

# ENA Network Innovation Competition (NIC) Call for Ideas 2019/2020

\*Required

## 1. Email address \*

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## Introduction

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Innovation is a key element of the existing RIIO (Revenue = Incentives + Innovation + Outputs) price control mechanism. One of the principal processes to encourage innovation in the energy industry is through an annual competition for funding known as the Network Innovation Competition (NIC), which is provided to Networks by the regulator, Ofgem. More information about how the NIC funding mechanism fits into the wider energy innovation landscape can be found in the EIC and Energy System Catapults 'A guide to Funding'.

The Gas and Electricity Networks in Great Britain (GB) have committed to working closely together to ensure the benefits of new technologies and processes are realised across the whole energy system. Our goal is to develop high-quality innovation projects that deliver value for money for customers, and we want to work with other innovators in the energy industry to help us achieve this. As such, we are pleased to launch our latest Network Innovation Competition (NIC) Call for Ideas and invite you to put forward your innovative project proposals. We want to hear about new, innovative and low carbon solutions to the priority areas that we have identified in this Call us so we can work with you to take them forward and trial them on the networks.

## The opportunity

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The NIC is an annual opportunity for gas and electricity network companies to compete for funding for the development and demonstration of new technologies and new operating and commercial arrangements. Funding will be provided for the best innovation projects which help the network operators understand what they need to do to facilitate innovation as GB moves to a low carbon economy. Up to £20 million is available through the gas NIC, and up to £70 million for the electricity NIC. For whole energy system projects, the allocation of funding will depend on the expected benefits of the project.

We strongly value your ideas and to demonstrate our commitment to this call for ideas, the gas and electricity networks will support the highest scoring applicants and work with them to develop their proposals into submissions to the Ofgem competition.

## Requirements

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Before submitting an idea you should ensure it complies with the Gas NIC Governance Document and/or Electricity NIC Governance Document and consider whether it:

- Addresses relevant industry challenges within required time frames
- Stimulates a low carbon energy sector and/or delivers environmental benefits
- Demonstrates a robust methodology
- Provides value for money for customers
- Generates knowledge that can be shared
- Is innovative (i.e. not business as usual or delivered elsewhere)
- Has broad industry involvement and/or funding

## The Voice of the Networks

All applicants should carry out a review of existing and completed innovation projects (including those on the Smarter Networks Portal) to ensure the proposed project is genuinely innovative and builds on any previous learning.

By nature, the competition is typically suited to large-scale long-duration projects i.e. over £2M budget running for two or more years. While this call is directly focused on project ideas for the NIC, third parties looking to work with the networks on smaller projects can submit these proposals on ENA's Network Innovation Collaboration Portal.

In line with the NIC and to reflect the project bid process within the wider industry there is no mechanism to reclaim any costs associated with the preparation of a NIC bid. Please be aware that if your idea is selected to proceed through to the Ofgem NIC submission process you will be required to fund your own bid costs. As part of the requirement to demonstrate value for money for customers in project delivery as a named partner, you will have to contribute a portion of your costs as cash or benefit in kind. Typically this should be excess of 10% of your portion of the project costs, with higher proportions if your return from a successful project is higher.

Please note that in previous years Ofgem has stated that the NIC funding should not be used to pay for electricity storage assets or electricity/gas generation. As such, projects involving significant expense in these areas should indicate where this element of their funding is coming from.

## Timeline

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Ideas should be submitted using the [Google Form](#) by 17:00 on Friday the 8 November.

Call Opens: 16 September 2019  
Webinar: 10:00 25 September 2019  
Call Closed: 17:00 8 November 2019

Proposals shortlisted: 26 November 2019  
Pitch to Networks: 3-5 December 2019  
Decision announced: 20 December 2019

## Get in touch

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More information about the call is available here: <https://www.niccollaborationportal.org/>

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please contact [nic@energynetworks.org](mailto:nic@energynetworks.org).

