

Robin McCormick  
SONI LTD  
Castlereagh House  
12 Manse Road  
Belfast  
BT6 9RT

27<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Our Ref – NET/E/TH/30

Dear Robin,

**RE: Direction under Condition 16 of SONI Transmission Licence  
ERE Developments Limited (ERE) – Lisahally Biomass Plant  
Derogation Request from SONI Limited (SONI) Grid Code Conditions  
CC.S1.2.3.3 and CC.S1.2.3.4**

**Whereas:**

- (A) SONI Limited (**the Licensee**) holds an electricity transmission licence (**the Licence**) granted to it on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007.
- (B) The Licensee is authorised to participate in the transmission of electricity for the purpose of giving a supply to any premises or enabling a supply to be so given.
- (C) The Grid Code is required to be prepared by SONI, approved by the Utility Regulator (**the UR**) and applied by SONI to permit the development, maintenance and operation of an efficient, co-ordinated and economical Transmission System.
- (D) Paragraph 1 of Condition 16 of the Licence requires the licensee to comply with the provisions of the Grid Code insofar as applicable to it. Paragraph 6 of Condition 16 specifies the content of the Grid Code including: connection conditions; operating code; planning code; a set of scheduling and dispatch codes and a metering code.
- (E) Paragraph 12 of Condition 16 of the Licence provides that the UR may issue directions (after consultation with the licensee), relieving the licensee of its obligations to implement or comply with, or to enforce against any other person any provision of, the Grid Code in respect of such parts of the Transmission system to such extent as may be specified in the directions.
- (F) On 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017, ERE submitted a document (**the derogation request**) to the UR requesting lifetime derogations from two requirements of the SONI Grid Code in relation to Lisahally Power Station. On 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018 ERE

submitted an updated derogation request to correct a numbering anomaly. The Grid Code requirements which ERE requested to derogate from are as follows:-

**CC.S1.2.3.3**

*A Generating Unit must be capable of remaining Synchronised to the NI System at an Output which is no greater than the lower of 80 MW or 40% of maximum continuous rating.*

**CC.S1.2.3.4**

*Start-Up and Ramp Rates*

*(a) A Generating Unit must be capable of Start-Up:*

- (i) from cold within 14 hours;*
- (ii) from warm within 5 hours;*
- (iii) from hot within 3 hours.*

*The block Load on synchronising must be no greater than 40 MW.*

*(b) A Generating Unit which is in a hot condition must be capable of ramping up from part-load pursuant to a Dispatch instruction at a rate of at least 3% of MCR per minute.*

*(c) A Generating Unit must be capable of de-loading at a rate of at least 3% of MCR per minute.*

(G) In its consideration of the derogation request, the UR has consulted with SONI, ERE, NIE Networks, and has appointed Consultants to produce a technical assessment (enclosed). Having reviewed all relevant information and considered the specific and unique circumstances of this case, the UR now gives the following Direction:-

**Direction:**

1. Pursuant to its power under paragraph 12 of Condition 16 of the Licence, the UR directs that the Licensee:-
  - a. is relieved of its obligations under Condition 16 of the Licence Document to implement, comply with and enforce, in relation to Lisahally Power Station, Section CC.S1.2.3.3 of the SONI Grid Code. Lisahally Power Station must comply with the following requirement:-  
"A Generating Unit must be capable of remaining Synchronised to the NI System at an output which is no greater than 70% of maximum continuous rating."
  - b. is relieved of its obligations under Condition 16 of the Licence Document to implement, comply with and enforce, in relation to Lisahally Power Station, Section CC.S1.2.3.4 of the SONI Grid Code.

Lisahally Power Station must comply with a ramping up/de-loading rate of 2.4 MW/h.

2. The following conditions shall apply:

- This Direction applies from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 until 30<sup>th</sup> November 2028.
- This Direction relates solely to Lisahally Power Station and does not set a precedent for future derogations.

**Reasons for this decision**

A number of factors have informed this decision, which include:-

- That the design of biomass power plants of this type would not usually allow the plant to be controlled to the extent required by the Grid Code (40% maximum continuous rating (MCR)) and therefore some form of derogation would be expected.
- The UR does not consider that sufficient evidence has been provided to justify the request to amend the derogation parameter for MCR to 100%.
- Based on the evidence presented, it is considered reasonable to maintain the parameters granted in the May 2015 Direction (70% MCR, 2.4MW/h ramp rate) unchanged.
- The UR does not consider there are strong enough grounds in this case to issue a derogation which extends to the lifetime of the plant. In reaching this conclusion, comments from SONI have been taken into account.
- The ten year time limit will allow for the emergence of new technologies which may enable this plant to meet the required Grid Code parameters and the UR will encourage ERE to explore this.

The UR wishes to thank SONI for its cooperation in the assessment of the derogation request.

Signed .....

**Name: Tanya Hedley**

**Authorised by and on behalf of the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation**