

Introduction and background to the Open Networks Project

Launched in January 2017, ENA's Open Networks Project is laying the foundations of a smart, flexible energy system in Great Britain and informing future developments in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Through the work over the years, the project has introduced real momentum into the transition to Distribution System Operation and has set out a clear least regrets pathway and the actions required to deliver it.

Open Networks is playing a pivotal role in helping to support the move towards Net Zero. We will build on existing successes and drive forward change that will improve transparency, boost new flexibility markets, and secure the supply of clean, low-carbon energy. ENA's Open Networks Project is key to enabling the delivery of Net Zero by:

- a) Opening local flexibility markets to demand response, renewable energy and new low-carbon Technology, and removing barriers to participation
- b) Providing opportunities for flexible resources to connect to our networks faster
- c) Opening data to allow flexible resources to identify the best locations to invest
- d) Delivering efficiencies between the network companies to plan and operate secure, efficient networks

The project is delivering change at pace, driving key areas for convergence and standardisation, providing better visibility of data, and working across whole systems to build an energy system that leaves nobody behind. The project will continue to maintain an implementation focus and through project governance the network companies are committed to delivering these outcomes. We will continue to provide visibility to industry on how these outcomes are being implemented by individual network companies through our [DSO Implementation Plan](#).

In order to facilitate open debate and discussion across the industry, all outputs from the project are being published on ENA's website¹ alongside annual reports which summarise progress and achievements.

This 2021 Workplan consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to seek views from stakeholders on our 2021 workplan in order for us to re-prioritise or adapt our work accordingly.

For the first time, we are also issuing our [Flexibility Roadmap](#) as part of this consultation, which provides a broader view of work that we have delivered and are planning to deliver under Open Networks. It also signposts key industry developments that are feeding into our work. This roadmap has been progressed in discussion with BEIS and Ofgem to demonstrate the traceability of our development work to our Flexibility Commitments and Next Steps for Implementation as well as a consolidated list of key stakeholder issues that have been raised through our flexibility consultation and interactions with stakeholders.

¹ <https://www.energynetworks.org/creating-tomorrows-networks/open-networks>

We are very conscious of the draw on stakeholders' time with consultations, therefore we would like to make it as simple as possible for stakeholders to respond to and we will take any feedback and input from stakeholders at whatever level of detail you wish to submit. If you would like to send us a few bullets by email highlighting where you believe our priorities should lie, this is much preferable to no feedback. We do of course welcome any detailed comments from stakeholders on our scope, deliverables, priorities, and stakeholder engagement proposals set out in the PID.

Accordingly, we have one simple consultation request:

Please provide us with any comments on our 2021 Open Networks Project workplan set out in v1.0 of the [Project Initiation Document](#)

How to engage and respond

This consultation will be open for **six weeks** and closes on **1st March 2021**.

Everyone is welcome to respond in the format and level of detail they wish.

Please send your responses to the consultation by email to opennetworks@energynetworks.org.

We hosted a webinar on 4th February 2021 as a Questions and Answers session on the Project Initiation Document to help inform your input, with the [presentation slides](#) and [recording](#) both available to access.

It is our intention to review the responses to this consultation and publish our response to the feedback and any revisions to our PID by the **end of May 2021** on ENA's website. All stakeholder responses will be published unless explicitly marked as confidential.