Introduction to the Open Networks Project

Launched in January 2017, ENA's Open Networks Project is laying the foundations for a smart energy grid in Great Britain and informing future developments in Ireland and Northern Ireland. It is a key initiative to deliver Government policy set out in Ofgem and BEIS' Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan, the Government's Industrial Strategy and the Clean Growth Plan and the path to Net Zero.

The Open Networks Project has introduced real momentum into the development work required to enable GB's energy networks to:

- facilitate our customers' transition to a low-carbon future, including the electrification of heat and transport;
- address the challenges arising from the continued uptake of local generation;
- evolve to be market enablers for a whole range of new smart energy technologies;
- reduce costs to customers by contracting for flexibility services alongside investment in traditional and innovative network solutions, and
- play a key role in delivering overall lowest whole energy system costs for customers.

In order to facilitate open debate and discussion across the industry, all outputs from the project are being published on ENA's website[1] alongside annual reports that summarise progress and achievements.

Background to this Queue Management Consultation

The Open Networks Project has been developing improvements to existing queue management processes through 2018 and 2019 with extensive stakeholder engagement and consultation to date.

Queue management is the process by which network companies manage contracted connections against limited capacity and the policy enables network companies to:

- Take action on contracted projects if they are not progressing against agreed contract milestones;
- Progress projects up the queue where capacity is made available;
- Terminate connection offers where projects are not progressing in reasonable timescales and therefore delaying the connection of other customers in the queue; and
- Utilise flexible resources in connection queues to better utilise the available capacity.

A consultation was issued in 2018 to provide stakeholders with a desktop review of network companies' approach to queue management and seek views on the direction of travel for 2019.

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[1] http://www.energynetworks.org/electricity/futures/open-networks-project

The majority of respondents were supportive of the Open Networks Project working to develop queue management policy. In addition, there was strong support across generation stakeholders for the use of ENA milestones that were developed by the DER Connections Steering Group, and that if any changes were to be made to these milestones they should be well justified.

Further information on the 2018 consultation can be found at:

- [Interactivity and Queue Management consultation document](#)
- [Response to Queue Management feedback](#)

A second consultation was issued in 2019 with the purpose of seeking feedback on more detailed proposals on how queue management could work and how to develop an implementation plan for the Queue Management policy by the end of 2019.

The key messages from the 2019 consultation were:

- Support for the principle of queue management and broad support for the proposals set out
- Support for the proposal to promote flexibility in the connection queue where it frees capacity for others (action 1.6 of Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan)
- Some concerns raised on the detail of the policy, particularly around the risk of customers being penalised on prescriptive time-lapsed application of milestones for issues out-with their control

Further information on the 2019 consultation together with the Open Networks Project response can be found at:

- [Interactivity and Queue Management consultation document](#)
- [Response document](#)

This 2020 Queue Management User Guide Consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to seek comments from stakeholders on the drafting of the User Guide which is based on the conclusions of consultations to date and our 'minded to' policy standard to be applied across all GB network companies. It is not intended to re-open the policy standard and principles previously set out. It is intended to seek comments where these principles have not been accurately reflected in the drafting of the processes set out in the User Guide. It is intended that the outcome of this consultation will be used to update the User Guide in Q4 of 2020 when it will be published as a baseline guide.

The two main components to the queue management policy in respect of moving projects in a connection queue or terminating projects are:

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- Milestones[2] – these form the agreed benchmarks by which network companies and their customers can measure and track the progress of a project towards a contracted connection date. They were developed with Distributed Generator (DG) stakeholders on the Energy Network Association's (ENA's) DG and DNO Steering Group.
- Tolerance – this introduces a mechanism to establish a level of flexibility to queue management. Any delays against Milestones are measured through a project's development and delivery. If the cumulative delay against milestones exceeds defined Tolerances then the project can be moved in the queue, or have its connection offer terminated, to allow other projects to progress.

The proposed queue management process in the User Guide recognises that there are issues that customers cannot control and which may lead to project delay. With this in mind, delays occurring as a result of these issues would not contribute to the cumulative delay under the proposed queue management process.

The Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan placed an action on network companies to manage network connections more effectively for flexible assets such as storage that can bring wider system benefits.

Queue Management changes described in the User Guide can result in flexible resources being promoted in connection queue in order to delay or offset the need for reinforcement and better utilise available capacity.

How to engage and respond

We welcome feedback on the drafting of the Queue Management User Guide. This can be found at:

- [Queue Management User Guide April 2020](#)

This consultation will be open for eight weeks and closes on 24th June 2020.

Everyone is welcome to respond at whatever level of detail or in whatever format they wish.

Please provide comments on the drafting by email to opennetworks@energynetworks.org.

It is our intention to review the responses to this consultation and publish our response to the feedback and any revisions to our User Guide on ENA's website. All stakeholder responses will be published unless explicitly marked as confidential.

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2 [Fair & Effective Management of DNO Connection Queues: Progression Milestones Best Practice Guide (2016)](#)