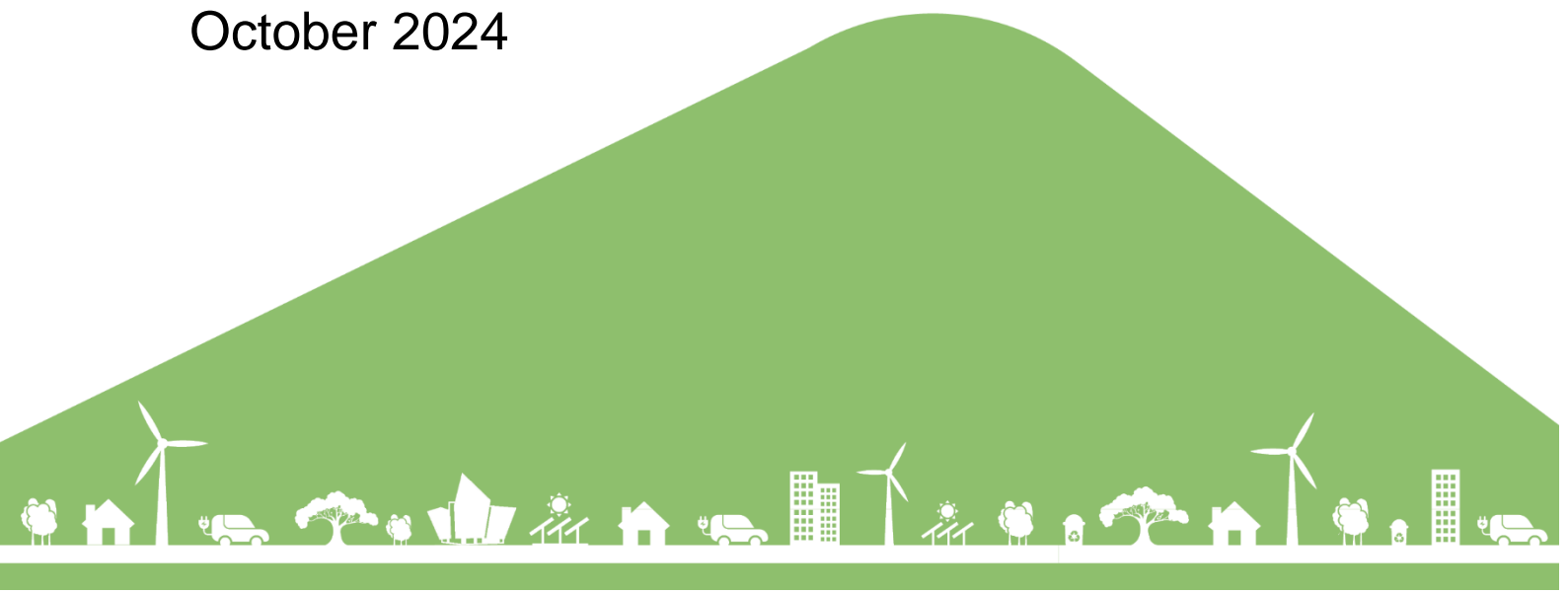


# Consultation on Proposed Licence Modifications

Notice under Article 14(2) of the Electricity  
(Northern Ireland) Order 1992 -Consultation  
on Proposed Licence Modifications regarding  
Digitalisation to NIE Networks Transmission,  
Distribution and SONI Electricity Licences

October 2024



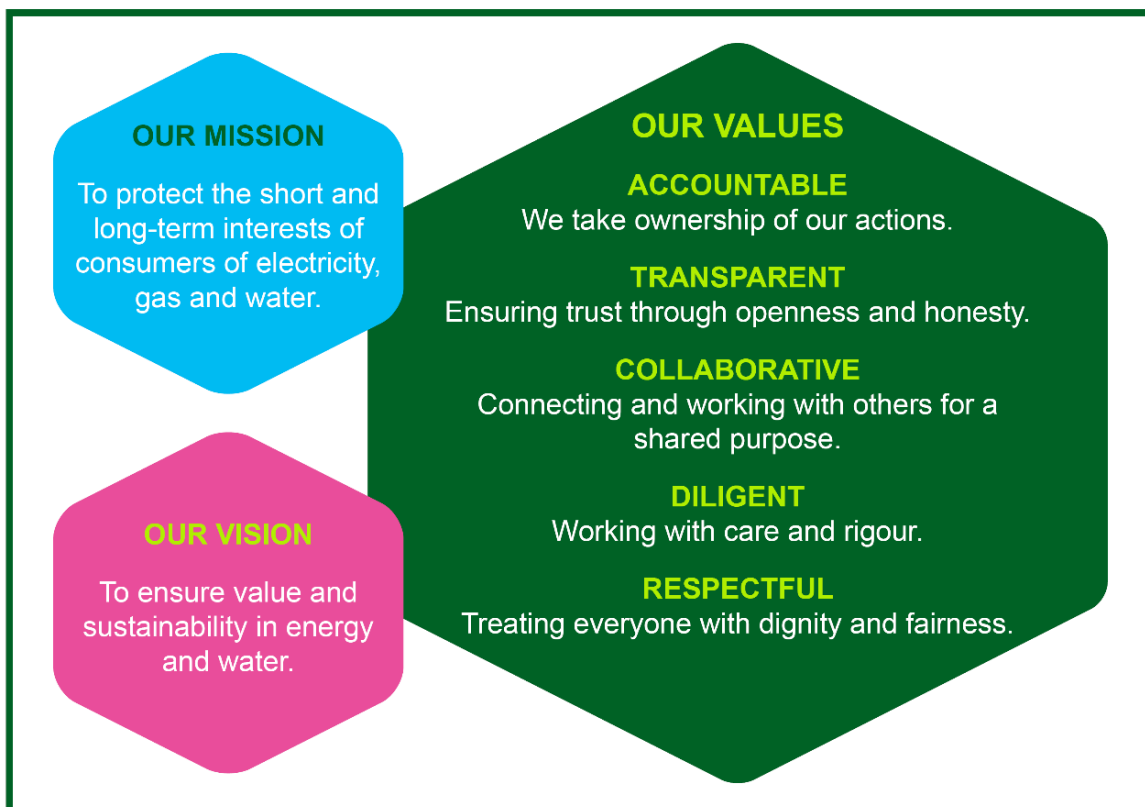
# About the Utility Regulator

The Utility Regulator is the independent non-ministerial government department responsible for regulating Northern Ireland’s electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries, to promote the short and long-term interests of consumers.

We are not a policy-making department of government, but we make sure that the energy and water utility industries in Northern Ireland are regulated and developed within ministerial policy as set out in our statutory duties.

We are governed by a Board of Directors and are accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly through financial and annual reporting obligations.

We are based at Queens House in the centre of Belfast. The Chief Executive and two Executive Directors lead teams in each of the main functional areas in the organisation: CEO Office; Price Controls; Networks and Energy Futures; and Markets and Consumer Protection. The staff team includes economists, engineers, accountants, utility specialists, legal advisors and administration professionals.



## Abstract

We are consulting on the draft licence conditions requiring NIE Networks and SONI to jointly develop, publish and periodically update digitalisation strategies and action plans. We seek to introduce these licence conditions to increase transparency on their plans to digitalise and share energy system data and support accountability to provide benefits for consumers in Northern Ireland.

## Audience

This document is likely to be of interest to SONI, NIE Networks, other stakeholders in the energy industry, government and other statutory bodies including consumer groups with an interest in the energy industry and digitalisation.

## Consumer impact

Our overall aim is to improve the digitalisation of the energy system and ensure better use of data to create benefits for consumers such as:

- a more efficiently planned, maintained, and operated energy system;
- greater visibility of, access to and ease of use of information and insight about the energy system; and
- improved integration between the energy system.

