staff member who terminates the call will report this their line manager when this happens, and a note of the telephone conversation will be made and recorded in an electronic file.

Where a person is unreasonably persistent, for example by telephoning several times a day and/or over several days, or by sending voluminous or repetitive emails or letters, we will ask them to reduce their contact with us, to that which is essential. This is to ensure a proportionate level of response across our service provision, so we can continue to support others.

Any member of UR / EST staff who directly experiences aggressive or abusive behaviour has the authority to deal with it immediately in a way they consider appropriate and in line with this policy. This may include ending phone calls or refusing to accept further correspondence.

All staff will report any behaviour they consider unacceptable to their line manager, and this will be recorded on the electronic file.

We will always try to ensure any action we take is proportionate to deal with the problem, and we will consider any relevant personal circumstances, including the severity of the complaint.

In exceptional circumstances, we may refuse to have any further contact with external stakeholders who are unreasonably persistent or abusive.

Where we receive threats against individual staff members (including placement staff), or office property, immediate action may be taken including informing the police or other emergency services. If this threat is on social media, then we will also report to the social media company, and the account will be permanently blocked.

Should any Primary Bidder not adhere to the above code of conduct, they will be considered to be in breach of the NISEP Framework Document, and the UR will reserve the right to take appropriate action as per the Accedence Agreement clauses 9-6.28 (a) (ii) or 11-63.5 (b).

APPENDIX 9

Post Termination Obligations

1 Post Termination Obligations

All Approved Schemes are scheduled to end in either March 2028 or March 2029, depending on whether the break clause in 2.3 of the Accedence Agreement is exercised by the Utility Regulator (UR). Following the closure of all Schemes, Primary Bidders must ensure that sufficient resources remain in place to fulfil all their post-closure obligations under the Accedence Agreement.

Without prejudice to their obligations in the Accedence Agreement post-closure obligations that all Primary Bidders must undertake include the following:

- the preparation and submission of final claims to the Programme Administrator; and
- completion of Post-Implementation Reports (PIRs); and
- compliance with all audit requirements.

Once the Audit Report and endorsed PIRs have been submitted to the UR, by the Programme Administrator and the UR is satisfied that all requirements have been met, a final PIR Approval Letter will be issued. The Accedence Agreement will terminate 20 days after the date of this letter.

The termination of a Primary Bidder's participation in the Programme does not remove its continuing obligations in relation to workmanship warranties, manufacturer guarantees, complaint investigations, remedial works, record retention, or cooperation with any compliance investigations associated with installations completed during the contract period.

2 Complaint Handling After Termination:

The Primary Bidder will remain responsible for investigating and responding to complaints relating to work completed before termination of the Accedence Agreement.

All Customers of Approved Schemes should be informed of how to raise complaints or warranty claims after the installer's participation in the programme ends.

Where complaints remain unresolved at the time of programme closure, the Programme Administrator or the UR shall specify all reasonable and necessary

requirements for each case which will define the actions necessary to achieve satisfactory closure.

All records relating to installations and complaints must be retained in accordance with Clause 16 of the Accedence Agreement.

3 Warranty Obligations After Termination:

Termination of the Primary Bidder's contract should not affect any workmanship warranties provided to customers for installed measures.

The Primary Bidder remains responsible for remedying defects that arise during the workmanship warranty period in accordance with the warranty terms issued at the time of installation.

To facilitate the above Primary Bidders must ensure customers are provided with appropriate warranty documentation, product guarantees and contact details for reporting defects at the time of installation.

Any manufacturer and product warranties should continue for their stated duration, regardless of whether the Primary Bidder remains contracted to the programme.

4 Ongoing Security and Data Protection Obligations After Termination:

Primary Bidders are required to continue complying with applicable security requirements and data protection provisions as set out in Clause 13 of the Accedence Agreement.

Primary Bidders should destroy all programme related material and confidential information which does not need to be retained by Primary Bidders to fulfil their post-closure obligations, and they must confirm their destruction in writing to the UR.

5 Liability and Indemnity:

The terms of Clause 18 of the Accedence Agreement continue notwithstanding closure of the Approved Schemes or termination of the Accedence Agreement.

6 Ongoing Provisions; Documentation Retention:

Please note the requirements regarding retaining all documentation for seven years and your continuing obligations to provide such documentation on request to the UR and/or any Competent Authority following termination as set out in Clause 16 of the Accedence Agreement.