

**14<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

**Renewables Grid Liaison Group**

**Minutes of Meeting**

<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Utility Regulator</b>	Tanya Hedley (TH), Jody O'Boyle (JOB)
<b>NIRIG</b>	Michael Harper (MH), Meabh Cormacain (MC), Mervyn Adams (MA(d)), Billy Graham (BG)
<b>NIE</b>	Robert Wasson (RW) Gerry Hodgkinson (GH), Michael Atkinson (MA), David de Casseres (DdC), Aidan Bradley (AB), Stephen Thompson (ST) Caron Malone (CM)
<b>SONI</b>	Eimear Watson (EW)
<b>DETI</b>	Michael Harris (MH(arr))
<b>Solar Power Representative</b>	Ruth McGuigan (RMcG), Richard Love (RL)
<b>Ulster Farmers Union</b>	Chris Osborne (CO), Gary Hawkes (GH)
<b>Apologies</b>	Dick Lewis (DL)

<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Dick Lewis (SONi)	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes and actions from previous meeting</b> Minutes from previous meeting agreed	
	<p><b>Actions from previous meeting</b></p> <p><u>Action 1:</u> Clusters - after Construction payment Security – <b>ACTION- NIE and the Utility Regulator to set meeting up this week</b></p> <p><u>Action 2:</u> Renewables Report – NIE are currently experiencing a high level of G83 applications coming in and further systems development is required to allow this info to be more readily available NIE expect to have systems updated in next 4-6 wks. <b>ACTION- Item to remain on agenda</b></p> <p><u>Action 3-</u> Generation Connection – FAQ information to be sent out:–completed</p> <p><u>Action 4:</u> G83 limits - decision on timeline to introduce new arrangements – NIE to communicate this widely to developers:- completed</p> <p><u>Action 5:</u> NIE confirmed Gap analysis to be undertaken to see what would be required to move from G59/1 - G59/2 and G83/1 – G83/1-1 G83/2:– NIE confirmed this work is still in progress. The Gap analysis for G59 has almost been completed - 1, 2 and /3- meter step change from G59/1 to /2. G59/3 will close gaps- will go from G59/1 to G59/3.</p> <p><b>ACTION - Next step is technical meetings to discuss protection requirements for policy</b></p> <p><b>ACTION - Legal aspect to be considered on whether NIE can adopt mainland docs or something NI specific.</b></p>	<p><b>NIE (GH)/ UR(JOB)</b></p> <p><b>NIE (AB)</b></p> <p><b>NIE(ST)</b></p> <p><b>NIE(ST)</b></p>

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	<p>Solar Power Representatives noted their view that as of 1 March although new G83 limits will come into alignment, still other aspects incompatible due to G83/2 still not in effect.. In mainland UK this all happened in tandem and as a result NI customers incur exceptional costs not incurred elsewhere in UK. Asked if there was anything to be done to bridge gap at interim</p> <p>NIE noted their view that in mainland UK this took a substantial period of time (around 18 months) and there will be intervening period of time until gap is closed. NIE agreed to produce a timetable to outline the anticipated process. Item to be incorporated into standing action</p> <p><b>ACTION- NIE to dimension work required in order to assess work content and possible timeline for this work</b></p> <p><u>Action 6:</u> All members to think of any questions they would want answered on NIE's FAQ's: - NIE has not received any responses as of yet. NIE actively looking at this. Action to be removed</p> <p><u>Action 7:</u> NIE to consider any potential to reduce G59 application and feasibility study turnaround times- overall NIE plan to inject additional resources to improve efficiency for the G59 application process and feasibility study timelines. .</p> <p>Solar Power Representatives indicated the overriding concern with SSG is length of time for G59 quotations and highlighted this to be a major stumbling block for many projects trying to get connected to the grid, particularly for those that only take a week to install yet it takes 90 days for a connection offer.</p> <p>NIRIG representatives welcomed NIE's plans to strengthen resources and the efforts to reduce the time for feasibility studies and recognised that all G59 applications go into the same queue regardless of their nature; however they indicated that efforts should be made to improve the feasibility study timeline.</p> <p>NIE indicated that it is required to maintain a level of consistency and any application in the G59 process will have to take account of full application queue. It is not possible to have different approaches for sub -categories. The steps being taken will provide an earlier view of high cost connections and reduce timelines for feasibility studies</p> <p>Solar Power representatives highlighted the volume of applications will surge at 1 March and asked if there was any major effort to reduce the 90 days.</p> <p>NIE confirmed there has been a major effort to accommodate a sharp escalation of applications across the board. NIE are therefore injecting more resources to enable Licence standards to be met.</p> <p>The Utility Regulator indicated that there are no plans to look at these License requirements during RP5 and this may be an item for consideration during RP6.</p> <p><u>Action 8:</u> DETI to raise with DARD matters relating to multiple supplies and the impact on developers acquiring grants</p> <p>DETI have engaged with DARD. The current EC requirement</p>	<p>NIE (ST)</p>