# Contents page

<b>Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Electricity Network Digitalisation.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. Licence Modifications to give effect to our Digitalisation Licence proposals .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3. Responding to this Consultation .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>4. Annexes.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Annex A - Proposed Licence Condition Procedure and Timetable.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Annex B - SONI Transmission System Operator Licence Condition.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Annex C - NIE Networks Transmission Licence Condition .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Annex D - NIE Networks Distribution System Licence Condition..</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Annex E - Article 14(2) Licence Modification Notice - SONI Transmission System Operator Licence Condition.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Annex F - Article 14(2) Licence Modification Notice - NIE Networks Transmission Licence Condition .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Annex G - Article 14(2) Licence Modification Notice - NIE Networks Distribution System Licence Condition .....</b>	<b>88</b>

## Glossary

NI	Northern Ireland
GB	Great Britain
NIE Networks	Northern Ireland Electricity Networks
SONI	System Operator for Northern Ireland
UR	Utility Regulator
DfE	Department for the Economy
Ofgem	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
DSAP	Digitalisation Strategy Action Plan
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act 2000
Electricity Order	The Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992
Energy Order	Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679

# Executive Summary

## What we are consulting on

This consultation outlines our proposals to modify NIE Networks' and SONI's licences to include a new condition which requires that they jointly develop, publish and periodically update a single Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan.

A Digitalisation Strategy should set out NIE Networks' and SONI's framework for digitalising and sharing data to benefit consumers which is aligned with stakeholders needs. The Action Plan should set out how NIE Networks and SONI will and are delivering against those strategic commitments to ensure the strategy is effectively met. The scope of this work concerns system data and not consumer held data.

The modifications will be reflected in three separate licence conditions (NIE Networks Distribution Licence - Condition 46, NIE Networks Transmission Licence - Condition 43 and SONI Transmission Licence – Condition 43) which will outline the various licensee obligations and form the basis for compliance.

The remainder of this section sets out why we are consulting before going into:

- **Section 1** provides an overview of the licence modifications. The section also asks a number of questions, which while not directly part of the licence modification consultation, we asked to further our understanding of the digitalisation of the electricity network in Northern Ireland.
- **Section 2** then sets out the proposed licence modifications reasons and effects.
- **Section 3** outlines how to respond to the consultation and the next steps.
- **Section 4** provides an overview of annexes which include the proposed licence modifications and the Article 14(2) notices.

Annex A also sets out our timetable for completing the licence modifications and the draft licence condition procedure. This is to help licensees and stakeholders understand what may be required of them, and when, as part of the licence modification process and once the licence modifications take effect.

## Why we are consulting

Industry is facing major challenges on the journey to net zero. Drivers of change include ambitious climate change targets, security of supply, accompanied with a fast pace of technological change and energy decentralisation. Decarbonisation must be delivered at least cost for the consumer.

As utility and energy systems become more complicated, access to robust data and digitalised services will become even more important to enable an effective energy transition change.

The Department for the Economy (DfE) has consulted on Digitalisation as part of its Design Considerations for a Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan.<sup>1</sup> It is developing policy on the energy system in Northern Ireland, and envisages closer co-operation between the DfE, UR and System Operators in the area digitalisation. We seek to support the Department's work and deliver good outcomes for consumers.

Energy system data held by NIE Networks and SONI can provide benefits for consumers as well as stakeholders and can be part of the regulated asset which is funded through consumer bills.

This means that we have a direct regulatory role to ensure that Northern Ireland consumers are protected and receive a fair share of the benefits from digitalisation. This could be in areas which NIE Networks and SONI can together positively influence such as:

- a more efficiently planned, maintained and operated energy system;
- greater visibility of, access to, and ease of use of information, as well as insight about the energy system; and
- improved integration between the parties.

We have already taken steps to support NIE Networks and SONI to digitalise effectively and welcome the progress to date. We welcome that NIE Networks and SONI are already developing their plans and working together to digitalise and open up their data to stakeholders.

We incentivise SONI as part of its Evaluative Performance Framework to encourage it to innovate. The framework explicitly encourages excellent performance in digitalisation through its assessment criteria.

We also determine the amount of revenue which NIE Networks collect, and which will be passed onto consumer bills as part of our RP7 draft determination<sup>2</sup>. As part of RP7, we have welcomed that NIE Networks are progressing work in this area but have concerns that elements of the plan, such as how it would benefit consumers, needed further development during the price control period. However, we now want to further support NIE Networks and SONI in developing their digitalisation planning to benefit consumers.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfe/smart-systems-and-flexibility-plan/>

<sup>2</sup> RP7 is the name for the periodic price control which sets the allowed revenue that NIE Networks can collect from its customers from 2025 to 2031

We consider that further regulation is necessary. Other regulators are also considering how to support effective digitalisation and so we consider that there are significant learnings we can take from other jurisdictions while tailoring for Northern Ireland. Feedback from our Autumn 2022 Digitalisation Stakeholder Workshop<sup>3</sup> also supported further regulatory intervention to support NIE Networks and SONI digitalisation planning.

Our objective is for NIE Networks and SONI to:

- further increase transparency and accessibility of their digitalisation initiatives and how they are sharing energy system data, in a way which provides demonstrable and deliverable benefits for consumers in Northern Ireland.
- be held further accountable so that they deliver continuous digitalisation improvements which deliver tangible benefits to consumers, and in doing so, prioritise the needs of their stakeholders.
- continue to seek further opportunities to work jointly together, and with other stakeholders, to develop and deliver their plans to meet the requirements of the energy transition

We, therefore, now propose modifying SONI's and NIE Networks' licences to support and build on our existing regulatory approach and meet our objectives above.

We thank NIE Networks, SONI and other stakeholders for their input to date and welcome further views on our more detailed proposals below.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.uregni.gov.uk/news-centre/invitation-workshop-data-and-digitalisation>



# 1. Electricity Network Digitalisation

## Approach to developing the proposed licence modifications

1.1 To develop and inform our emerging approach we undertook engagement to further our understanding of the issue and encourage an exchange of views from a diverse range of stakeholders. We held a collaborative kick-off stakeholder workshop in Autumn 2022 to discuss electricity network digitalisation. At the stakeholder workshop:

- DfE presented on how it sees digitalisation as a crucial enabler as part of its Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan.
- UR presented on its regulatory approach and the consumer interest.
- SONI and NIE Networks presented on their emerging plans.
- The Electricity Storage Company – presented on the challenges and opportunities from an industry perspective.

1.2 Attendees provided a range of varied and useful feedback. Some of the key areas of discussion were:

- ❖ **Opportunities** from digitalisation and data sharing linked to the energy transition which may benefit both consumers and stakeholders.<sup>4</sup>
- ❖ **Risks and challenges.** Stakeholders raised issues such as consumer protection (for example, tariffs and affordability for vulnerable, cyber security), data protection, digital inclusion, data standards and integration (for example, interoperability<sup>5</sup> to support coordination and integration across the system), and consumer education and data accessibility.
- ❖ **Regulatory approach.** Stakeholders discussed the balance of prescription and flexibility in a fast-moving environment; and that well-targeted licence obligations can protect consumers and provide certainty to investors but also should not act as a barrier to progress.

1.3 We have also reviewed other regulatory approaches from other jurisdictions to understand whether there are learnings we can apply in our approach. In

---

<sup>4</sup> For example, stakeholders discussed how digitalisation may enable the delivery of controllable grid flexibility services reducing the need to invest in grid infrastructure (which NI consumers pay for) to accommodate increased electrification.

<sup>5</sup> This relates to the ability of different systems or software to exchange and make use of information

particular, we have reviewed Ofgem’s approach.<sup>6</sup> Our approach takes learning from Ofgem’s concept, but we have tailored to ensure that our proposals are proportionate and appropriate for the circumstances in Northern Ireland.