## Useful links

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- ENA NIC Opening Webinar: <http://bit.ly/ENA-NIC-Webinar>
- ENA NIC Call for Ideas Guidance document: <http://bit.ly/ENA-NIC-Guidance1>
- ENA NIC Call for Ideas Question PDF (reference only): <http://bit.ly/ENA-NIC-Question>
- The EIC & EIC A guide to Funding: <http://bit.ly/ESC-EIC-A-guide-tofunding>
- Gas NIC Governance Document: <http://bit.ly/GasNICGovernance>
- Electricity NIC Governance Document: <http://bit.ly/ElectricityNICGovernance>
- Smarter Networks Portal: <https://www.smarternetworks.org/>
- Network Innovation Collaboration Portal: <http://www.niccollaborationportal.org/>
- Gas Network Innovation Strategy: <http://bit.ly/ENA-GasNetworkInnovationStrategy>
- Electricity Network Innovation Strategy: <http://bit.ly/ENA-ElectricityNetworkInnovationStrategy>
- ENA NIC Call for Ideas 2019 Google Form: <http://bit.ly/ENANIC-Call-for-Ideas-2019>

## The Voice of the Networks

### Contact Details

2. **Contact Name \***

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3. **Organisation \***

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4. **Phone Number \***

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### Focus areas

The networks are interested in ideas which address the challenges and opportunities identified in the Gas Network Innovation Strategy and Electricity Network Innovation Strategy as well as the whole energy system areas identified below. However, we welcome all innovative ideas provided they meet the stated governance and criteria.

#### Whole Energy Systems

- Planning and Forecasting
- Pricing and Settlement
- Network Resilience
- Communications and Data Management
- Decarbonisation of Heat
- Energy Flexibility
- Community Energy
- Customers in Vulnerable Situations

Gas Network Innovation Strategy: <http://bit.ly/ENA-GasNetworkInnovationStrategy>

Electricity Network Innovation Strategy: <http://bit.ly/ENA-ElectricityNetworkInnovationStrategy>

5. **Please select which sector your project concerns \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Gas *Skip to question 6.*
- Electricity *Skip to question 9.*
- Whole energy system *Skip to question 12.*

### Gas focus areas

Gas Network Innovation Strategy: <http://bit.ly/ENA-GasNetworkInnovationStrategy>

6. **Is your project specific to gas distribution or transmission networks? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Transmission
- Distribution
- Both / unsure

## The Voice of the Networks

7. Please select which core theme your project proposal relates to \* Mark only one oval.

- Future of gas
- Safety and emergency
- Reliability and maintenance
- Repair
- Distribution mains replacement
- Environment and low carbon
- Security

8. Describe how your project proposal helps networks address challenges/exploit opportunities within the theme selected. [200 word max] \*

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Skip to question 15.

## Electricity focus areas

Electricity Network Innovation Strategy: <http://bit.ly/ENA-ElectricityNetworkInnovationStrategy>

9. Is your project specific to electricity distribution or transmission networks? \* Mark only one oval.

- Transmission
- Distribution
- Both / unsure

10. Please select which core theme your project proposal relates to \* Mark only one oval.

- Network improvements and system operability
- Transition to low carbon future
- New technologies and commercial evolution
- Customer and stakeholder focus
- Safety, health and environment

## The Voice of the Networks

11. Describe how your project proposal helps networks address challenges/exploit opportunities within the theme selected. [200 word max] \*

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Skip to question 15.

## Whole energy system focus areas

12. Is your project specific to distribution or transmission networks? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Transmission
- Distribution
- Both / unsure

13. Please select which core theme your project proposal relates to \*

Mark only one oval.

- Planning and forecasting
- Pricing and Settlement
- Network Resilience
- Communications and Data Management
- Decarbonisation of Heat
- Energy Flexibility
- Community Energy
- Customers in Vulnerable Situations

14. Describe how your project proposal helps networks address challenges/exploit opportunities within the theme selected. [200 word max] \*

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Skip to question 15.

## The Voice of the Networks

### Location

Your innovation idea can apply to one or more of the gas and/or electricity networks or it can be location-specific. You are welcome to target specific networks if desired.