No	Item	Action
	<p>cannot be changed. Applications are given guidance notes setting out application and procedures. DARD accept there are issues but these are with the applicants - Action complete</p> <p>NIE asked that anything that can be done to encourage DARD to highlight this more to participants would be welcome</p> <p>UFU indicated that due to a dispute between Finance minister and DARD minister, no money is going into rural development funding in 2014. UFU would be want to ensure that any future grants would reflect issues with grid connection and have advocated soft funding (Storage solutions)</p> <p><b>ACTION - If DARD are going to be consulting on matters relating to multiple supplies again then DETI to bring it to RGLG for visibility</b></p> <p><u>Action 9:</u> Timeline 12 months put forward by Utility Regulator for completion of £2.3m investment will be challenging to achieve given procurement issues around tap changers and programming of substation works. NIE are to engage in the near term with the Competition Commission / UR to agree practicalities of this and what the timeline should be.</p> <p>NIE have considered the sites where 33kV funding has been approved and prioritised these based on the expected timelines for the customer connections to be built. NIE have also identified sites where investment could be moved from one substation to another to maximise released capacity for applicants- need UR agreement on this.</p> <p>The UR asked NIE to put forward a timeline to the group and to write to UR about extending time period. UR indicated they agreed in principle with switching work between substations but require proposals in writing from NIE</p> <p><b>ACTION - NIE to create timeline and agree with UR</b></p> <p><b>ACTION - NIE to write to UR concerning switching investment between substations</b></p> <p><u>Action 10:</u> NIE to update on progress of work to assess inverter size vs the PV panel capacity - action complete. This has also been included in a number of FAQs on NIE website</p> <p><u>Action 11:-</u> NIE agreed to confirm the date of the new G83 limit timeline – action complete.</p> <p><u>Action 12:</u> NIE to confirm G83 changes through website and mail shots- action complete</p> <p><u>Action 13:</u> Update on ANM to be provided in early 2014 to all industry stakeholders - NIE confirmed study currently underway with Smarter Grid Solutions and that an update would be provided to workshop on 6<sup>th</sup> February</p> <p><b>ACTION- NIE to provide update at workshop</b></p> <p><u>Action 14:</u> NIRIG and the Utility Regulator to write to DETI indicating they do not agree with DETI response - action complete - NIRIG has written to DETI – further meeting to be arranged with</p>	<p>DETI(MH)</p> <p>NIE/UR</p> <p>NIE(AB)</p> <p>NIE(MA)</p>

No	Item	Action
	<p>NIRIG/NIE/DETI</p> <p><u>Action 15:</u> Rebate issues- NIE, UR &amp; NIRIG to agree scope of potential agreement on this issue and revert to DETI with an agreed plan.</p> <p><u>Action 16:</u> UFU (Chris Osborne) to be included on circulation list - complete</p>	
3	<p><b>Renewables Integration Status report</b></p> <p>NIE confirmed it has provided any changes to report to UR for consideration.</p> <p>UR feel this is a live document - if anyone feels there is improvement required when this is visible please feed back to UR</p>	ALL
4	<p><b>SONI Annual Constraint Information</b></p> <p>SONI confirmed that work underway is currently underway on this and they hope to have results within 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter.</p> <p>NIRIG raised questions about the Generator Output Reduction Consultation. SONI indicated they were not aware of another consultation</p> <p><b>ACTION- SONI to check the generator output reduction consultation- (GOR)</b></p>	SONI
5	<p><b>Off Shore Consultation- Next Steps Paper</b></p> <p>The UR and NIE have received a number of communications about this paper. The UR advised that it intended to provide a clarification note by the end of the week. There was considerable discussion around this topic and, in particular, references in the UR document around the need for project planning permission as part of connection applications.</p> <p>UR highlighted they are a dispute body and therefore has no input on the processes NIE has put in place. However the UR stated that they have no issue with the NIE / SONI requirement for planning permission as a pre-requisite to applying for connection. (TH noted that due to her previous role within NIE she would be deemed to be conflicted around the issue and therefore would not be part of any UR dispute team looking at this if a challenge was brought)</p> <p>NIE reaffirmed the policies in place are well founded. NIE have a well established generation queue which is critical to managing connections. SONI/ NIE recently consulted upon FAQ allocation in N Ireland and connection processes and it was generally accepted that project Planning Permission was a pre-requisite for on shore for a connection application to either NIE or SONI.</p> <p>NIE noted is has been inundated with inquiries to make payments in advance of planning approvals and that there is the potential to cause a logistical nightmare if the situation is not clarified very quickly. NIE noted clearly that there is no change to current process and planning will remain a prerequisite before application.</p> <p>NIRIG confirmed that the industry remains supportive of the requirement for planning permission. This mechanism ensures the reservation of grid capacity for bona fide schemes. NIRIG</p>	