- 1.4 In developing the licence conditions for consultation, we also shared initial drafts with SONI and NIE Networks, as the licence holders, to take account of any initial feedback which they may have had.

### **Key features of our licences modification proposal**

- 1.5 We propose to modify NIE Networks’ and SONI’s licences to include a new condition which requires that they jointly develop, publish and periodically update a single Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan, in order to meet our objectives. These joint documents will include different parts within each document to reflect that not all the content will necessarily apply to both companies.
- 1.6 All parties to a joint working arrangement will need to comply with Data Protection legislation including, but not limited to, the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (“GDPR”) and any national implementing laws, regulation(s) and secondary legislation as may transpose the GDPR into the domestic law of all or any part of the United Kingdom (including, without limitation, the Data Protection Act 2018), in each case as such law(s) may be replaced, supplemented, substituted or amended from time to time.
- 1.7 We envisage that the scope of the data would be energy system data (as opposed to consumer data) at this point. We encourage companies to consider best practice in other jurisdictions tailored to NI needs.

---

<sup>6</sup><https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/energy-policy-and-regulation/policy-and-regulatory-programmes/energy-data-and-digitalisation> and [Special Condition 2.11, pg 63, Special Conditions - ESO \(ofgem.gov.uk\)](#)

1.8 The table below provides an overview of the key features of our proposals, before we discuss these in more detail.

<b>Key themes and objectives</b>	<b>Overview of key features and/or requirements</b>
System Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIE Networks and SONI must <b>work together</b> to produce and deliver a single strategy and a single action plan (in a way which preserves their independent interests)</li> </ul>
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIE Networks and SONI must <b>publish</b> their strategy and action plan along with various other supporting requirements, in an accessible way.</li> </ul>
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIE Networks and SONI <b>must consult with stakeholders and take account of their views in developing the strategy.</b></li> <li>• UR has power to direct <b>changes to the strategy and the action plan</b> within a set time frame during the development phase.</li> <li>• NIE Networks and SONI must <b>adopt the strategy and action plan</b> within a set time frame.</li> <li>• NIE Networks and SONI must <b>update the action plan every year and update the strategy every two years. The Action Plan should report on progress made from the previous Action Plan.</b></li> <li>• UR has power to develop <b>Guidance</b> (non-binding) and <b>Instructions</b> (binding) if it considers necessary.</li> <li>• In developing their strategy and formulating their action plans, NIE Networks and SONI are required to take account of the <b>consumer interest, deliver consumer benefits which are aligned with stakeholder needs, and ensure digitalisation benefits are shared fairly with consumers.</b></li> </ul>

## **Accountability and transparency for consumers and stakeholders**

- 1.9 We are particularly concerned that, as the data and digitalisation in question is a regulated asset which consumers pay for, consumers should then benefit and be protected from any inappropriate use as the data becomes commercialised. We also want SONI and NIE Networks to prioritise the meeting of those stakeholder needs which will benefit energy consumers in Northern Ireland.
- 1.10 This means that we consider that stakeholder needs being aligned to consumers receiving a fair share of the benefits is an important principle to test both NIE Networks' and SONI's digitalisation investment.
- 1.11 We also consider that there should be a means within the licence for both UR and stakeholders to challenge and provide feedback to SONI and NIE Networks on their plans, to add further accountability. We have also introduced publication and accessibility requirements.
- 1.12 We have introduced the above thinking within the proposed licence condition mainly through our proposed Licence Definitions and certain procedural requirements.

## **System coordination**

- 1.13 Given that energy transition will require effective coordination, data and digitalisation is essential. Our licence modification proposals require NIE Networks and SONI to work and deliver jointly in this area. We see this as a key principle which can add value.
- 1.14 However, we also recognise that NIE Networks and SONI are independent of each other and play different roles within the NI electricity system. Accordingly, we have recognised this in licence modification proposals. This is reflected through 'best endeavours' drafting within the Digitalisation Strategy and Action plan Principal Obligations. The structural breakdown of the Digitalisation Strategy, in Part A Paragraph 3, also recognises that the Digitalisation Strategy should be essentially a single 'joint' document in different parts to reflect that not all the content will necessarily apply to both companies. A dispute resolution process has also been included to provide further clarity.
- 1.15 We consider that our proposal strikes a reasonable balance between the encouraging our coordination principle (which stakeholders support and is a key energy transition concept) and maintaining company independence.

## Flexibility and adaptability

- 1.16 Stakeholders have noted that flexibility will be required for NIE Networks and SONI to deliver in this area as digitalisation may be uncertain and fast paced, and that any burden on NIE Networks, SONI and stakeholders should be minimised as far as is necessary. We understand this.
- 1.17 We have attempted to ensure that the licence requirements and drafting are instructive but give NIE Networks and SONI sufficient space to develop their plans. We have also considered and tailored some of the timelines for completing requirements for proportionality purposes. For example, we are requiring that the Action Plan is updated every 12 months (rather than for example every 6 months like in GB).
- 1.18 We have also introduced a requirement which gives us an option to introduce Guidance and instructions if they are necessary but have not yet made this mandatory as we consider further work and engagement is required, including with DfE on its emerging Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan policy, to set out further expectations on this.
- 1.19 We welcome feedback from stakeholders on whether we have got the right balance.

## Consultation questions to further our understanding of energy system data and digitalisation.

- 1.20 We want to build our knowledge base so that we can effectively undertake our role and so we seek views to further our understanding of energy system data and digitalisation in Northern Ireland. While these questions are not directly part of the consultation on the licence modifications we would welcome stakeholder views on them:
- ❖ What digitalisation consumer benefits (including energy system data sharing) should and can be delivered over the following time frames a) today b) over the next 6 years and c) longer term to deliver net zero and related targets?
  - ❖ Are there best practice initiatives being delivered in other jurisdictions and industries which may be suitable for NI and if so, why?
  - ❖ How should consumers receive their fair share of the benefits?
  - ❖ How can we ensure that digitalisation delivers benefits for consumers as opposed to solely for market participants and shareholders?
  - ❖ How should NIE Networks and SONI be coordinating over these time frames to deliver these benefits?

- ❖ What data do NIE Networks and SONI need to share with different stakeholder types to support consumer benefits over these time frames? How should the data be shared to benefit consumers?
- ❖ What barriers prevent delivery for stakeholders and consumers?
- ❖ Are there any existing or developing standards in other parts of NI government or other NI industries with which the electricity network companies should harmonise or adopt?

## 2. Licence modifications to give effect to our Digitalisation proposals.

- 2.1 This section sets out our reasons and effects for the new licence condition that will give effect to our proposals for digitalisation.

### **Preparation of the Digitalisation Strategy**

- 2.2 This segment of Part A of the proposed condition makes provision for the licensees to prepare a single, joint Digitalisation Strategy.
- 2.3 The effect of these provisions will be that the licensees will have taken all reasonable steps to prepare a single, joint Digitalisation Strategy which:
- a. allows for separate sections so that not all parts of the strategy will necessarily apply to both NIE Networks and SONI thus recognising company independence.
  - b. ensures that the strategy content complies with and takes account of the Authority's Digitalisation Strategy and the Digitalisation Action Plan (DSAP) Instructions and Guidance respectively.
  - c. enables interested stakeholders to effectively input into the draft strategy within a period of not less than 42 days (3rd Requirement) from the publication of the draft; and ensures that the licensees will have taken account of stakeholder views in a careful and conscientious way.
  - d. provides an updated draft strategy with summarised stakeholder views and explained changes, publishes this in an accessible way to interested stakeholders, and gives the Authority a copy.
  - e. seeks the views of Authority on a version of the strategy (after d.) and updates this strategy to include changes that the Authority has considered necessary, should the Authority have any, within 28 days of giving the version to Authority (5th Requirement).
- 2.4 The reasons for proposing that the licensees prepare the Digitalisation strategy in this way is to:
- a. support the content of the strategy being structured so as to recognise company independence whilst supporting our system coordination objective.
  - b. bring accountability by clearly taking account of stakeholder views and UR considerations within appropriate time periods and meeting

the Authority views and expectations (in form of guidance and instructions)

- c. ensure the elements of the procedure are sufficiently transparent and accessible to stakeholders (including the Authority).

