

# Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group

Contestability in Connections - NIAUR workshop

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# Overview - NIRIG

The Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group (NIRIG) is a joint collaboration between the Irish Wind Energy Association and RenewableUK. NIRIG represents the views of the large and small scale renewable electricity industry in Northern Ireland, providing a conduit for knowledge exchange, policy development support and consensus on best practice between all stakeholders in renewable electricity.

NIRIG members have developed, built or own more than 80% of all renewable energy generation in Northern Ireland and hold all current Crown Estate exclusivity agreements for lease for marine and offshore wind development

# Contestability - obligations

The principal objective of NIAUR in carrying out its electricity related functions is:

- to protect the interests of consumers of electricity supplied by authorised suppliers, wherever appropriate by **promoting effective competition** between persons engaged in, or in commercial activities connected with, the generation, transmission, distribution or supply of electricity.

NIRIG believes that the rapid delivery of contestability will help fulfil its principle function of promoting effective competition. In order to deliver by Q2 2015:

- Clear timetables **and**
- Appropriate resourcing for all key stakeholders will be required

NIE and SONI must develop clear uniform specifications and standards and contestable connection procedures in tandem with the regulatory call for evidence and consultation process.

# Contestability - Experience

Existing templates already exist in RoI and GB

- where these are relevant, useful and/or transferable, they should be used.

The experience and expertise of DNOs and TSOs elsewhere should be leveraged:

- this includes templates for procedures and standards which already exist
- ESNB prepared an 'internal lessons learned' report after introducing contestability– such lessons would be invaluable!

NIRIG members have experience in delivering contested assets in both NI and RoI e.g.:

*“There were significant teething problems when contestability was first introduced. As already mentioned, the specs were not prepared in parallel with the policy which delayed implementation”.*

*“there were issues with the specs where both distribution and transmission assets were involved in the same station. The TSO and DSO specs didn't fully align and this caused quite a few issues”*

Leveraging experiences at an early stage from elsewhere in GB and RoI, as well as from industry will increase the likelihood of successful delivery

# Contestability - priorities

- Contestability of connection assets should be prioritised (up to and including 275kV).
- We believe that establishing an a la carte menu of works that are open to contestability will deliver far greater flexibility and benefits than prioritising one particular technology or scale of project over another.
- The contesting of shared assets should be an option.

Both NIE and SONI must commit adequate resources to ensure the full benefits of contestability (including improved timelines)  
This includes the resources to modify connection offers, prepare functional specifications, review designs and carry out on-site inspections etc.

# Contestability - delivery

- The most effective way to deliver contestability is to form a NIAUR-led workgroup
- This group should comprise SONI, NIE and industry and leverage the considerable experience of all stakeholders.
- The group should also ensure liaison with NIE's Project 40
- The delivery of contestability along with the significant body of work contained under Project 40 will require appropriate and additional resourcing.

**NIRIG is committed to supporting the expedited delivery of contestability**