**15. Is your project proposal location specific? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**16. Please explain your response to the previous question. [50 word max] \***

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### NIC Governance Compliance

Gas NIC Governance Document <http://bit.ly/GasNICGovernance>

Electricity NIC Governance Document <http://bit.ly/ElectricityNICGovernance>

**17. Please confirm that you have read and fully understood the relevant NIC Governance Document(s)? \***

*Tick all that apply.*

- Tick to confirm

**18. A NIC Project must have the potential to have a direct impact on a Network Licensee's network or on the operations of the Great Britain (GB) System Operator and involve the development or demonstration of at least one of the following elements. Please select the one(s) that relate to your project idea. \* Tick all that apply.**

- A specific piece of new (i.e. unproven in GB) equipment (including control and/or communications systems and/or software)
- A specific novel arrangement or application of existing gas and/or electricity transmission and/or distribution equipment (including control and communications systems software)
- A specific novel operational practice directly related to the operation of the gas transportation and/or electricity Transmission System/Distribution System
- A specific novel commercial arrangement

## The Voice of the Networks

19. Please describe how your project meets the eligibility requirement selected above. Please note that proposals which do not comply with the NIC Governance will be dismissed. [200 word max] \*

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20. Please confirm that this project conforms to the default Intellectual Property arrangements set out in the NIC Governance Document. \*

*Tick all that apply.*

Tick to confirm

21. Please confirm that you have reviewed existing and completed innovation projects to ensure that the scope of your project proposal is unique? All NIA and NIC projects can be found here: <http://www.smarternetworks.org/> \*

*Tick all that apply.*

Tick to confirm

22. Please list any existing projects which relate to this proposal, and describe how the project is distinct from these? [300 word max] \*

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## Project Proposal

23. Proposal Title \*

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24. Executive summary of your proposal: Assume a non-technical audience and include the problem/opportunity addressed and the solution proposed. [150 word max] \*

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## The Voice of the Networks

**25. Indicative cost of your project proposal (£ Millions) \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- < £2M
- £2M - £5M
- £5M - £10M
- £10M - £15M
- > £15M

**26. Estimated Duration (years) \* *Mark only one oval.***

- < 1 year
- 1 - 2 years
- 2 - 3 years
- 3 - 4 years
- 4 - 5 years
- > 5 years

**Problem: Provide three key questions your project proposal looks to answer.**

**27. Question 1 of 3 [25 word max]\***

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**28. Question 2 of 3 [25 word max] \***

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**29. Question 3 of 3 [25 word max]\***

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## Project Proposal Details

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**30. Detail the proposed methodology and project stages to design, build and test the solution. [400 word max] \***

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**31. Describe the project outputs and deliverables. [300 word max] \***

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**32. Describe how the project is innovative and has an unproven business case, where the innovation risk is sufficiently high that it warrants a limited Demonstration Project to demonstrate its effectiveness. Please justify the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) at the start of the project, and what you expect it to be at the end of the project. [200 word max] \***

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**33. Describe how the project delivers value for money for electricity/gas customers; both network customers and the wider system. This section should include a cost-benefit analysis indicating the quantitative benefits that the project will deliver as well as what it could deliver if it was rolled out across GB. [400 word max] \***

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## The Voice of the Networks

**34. Describe how the project accelerates the networks' contribution towards net zero and any other wider societal benefits e.g. clean air, improved customer experience. Please quantify the carbon reduction and other benefits. [300 word max] \***

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**35. Describe how the project would be delivered including roles and responsibilities of any project partners, other sources of funding and external resources. This should explicitly state your contribution to the project, both financially and from a resource perspective. [300 word max] \***

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**36. Describe how the project creates knowledge that can be shared across energy networks in GB or creates opportunities for roll-out across a significant proportion of GB networks. [150 word max] \***

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**37. Any other comments or relevant information? [200 word max]**

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## The Voice of the Networks

### Terms and Conditions

Please review the following Terms and Conditions and indicate that you have read and understood them.

38. **Please confirm that you understand that ENA will share this proposal with all GB Networks, for the purposes of assessment and review; however, these proposals not be shared with any other third party without seeking explicit written permission. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

Tick to confirm

39. **Please confirm you understand that you are not guaranteed to receive any funding for the proposed project by participating in the Call for Ideas. \* Mark only one oval.**

Tick to confirm

40. **Please confirm you understand that if this proposal is successful, you will be expected to work with the Network(s) to develop the Initial Screening Proforma (ISP) submission to Ofgem. \* Mark only one oval.**

Tick to confirm

41. **Please confirm you understand that all costs associated with the ENA NIC Call for Ideas and if successful, submission of the NIC bid to Ofgem, will be borne by the individual parties responsible for generating those costs while preparing the bids. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

Tick to confirm

A copy of your responses will be emailed to the address that you provided

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