## **Adoption of the Digitalisation Strategy**

- 2.5 This segment of Part A of the new condition proposes that the licensees shall adopt and publish the joint Digitalisation Strategy.
- 2.6 The effect of these provisions, as proposed, will be that the licensees will adopt and publish a single joint Digitalisation Strategy which:
  - a. ensures that the strategy is adopted by no later than 31 March 2026 or an alternative date set by the Authority.
  - b. publishes the strategy in a manner accessible to interested parties.
- 2.7 The reasons for proposing that the licensees adopt and publish the Digitalisation Strategy in this way are:
  - a. that licensees are held accountable for delivering within a set timeframe but with flexibility to adopt and publish on an alternative date by the Authority.
  - b. that publication of the adopted strategy increases transparency and accessibility for stakeholders.

## **Maintenance of the Digitalisation Strategy**

- 2.8 This segment of Part A of the proposed condition requires the licensees to carry out transparent and periodic reviews of the strategy to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and is updated in line with changes in the electricity network and digitalisation environment, the Authority's instructions/ guidance and relevant stakeholder feedback.
- 2.9 The effect of these proposed provisions is to introduce a process for licensees to review, update and maintain an archive of the strategies. This requires the licensees to:
  - a. complete a review no later than two years following the adoption of the original strategy and carry out subsequent reviews every two years after completion of the preceding review.
  - b. prepare and publish a Review Paper that summarises progress and proposes changes with reasoned explanations where these are



deemed appropriate.

- c. allow interested parties to feed into the content of the Review Paper within a period of not less than 42 days from draft publication and ensure that the licensees have taken account of stakeholder views in a careful and conscientious way.
- d. comply with and take account of DSAP Instructions and Guidance respectively.
- e. prepare a summary of stakeholder representations to the Review Paper, explain proposed changes, publish this in an accessible way and give the Authority a copy.
- f. provide the Authority with an additional statement that identifies proposed changes or explains why no change to the strategy is appropriate at this time.
- g. update the strategy as directed by Authority and following a of 28-day review period (after receipt of both documents in e and f).
- h. publish an updated, post-review version of the strategy in an accessible manner after seeking both the Authority and stakeholder views.
- i. set up and maintain an accessible archive of all previously published versions of the strategy following the first review.

2.10 The reasons for proposing that the licensees maintain, review and archive the strategy are to:

- a. build accountability by monitoring progress at regular intervals. (every two years) and to ensure that the strategy content remains accurate, up to date and fit for purpose.
- b. bring accountability by clearly taking account of stakeholder views and UR considerations within appropriate time periods and meeting the Authority's views and expectations (in form of guidance and instructions)
- c. ensure the elements of the procedure are sufficiently transparent and accessible to stakeholders (including the Authority).

## **Disputes – Resolution by the Authority**

2.11 This section of Part A requires the Authority to adjudicate where the licensees have been unable to establish a common position.

- 2.12 The effect of this proposed condition is to introduce a process to help agree a single joint strategy by:
- a. resolving disputes in a timely manner following consideration of the proposals and the explanations submitted by both licensees to the Authority.
  - b. directing licensees on strategy content by determining whether to accept one of their preferred proposals or by identifying an alternative and appropriate approach.
  - c. ensuring that licensees work together when required and are in compliance with licensing requirements.
  - d. allowing additional time for the Authority to consider the relevant proposals and explanations in the case of a dispute. 28 days for an undisputed draft is increased to 56 days prior to Strategy adoption and following a review.
- 2.13 The reasons for this proposed condition are to introduce a process to deal with disputes and to:
- a. offer each licensee the opportunity to put forward their preferred proposal. The Authority will require statements from each licensee on both non-contentious and contentious matters. Additionally, a reasoned explanation will be required from both licensees to justify their preferred proposals and to allow the Authority to consider all the available evidence before making a decision.
  - b. increase accountability to stakeholders by ensuring that a fair process is in place to resolve disputes in both a timely and transparent manner.
  - c. provide clarity for licensees by outlining a dispute resolution process in the event that agreement cannot be reached on the Strategy.

### **Key Definition – Digitalisation Strategy**

- 2.14 This segment of Part A of the proposed licence condition provides a definition of the Digitalisation Strategy.
- 2.15 The effect of these provisions is to outline the overarching Digitalisation Strategy requirements for inclusion.
- 2.16 The reason is to clarify the intended purpose of the Digitalisation Strategy.

## Preparation of the Digitalisation Action Plan

- 2.17 This segment of Part B of the proposed condition makes provision for the licensees to prepare a single, joint Digitalisation Action Plan
- 2.18 The effect of these provisions will be that the licensees will have taken all reasonable steps to prepare, and so will have prepared, a joint Action Plan which:
- a. allows for separate sections so that not all sections will necessarily apply to both NIE Networks and SONI and thus recognising company independence.
  - b. ensures that the action plan content complies with and takes account of Authority's DSAP Instructions and Guidance respectively.
  - c. includes providing a draft of the plan and all the relevant supporting materials to the Authority and that any further explanations are made available on request.
  - d. further updates the draft plan within 42 days of having provided the draft copy to the Authority and includes any further instructions before finalising.
- 2.19 The reasons for proposing that the licensees prepare the Digitalisation Action Plan in this way is to:
- a. ensure that the content of the action plan is structured to recognise company independence whilst supporting our system coordination objective.
  - b. bring accountability by enabling the Authority to input, and then allow the licensees to take account, of the Authority's considerations within appropriate time periods and meeting the Authority's views and expectations (in form of guidance and instructions).

## Adoption of the Digitalisation Action Plan

- 2.20 This segment of Part B requires the licensees to adopt and publish a final version of the action plan.
- 2.21 The effect of these provisions will be that the licensees will adopt and publish a joint Digitalisation Action Plan which:
- a. is adopted by 30 September 2026 or a later date specified by the Authority within a reasonable and an agreed timescale.

- b. is published in a manner accessible to interested parties.

2.22 The reasons for proposing that the licensees adopt and publish the Digitalisation Action Plan in this way are:

- a. that licensees are held accountable for adoption within a set timeframe but with flexibility to be held to an alternative date by the Authority.
- b. that publication of the adopted strategy increases transparency and accessibility for stakeholders.

### **Maintenance of the Digitalisation Action Plan**

2.23 This segment of Part B requires the licensees to carry out periodic reviews of the action plan to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and is updated in line with the Authority's Instructions and Guidance.

2.24 The effect of these provisions is to introduce a process for licensees to review, update and maintain an archive of the action plans. This requires licensees to:

- a. undertake a review no later than one year following the adoption of the original action plan and carry out subsequent reviews every year after completion of the preceding review.
- b. ensure that the plan takes account of and complies with DSAP instructions and guidance respectively.
- c. prepare a paper for the Authority which comments on progress and sets out and explains any proposed changes.
- d. update the plan as directed by the Authority following a 28-day review period (after receipt of the document in c).
- e. publish an updated, post-review version of the action plan in an accessible manner after seeking the Authority's views.
- f. set up and maintain an accessible archive of all previously published versions of the action plans following the first review.

2.25 The reasons for proposing that licensees review, maintain and archive the Digitalisation Action Plans are to:

- a. build accountability into the process by monitoring progress at regular intervals (every year) and ensure that the strategy content remains accurate, up to date and fit for purpose.
- b. bring accountability by clearly taking account of Authority considerations within appropriate time periods and meeting Authority views and expectations (in form of guidance and instructions).
- c. further transparency by ensuring documentation is accessible and transparent to interested parties.