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	<p>NIRIG confirmed they have written to the department on this.</p> <p>NIRIG suggested that it would be useful for NIRIG to sit down with NIE. This engagement to act as an enabler for NIE and UR to go back to DETI with well bounded questions.</p> <p><b>ACTION- NIE &amp; NIRIG to agree scope of potential agreement on this issue and revert to DETI with an agreed plan. UR happy to attend any meeting if required but would not formally agree scope</b></p>	<b>UR/NIE/NIRIG</b>
7	<p><b>Contestability Arrangements</b></p> <p>UR have forward work plan around this out in draft. Any comments should be sent to UR</p> <p>NIRIG indicated they would respond as they have issue regarding it particularly mentioning 'distribution'. NIRIG also volunteered to send list of UK docs already in place to UR. UR will consult on strategic document to include timeline.</p>	
8	<p><b>Small Scale Generation</b></p> <p><u>Industry Workshop</u></p> <p>NIE outlined plan to engage industry stakeholders on 6th February with NIRIG. The workshop will provide an update on progress with the Smart study, conditional offers and the increasing significance of G83 issues</p> <p><u>Conditional Offers</u></p> <p>In relation to Conditional Offers: NIE have issued c40 letters to customers removing the conditional element of connection offer and formally requesting deposit so they can formally take position in queue. c90% of these are expected to accept the Offers. NIE have given 30 day period to pay the deposit and will update the next meeting re: the number that have successfully converted to non-conditional offers.</p> <p>NIE indicated the levels of applications for highly red areas on the Heat Map is low – however there are still a number in the queue who have conditional offers which will not change to non-conditional in the near term. NIRIG asked if there was a timeline to resolve this. NIE indicated that the entire issue of 33kV investments is part of and will need to wait on the outcome of the CC process.</p> <p>NIE is currently concentrating on those that it can process outside the CC process. Some substations can be resolved quite quickly but might not be included in assessments to UR so far. NIE also indicated that more substations will require reinforcement and they will need to assess requirements for additional lower level approvals.. NIE to provide an update on this at workshop on 6th Feb</p> <p>UFU asked that at the workshop on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb and also at the DARD workshop on 25th Feb that NIE put this matter on the Agenda for highlighting purposes.</p>	

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	<p>NIE explained they have recently attended local council events to highlight the seriousness of situation. At the DARD event there will be an update to this. NIE engages with CAFRE / DARD 2/3 weeks before events to discuss agenda items. NIE are happy for any RGLG members to highlight items to bring to agenda</p> <p><b>ACTION- NIE to update on this at next meeting</b></p> <p><b>Study into smart ANM options</b></p> <p>NIE confirmed the study currently underway and that NIE is still in process of working through data exchanges and analysis. The 6<sup>th</sup> Feb workshop will be updated on outputs from this study</p>	<b>NIE</b>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>None</p>	
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Date for next meetings</b></p> <p>Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 10.00am</p> <p>Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 10.00 am</p>	



## Summary of Actions

<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Action Description</b>	<b>To be Actioned by</b>
<b>1</b>	Clusters - after Construction payment Security: NIE and the Utility Regulator to set meeting up this week	<b>NIE (GH)/ UR(JOB)</b>
<b>2</b>	Renewables Report: Item to remain on agenda –NIE expects to have systems updated in next 4-6 wks.	<b>NIE (AB)</b>
<b>3</b>	G59 and G83 Changes: Next step is technical meetings to discuss protection requirements for policy	<b>NIE(ST)</b>
<b>4</b>	G59 and G83 Changes: Legal aspect to be considered on whether NIE can adopt mainland docs or something NI specific.	<b>NIE(ST)</b>
<b>5</b>	G59 and G83 Changes: NIE to dimension work required in order to assess work content and possible timeline for this work	<b>NIE</b>
<b>6</b>	Multiple Supplies: If DARD are going to be consulting on matters relating to multiple supplies again then DETI to bring it to RGLG for visibility	<b>DETI</b>
<b>7</b>	33kV Investment Tap Changers: NIE to create a timeline for procurement of tap changers and work on 33kV network and agree with UR	<b>NIE/UR</b>
<b>8</b>	33kV Investment Prioritisation: NIE to write to UR concerning switching investment between substations	<b>NIE</b>
<b>9</b>	NIE to provide update on ANM study at workshop on 6 <sup>th</sup> February	<b>NIE(MA)</b>
<b>10</b>	Annual Constraints: SONI to check the generator output reduction consultation - (GOR)	<b>SONI</b>
<b>11</b>	Rules for Queue Entry Date: SONI to confirm to UR that entry date to SONI listing for FAQ allocation is based on Connection Application date.	<b>SONI</b>
<b>12</b>	Clarification of UR Next Steps Paper: NIE to explore with UR on a view of current arrangements and clarification notes	<b>NIE</b>
<b>13</b>	Clarification of UR Next Steps Paper: UR to provide clarification note on Next Steps Paper	<b>UR</b>
<b>14</b>	SONI Consultation on Next Steps Paper: SONI to provide timetable for consultation	<b>SONI</b>
<b>15</b>	Rebate Policy: NIE UR & NIRIG to agree scope of potential agreement on this issue and revert to DETI with an agreed plan.	<b>NIE, UR, NIRIG</b>
<b>16</b>	NIE to update on conditional offers converted to non-conditional offers and the % of acceptances at next meeting	<b>NIE</b>