## **Disputes – Resolution by the Authority**

- 2.26 The provisions in paragraphs 34 to 36 of Part B require the Authority to adjudicate where the licensees have been unable to establish a common position on the action plan.
- 2.27 The effect of this proposed condition is to introduce a process to help agree a single joint action plan by:
- a. resolving disputes following careful consideration of the proposals and the explanations submitted by both licensees to the Authority.
  - b. directing licensees on action plan content by determining whether to accept one of their preferred proposals or by identifying an alternative appropriate approach.
  - c. ensuring that licensees work together when required and are in compliance with the licensing requirements.
  - d. allowing additional time for the Authority to consider the relevant proposals and explanations in the case of a dispute. 42 days for an undisputed draft is increased to 84 days prior to action plan adoption while 28 days is increased to 56 days following a disputed review.
- 2.28 The reasons for this proposed condition are to introduce a process to deal with disputes and to:
- a. offer each licensee the opportunity to put forward their preferred proposal. The Authority will require statements from each licensee on both non-contentious and contentious matters. Additionally, a reasoned explanation will be required from both licensees to justify their preferred proposals and to allow the Authority to carefully consider all the available evidence before making a decision.
  - b. increase accountability to stakeholders by ensuring that a fair process

is in place to resolve disputes in both a timely and transparent manner.

- c. provide clarity for licensees by outlining a dispute resolution process in the event that agreement cannot be reached on the action plan.

### **Key Definition – Digitalisation Action Plan**

- 2.29 This provides a definition of the Digitalisation Action Plan.
- 2.30 The effect of this provision is to outline the overarching requirements of the Digitalisation Action Plan which gives practical effect to the Digitalisation Strategy.
- 2.31 The reason is to clarify the intended purpose of the Digitalisation Action Plan.

### **The DSAP Instructions and Guidance**

- 2.32 This segment of Part C makes provision for the Authority to develop, consult on and amend guidance and instructions concerning the Digitalisation Strategy and the Digitalisation Action Plan (DSAP).
- 2.33 The reason for this is to allow the Authority flexibility to provide requirements and expectations concerning the Digitalisation and Action Plans over time.

### **Definitions**

- 2.34 This segment of Part D provides definitions of the key terms outlined in the licence modification.
- 2.35 The effect is to define the concepts which are particular and relevant to the licence modification.
- 2.36 The reasons for including key definitions are to provide clarity to licensees and stakeholders and to support licensees compliance with the licence condition.

### **Consultation Questions on the Proposed Licence Conditions**

- Do you agree with the proposed licence conditions?
- Do you have any recommendations for improvement? Please provide your rationale as to why.

## 3. Responding to this consultation

3.1 In this section we provide information on how to respond to the Consultation as well as next steps.

3.2 Responses to this consultation should be forwarded to reach UR on or before 5pm on 26 November 2024 and should be addressed to:

Fiona Gallen,  
Utility Regulator,  
Queens House,  
14 Queen Street,  
BELFAST,  
BT1 6ED

Our preference is that responses are submitted by email to:  
[dataanddigitalisation@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:dataanddigitalisation@uregni.gov.uk) and [fiona.gallen@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.gallen@uregni.gov.uk)

3.3 This document is available in accessible formats. Please contact: Fiona Gallen at the email address above in 3.2.

3.4 Your response may be made public by the Utility Regulator. If you do not want all or part of your response or name made public, please state this clearly in your response as 'CONFIDENTIAL'.

3.5 If you want other information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential.

3.6 Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)).

### Next Steps

3.5 Once all responses to this consultation have been received, UR will analyse these and based on the information received, finalise the licence modifications and publish them by January 2025. It is anticipated that the licence modifications will take effect by March/April 2025. The diagram at Table 1 below provides an overview of some of the key steps in the process required by the licence modification itself.

**Table 1: Indicative timelines for next steps**

Next Steps	Proposed Date
Notice of proposal to modify Distribution and Transmission licences published	October 2024
Statutory consultation closes	November 2024
Notice of decision to modify Distribution and Transmission licences published	January/February 2025
Licence modification effective date	March/April 2025

- 3.6 A more detailed timetable of the procedure required by the licence condition can be found in Annex A.



## 4. Annexes

Table 2 below provides an overview over the annexes to this consultation document. Annex A sets out the procedure required by the licence condition with proposed dates. Annexes B to D sets out, for each licence, the proposed modifications. Annexes E and G represents the notice under Article 14(2) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 for the three licence modification proposals.

**Table 2: Overview of Annexes**

<b>Annex Reference</b>	<b>Annex Name</b>
Annex A	Proposed Licence Condition Procedure and Timetable
Annex B	SONI Transmission Licence Proposed Modifications
Annex C	NIE Networks Transmission Licence Proposed Modifications
Annex D	NIE Networks Distribution Licence Proposed Modifications
Annex E	Article 14(2) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 - SONI Transmission Licence
Annex F	Article 14(2) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 - NIE Networks Transmission Licence
Annex G	Article 14(2) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 - NIE Networks Distribution Licence

### **Annex A – Proposed Licence Condition Procedure and Timetable**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> digitalisation strategy development and adoption timelines</b>			
3 <sup>rd</sup> requirement	Publish draft strategy	Licensee	<b>30 September 2025</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> requirement	Consultation	Licensee	<b>6 weeks</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> requirement	Prepare and publish document summarising responses and/or whether will make changes	Licensee	<b>12 weeks</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> requirement	Prepare updated strategy for UR with or without changes		
5 <sup>th</sup> requirement	UR can direct further changes based on updated version	UR	<b>4 weeks</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> requirement	Adopt strategy	Licensee	<b>31 March 2026</b>
<b>Ongoing Digitalisation Action Plan</b>			
	Publish action plan	Licensee	<b>30 September 2026 - Every 12 months thereafter</b>
<b>Ongoing Digitalisation Strategy</b>			
NIE Networks and SONI must update strategy every <b>2 years</b> (and go through the same development and adoption cycle noted above under requirements for the 1 <sup>st</sup> strategy)			

 \*  
 -

**Please note that where the provisions in paragraphs 18-20 (5<sup>th</sup> or the 11<sup>th</sup> requirements of Part A) or 34-36 (3<sup>rd</sup> or the 7<sup>th</sup> requirements of Part B) apply in relation to dispute resolution the time frames outlined may be subject to change.**

## Annex B – SONI TSO Licence Condition

### Condition 43.      Digitalisation

#### INTRODUCTION

1. This condition makes provision for the Licensee, working together with NIE Networks, to produce a strategy and an action plan designed to facilitate the effective digitalisation of their regulated businesses, and it consists of four parts:
  - (a) **Part A** makes provision for the Licensee and NIE Networks to prepare, adopt and maintain a joint Digitalisation Strategy;
  - (b) **Part B** makes provision for the Licensee and NIE Networks to prepare adopt and maintain a joint Digitalisation Action Plan designed to give practical effect to the Strategy, and it requires the Licensee to take all steps within its power to comply with the relevant provisions of the Plan;
  - (c) **Part C** makes provision for the Authority to issue and amend a document known as the DSAP Instructions and Guidance, which may specify requirements as to the form and content of the Strategy and Plan and provide further guidance relating to those documents;
  - (d) **Part D** sets out various defined terms which are relevant to this condition.

## PART A. THE DIGITALISATION STRATEGY

### The Principal Obligation

2. The Licensee must, in conjunction and cooperation with NIE Networks, take all steps within its power to ensure that they jointly prepare, adopt and maintain a Digitalisation Strategy in accordance with the requirements of this Part A.

### Preparation of the Digitalisation Strategy

#### *The Form of the Strategy*

3. The **first** requirement is that the Digitalisation Strategy shall be structured so as to include separate sections, which shall respectively incorporate provisions:
  - (a) specific to the Transmission System Operator Business of the Licensee;
  - (b) specific to NIE Networks in its separate roles as:
    - (i) Transmission Owner; and
    - (ii) Distribution System Owner;
  - (c) common to both the Licensee and NIE Networks; and
  - (d) requiring cooperation and joint working on the part of the Licensee and NIE Networks.

#### *The Content of the Strategy*

4. The **second** requirement is that the Digitalisation Strategy shall be written so as to:
  - (a) comply with any requirements specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance; and

- (b) take into account any guidance, and be consistent with any principles or objectives, specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance.

*The Procedure Prior to Adopting the Strategy*

5. The **third** requirement is that, before adopting the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly:
  - (a) prepare a draft of the Strategy and publish that draft in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it;
  - (b) prepare and publish together with that draft such explanatory or supporting materials as are necessary to ensure that those who have an interest in the Strategy are able to understand clearly the purpose, aims and likely effect of the draft;
  - (c) allow all those who wish to make representations on the draft Strategy a reasonable opportunity (within a period of not less than 42 days from the publication of the draft) in which to do so; and
  - (d) carefully and conscientiously consider all representations received by the Licensee or NIE Networks during the specified period with a view to assessing whether any changes to the draft Strategy are necessary or desirable in the light of those representations.
  
6. The **fourth** requirement is that, before adopting the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly:
  - (a) prepare a document which:
    - (i) summarises the representations received by them from interested parties in response to the draft Strategy; and

- (ii) provides a clear and reasoned explanation of whether the Licensee and NIE Networks propose to make or not to make any changes to the draft Strategy in respect of each of those representations;
- (b) publish that document in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it; and
- (c) send a copy of the document to the Authority.

*Consideration of the Strategy by the Authority*

7. The **fifth** requirement is that, having complied with the first to the fourth requirements of this Part A but before adopting the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly:
- (a) prepare a further version of the Strategy incorporating such changes (if any) as they consider appropriate in the light of representations received on the draft Strategy;
  - (b) provide to the Authority a copy of that version of the Strategy as the document which they propose for adoption;
  - (c) provide to the Authority such further information or explanation in relation to the Strategy as the Authority may request;
  - (d) make any changes to that version of the Strategy which the Authority may, within 28 days of having been provided with a copy of it, direct them to make; and
  - (e) treat that version of the Strategy, including any changes directed by the Authority, as the final form of the document for the purposes of its adoption.

## Adoption of the Digitalisation Strategy

8. The **sixth** requirement is that the Licensee and NIE Networks shall adopt the Digitalisation Strategy by no later than 31 March 2026, or such later date as may be specified in a direction issued to each of them by the Authority pursuant to this paragraph 8.
9. The **seventh** requirement is that the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly arrange for the publication of the Digitalisation Strategy, following its adoption, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

## Maintenance of the Digitalisation Strategy

### *Reviews of the Strategy*

10. The **eighth** requirement is that the Licensee and NIE Networks shall, from time to time, jointly review the Digitalisation Strategy with the aim of ensuring that it remains accurate, up to date and fit for purpose, and shall in particular ensure that:
  - (a) in the case of the first such review, that review is completed by no later than the date which falls two years after the date on which the Strategy was initially adopted; and
  - (b) in the case of each subsequent review, the review is completed by no later than the date which falls two years after the date of completion of the immediately preceding review.
11. For these purposes, a review shall be treated as having been ‘completed’ only when the ninth to the eleventh requirements of this Part A have been satisfied in respect of it.

*The Procedure for a Review of the Strategy*

12. The **ninth** requirement is that, for the purpose of each review of the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly:
- (a) prepare and publish, in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it, a document (the **Review Paper**) which:
    - (i) summarises their views as to the progress made in implementing the Strategy since (as applicable) its initial adoption or the completion of the immediately preceding review;
    - (ii) specifies whether they propose to make or not make changes to the Strategy, and in either case provides a clear and reasoned explanation for the proposal; and
    - (iii) sets out any changes to the Strategy which may be proposed;
  - (b) allow all those who wish to make representations on the content of the Review Paper, and in particular on any proposal to make or not to make changes to the Strategy, a reasonable opportunity (within a period of not less than 42 days from its publication) in which to do so;
  - (c) carefully and conscientiously consider all representations received by the Licensee or NIE Networks during the allowed period with a view to assessing whether any variations to the proposal set out in the Review Paper are necessary or desirable in the light of those representations; and
  - (d) comply with such other requirements and take into account any guidance, in relation to the conduct of the review, as is specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance.



13. The **tenth** requirement is that, before completing each review of the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly:
- (a) prepare a document which:
    - (i) summarises the representations received by them from interested parties in response to the Review Paper; and
    - (ii) provides a clear and reasoned explanation of whether the Licensee and NIE Networks propose to make or not to make any changes to the Strategy in the light of those representations; and
  - (b) publish that document in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it, and send a copy of it to the Authority.

*Consideration of the Strategy by the Authority following a Review*

14. The **eleventh** requirement is that, having complied with the eighth to the tenth requirements of this Part A, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly:
- (a) provide to the Authority a statement which either:
    - (i) identifies the changes they propose to make to the Digitalisation Strategy; or
    - (ii) explains that they consider no changes to the Strategy to be appropriate at that time; and
  - (b) where the Authority, within 28 days of having been provided with that statement, directs them to do so:
    - (i) refrain from making any such changes to the Strategy as the direction may identify; and/or

- (ii) make such other changes to the Strategy as the direction may identify.

#### *Post-Review Publication of the Strategy*

15. The **twelfth** requirement is that the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly arrange for the publication of an updated version of the Digitalisation Strategy, following the completion of each review, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

#### *Archive of the Strategy*

16. The **thirteenth** requirement is that, following the first review of the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly arrange for an archive of all previously published versions of the Strategy to be maintained and published in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

#### **Disputes – Resolution by the Authority**

17. The provisions of paragraphs 18 to 20 shall apply only where the Licensee and NIE Networks, having each negotiated with each other in good faith and used all steps within their respective powers to establish a common position, are:
  - (a) in the case of the fifth requirement of this Part A, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to a version of the Strategy to be proposed for adoption; or
  - (b) in the case of the eleventh requirement of this Part A, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to the changes (if any) to be proposed to the Strategy.
18. Where this paragraph applies, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly, at the same time as they comply with all other aspects of the fifth or the eleventh

requirement (as the case may be), and by exception to the obligation to submit to the Authority a single joint proposal, submit to the Authority instead:

- (a) a statement identifying clearly:
  - (i) the matters on which they have been able to agree and which are therefore the subject of a single joint proposal; and
  - (ii) the matters on which they have not been able to agree and in respect of which they each make different proposals; and
- (b) in relation to those matters on which they have not been able to agree:
  - (i) a statement of the proposal preferred by each of them, which shall include (where relevant) a draft of the provisions of the Strategy that they would each respectively prefer to be adopted; and
  - (ii) a reasoned explanation of why each company prefers its own proposal as against the alternative proposal made by the other.

19. Where this paragraph applies, the Authority may, at the same time as it exercises its other functions as described in the fifth or the eleventh requirement (as the case may be), resolve the matters in dispute between the Licensee and NIE Networks by determining either to accept the proposal preferred by one of them or to follow an alternative approach identified by the Authority, and in either case shall direct the Licensee and NIE Networks to adopt a version of the Strategy which is consistent with that determination.

20. Where this paragraph applies, references in the fifth or the eleventh requirement (as the case may be) to 28 days shall be read instead as being references to 56 days.

## Key Definition

21. For the purposes of this condition, a **Digitalisation Strategy** means a document which sets out clearly:
- (a) the objectives of both the Licensee and NIE Networks in relation to the Digitalisation of their respective regulated businesses, identifying clearly how such objectives:
    - (i) align with the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland, including the interests of those consumers in receiving a fair share of the benefits generated from the managerial and operational implementation of the Strategy; and
    - (ii) demonstrate the Licensee and NIE Network's understanding of the needs of their stakeholders and prioritise the meeting of those needs which will benefit energy consumers in Northern Ireland;
  - (b) the intended means by which those objectives are to be achieved by each of them, including the resources requiring to be committed to the process of achieving those objectives;
  - (c) such target deadlines, standards of performance and/or deliverable outcomes as are to be set by them so as to ensure that their progress towards meeting the objectives is clearly measurable; and
  - (d) such processes as are to be established by them so as to ensure that:
    - (i) their progress by reference to the targets is regularly measured and reported on, in a manner that is transparent and accountable to energy consumers in Northern Ireland; and
    - (ii) corrective actions are promptly taken by them in any case in which the targets are not met, so as to ensure that all appropriate steps continue to be taken with a view to achieving the objectives and so protect the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland.

## PART B. THE DIGITALISATION ACTION PLAN

### The Principal Obligations

22. The Licensee must:
- (a) in conjunction and cooperation with NIE Networks, take all steps within its power to ensure that they prepare, adopt and maintain a Digitalisation Action Plan in accordance with the requirements of this Part B; and
  - (b) take all steps within its power to comply with the provisions of the Plan insofar as they are relevant to the Transmission System Operator Business.

### Preparation of the Digitalisation Action Plan

#### *The Form of the Plan*

23. The **first** requirement is that the Digitalisation Action Plan shall be structured so as to include separate sections, which shall respectively incorporate provisions:
- (a) specific to the Transmission System Operator Business of the Licensee;
  - (b) specific to NIE Networks in its separate roles as:
    - (i) Transmission Owner; and
    - (ii) Distribution System Owner;
  - (c) common to both the Licensee and NIE Networks; and

- (d) requiring cooperation and joint working on the part of the Licensee and NIE Networks.

#### *The Content of the Plan*

24. The **second** requirement is that the Digitalisation Action Plan shall be written so as to:
- (a) comply with any requirements specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance; and
  - (b) take into account any guidance, and be consistent with any principles or objectives, specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance.

#### *Consideration of the Plan by the Authority*

25. The **third** requirement is that, before adopting the Digitalisation Action Plan, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly:
- (a) prepare a draft of the Plan and provide a copy of it to the Authority;
  - (b) prepare and provide to the Authority together with that draft such explanatory or supporting materials as are necessary to ensure that the Authority may understand clearly the purpose, aims and likely effect of the draft;
  - (c) provide to the Authority such further information or explanation in relation to the Plan as the Authority may request;
  - (d) make any changes to the draft of the Plan which the Authority may, within 42 days of having been provided with a copy of it, direct them to make; and

- (e) treat that version of the Plan, including any changes directed by the Authority, as the final form of the document for the purposes of its adoption

### **Adoption of the Digitalisation Action Plan**

- 26. The **fourth** requirement is that the Licensee and NIE Networks shall adopt the Digitalisation Action Plan by no later than 30 September 2026, or such later date as may be specified in a direction issued to each of them by the Authority pursuant to this paragraph 26.
- 27. The **fifth** requirement is that the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly arrange for the publication of the Digitalisation Action Plan, following its adoption, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

### **Maintenance of the Digitalisation Action Plan**

#### *Reviews of the Plan*

- 28. The **sixth** requirement is that the Licensee and NIE Networks shall, from time to time, jointly review the Digitalisation Action Plan with the aim of ensuring that it remains accurate, up to date, fit for purpose and aligned with the Digitalisation Strategy, and shall in particular ensure that:
  - (a) in the case of the first such review, that review is completed by no later than the date which falls twelve months after the date on which the Plan was initially adopted; and
  - (b) in the case of each subsequent review, the review is completed by no later than the date which falls twelve months after the date of completion of the immediately preceding review.
- 29. For these purposes, a review shall be treated as having been ‘completed’ only when the seventh requirement of this Part B has been satisfied in respect of it.

*The Procedure for a Review of the Plan and its Consideration by the Authority*

30. The **seventh** requirement is that, for the purpose of each review of the Digitalisation Action Plan, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly:
- (a) comply with such requirements and take into account any guidance, in relation to the conduct of the review, as is specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance;
  - (b) prepare and provide to the Authority a document which:
    - (i) summarises their views as to the progress made in giving effect to the Plan since (as applicable) its initial adoption or the completion of the immediately preceding review;
    - (ii) specifies whether they propose to make or not make changes to the Plan, and in either case provides a clear and reasoned explanation for the proposal; and
    - (iii) sets out any changes to the Plan which may be proposed;
  - (c) where the Authority, within 28 days of having been provided with that document, directs them to do so:
    - (i) refrain from making any such changes to the Plan as the direction may identify; and/or
    - (ii) make such other changes to the Plan as the direction may identify.

*Post-Review Publication of the Plan*



31. The **eighth** requirement is that the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly arrange for the publication of an updated version of the Digitalisation Action Plan, following the completion of each review, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

*Archive of the Plan*

32. The **ninth** requirement is that, following the first review of the Digitalisation Action Plan, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly arrange for an archive of all previously published versions of the Plan to be maintained and published in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

**Disputes – Resolution by the Authority**

33. The provisions of paragraphs 34 to 36 shall apply only where the Licensee and NIE Networks, having each negotiated with each other in good faith and used all steps within their respective powers to establish a common position, are:
- (a) in the case of the third requirement of this Part B, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to a version of the Plan to be proposed for adoption; or
  - (b) in the case of the seventh requirement of this Part B, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to the changes (if any) to be proposed to the Plan.
34. Where this paragraph applies, the Licensee and NIE Networks shall jointly, at the same time as they comply with all other aspects of the third or the seventh requirement (as the case may be), and by exception to the obligation to submit to the Authority a single joint proposal, submit to the Authority instead:
- (a) a statement identifying clearly:

- (i) the matters on which they have been able to agree and which are therefore the subject of a single joint proposal; and
    - (ii) the matters on which they have not been able to agree and in respect of which they each make different proposals; and
  - (b) in relation to those matters on which they have not been able to agree:
    - (i) a statement of the proposal preferred by each of them, which shall include (where relevant) a draft of the provisions of the Plan that they would each respectively prefer to be adopted; and
    - (ii) a reasoned explanation of why each company prefers its own proposal as against the alternative proposal made by the other.
35. Where this paragraph applies, the Authority may, at the same time as it exercises its other functions as described in the third or the seventh requirement (as the case may be), resolve the matters in dispute between the Licensee and NIE Networks by determining either to accept the proposal preferred by one of them or to follow an alternative approach identified by the Authority, and in either case shall direct the Licensee and NIE Networks to adopt a version of the Plan which is consistent with that determination.
36. Where this paragraph applies:
- (a) the reference in the third requirement to 42 days shall be read instead as being a reference to 84 days; and
  - (b) the reference in the seventh requirement to 28 days shall be read instead as being a reference to 56 days.

### Key Definition

37. For the purposes of this condition, a **Digitalisation Action Plan** means a document which is designed to give practical effect to the Digitalisation Strategy

by setting out in detail how the Licensee and NIE Networks will, taking into account the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland and the needs of their stakeholders (where meeting those stakeholder needs will benefit energy consumers in Northern Ireland), make progress towards successfully delivering the work required to ensure the effective managerial and operational implementation and fulfilment of the Strategy.

### **PART C. THE DSAP INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDANCE**

38. The Authority may following consultation with the Licensee and such other persons as it considers appropriate, issue, and from time to time amend, a document which shall be known as the **DSAP Instructions and Guidance**, which may set out:
- (a) requirements to be complied with by the Licensee and NIE Networks in relation to the form or content of the Digitalisation Strategy and the Digitalisation Action Plan;
  - (b) guidance as to the form or content of the Strategy and the Plan, which may include in particular a statement of principles and objectives with which the Strategy and the Plan are to be consistent; and
  - (c) requirements or guidance as to the conduct of any reviews of the Strategy and the Plan.
39. The DSAP Instructions and Guidance may incorporate such provisions as the Authority may from time to time consider appropriate, including in particular provisions as to:
- (a) how the Licensee and NIE Networks should ensure that data which they control or produce is used to generate benefits for energy consumers in Northern Ireland;

- (b) the objectives and targets to be adopted as part of the Digitalisation Strategy and how they are to be measured; and
- (c) the means of ensuring that the performance of the Licensee and NIE Networks in meeting the targets and achieving the objectives is made transparent and so that the companies may be publicly accountable for it.

## PART D. DEFINITIONS

40. For the purposes of this condition:

<b>Digitalisation</b>	means the transformation of a business by the use of digital technologies throughout the entire range of its activities so as to ensure that the business operates with maximum efficiency and is able to realise the full value (including in the form of public and stakeholder benefit which is aligned with the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland) of such data as it may from time to time control or produce.
<b>Digitalisation Action Plan</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 37.
<b>Digitalisation Strategy</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 21.
<b>DSAP Instructions and Guidance</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 38.

<b>NIE Networks</b>	means NIE Networks Limited, acting in its capacity as both the Transmission Owner and Distribution System Owner.
<b>Plan</b>	means the Digitalisation Action Plan.
<b>Review Paper</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 12.
<b>Strategy</b>	means the Digitalisation Strategy.

## Condition 43 Digitalisation

### INTRODUCTION

1. This condition makes provision for the Licensee, working together with SONI, to produce a strategy and an action plan designed to facilitate the effective digitalisation of their regulated businesses, and it consists of four parts:
  - (a) **Part A** makes provision for the Licensee and SONI to prepare, adopt and maintain a joint Digitalisation Strategy;
  - (b) **Part B** makes provision for the Licensee and SONI to prepare adopt and maintain a joint Digitalisation Action Plan designed to give practical effect to the Strategy, and it requires the Licensee to take all steps within its power to comply with the relevant provisions of the Plan;
  - (c) **Part C** makes provision for the Authority to issue and amend a document known as the DSAP Instructions and Guidance, which may specify requirements as to the form and content of the Strategy and Plan and provide further guidance relating to those documents;
  - (d) **Part D** sets out various defined terms which are relevant to this condition.

### PART A. THE DIGITALISATION STRATEGY

#### The Principal Obligation

2. The Licensee must, in conjunction and cooperation with SONI, take all steps within its power to ensure that they jointly prepare, adopt and maintain a Digitalisation Strategy in accordance with the requirements of this Part A.

## **Preparation of the Digitalisation Strategy**

### *The Form of the Strategy*

3. The **first** requirement is that the Digitalisation Strategy shall be structured so as to include separate sections, which shall respectively incorporate provisions:
  - (a) specific to SONI in its role as the Transmission System Operator;
  - (b) specific to the Licensee in its separate:
    - (i) Transmission Owner Business; and
    - (ii) Distribution Business;
  - (c) common to both the Licensee and SONI; and
  - (d) requiring cooperation and joint working on the part of the Licensee and SONI.

### *The Content of the Strategy*

4. The **second** requirement is that the Digitalisation Strategy shall be written so as to:
  - (a) comply with any requirements specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance; and
  - (b) take into account any guidance, and be consistent with any principles or objectives, specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance.

### *The Procedure Prior to Adopting the Strategy*

5. The **third** requirement is that, before adopting the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
  - (a) prepare a draft of the Strategy and publish that draft in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it;
  - (b) prepare and publish together with that draft such explanatory or supporting materials as are necessary to ensure that those who have an interest in the Strategy are able to understand clearly the purpose, aims and likely effect of the draft;
  - (c) allow all those who wish to make representations on the draft Strategy a reasonable opportunity (within a period of not less than 42 days from the publication of the draft) in which to do so; and
  - (d) carefully and conscientiously consider all representations received by the Licensee or SONI during the specified period with a view to assessing whether any changes to the draft Strategy are necessary or desirable in the light of those representations.
  
6. The **fourth** requirement is that, before adopting the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
  - (a) prepare a document which:
    - (i) summarises the representations received by them from interested parties in response to the draft Strategy; and
    - (ii) provides a clear and reasoned explanation of whether the Licensee and SONI propose to make or not to make any changes to the draft Strategy in respect of each of those representations;



- (b) publish that document in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it; and
- (c) send a copy of the document to the Authority.

#### *Consideration of the Strategy by the Authority*

7. The **fifth** requirement is that, having complied with the first to the fourth requirements of this Part A but before adopting the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) prepare a further version of the Strategy incorporating such changes (if any) as they consider appropriate in the light of representations received on the draft Strategy;
  - (b) provide to the Authority a copy of that version of the Strategy as the document which they propose for adoption;
  - (c) provide to the Authority such further information or explanation in relation to the Strategy as the Authority may request;
  - (d) make any changes to that version of the Strategy which the Authority may, within 28 days of having been provided with a copy of it, direct them to make; and
  - (e) treat that version of the Strategy, including any changes directed by the Authority, as the final form of the document for the purposes of its adoption.

#### **Adoption of the Digitalisation Strategy**

8. The **sixth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall adopt the Digitalisation Strategy by no later than 31 March 2026 or such later date as may

be specified in a direction issued to each of them by the Authority pursuant to this paragraph 8.

9. The **seventh** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for the publication of the Digitalisation Strategy, following its adoption, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

## **Maintenance of the Digitalisation Strategy**

### *Reviews of the Strategy*

10. The **eighth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall, from time to time, jointly review the Digitalisation Strategy with the aim of ensuring that it remains accurate, up to date and fit for purpose, and shall in particular ensure that:
  - (a) in the case of the first such review, that review is completed by no later than the date which falls two years after the date on which the Strategy was initially adopted; and
  - (b) in the case of each subsequent review, the review is completed by no later than the date which falls two years after the date of completion of the immediately preceding review.
11. For these purposes, a review shall be treated as having been ‘completed’ only when the ninth to the eleventh requirements of this Part A have been satisfied in respect of it.

### *The Procedure for a Review of the Strategy*

12. The **ninth** requirement is that, for the purpose of each review of the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) prepare and publish, in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it, a document (the **Review Paper**) which:
    - (i) summarises their views as to the progress made in implementing the Strategy since (as applicable) its initial adoption or the completion of the immediately preceding review;
    - (ii) specifies whether they propose to make or not make changes to the Strategy, and in either case provides a clear and reasoned explanation for the proposal; and
    - (iii) sets out any changes to the Strategy which may be proposed;
  - (b) allow all those who wish to make representations on the content of the Review Paper, and in particular on any proposal to make or not to make changes to the Strategy, a reasonable opportunity (within a period of not less than 42 days from its publication) in which to do so;
  - (c) carefully and conscientiously consider all representations received by the Licensee or SONI during the allowed period with a view to assessing whether any variations to the proposal set out in the Review Paper are necessary or desirable in the light of those representations; and
  - (d) comply with such other requirements and take into account any guidance, in relation to the conduct of the review, as is specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance.
13. The **tenth** requirement is that, before completing each review of the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) prepare a document which:

- (i) summarises the representations received by them from interested parties in response to the Review Paper; and
  - (ii) provides a clear and reasoned explanation of whether the Licensee and SONI propose to make or not to make any changes to the Strategy in the light of those representations; and
- (b) publish that document in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it, and send a copy of it to the Authority.

*Consideration of the Strategy by the Authority following a Review*

14. The **eleventh** requirement is that, having complied with the eighth to the tenth requirements of this Part A, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) provide to the Authority a statement which either:
    - (i) identifies the changes they propose to make to the Digitalisation Strategy; or
    - (ii) explains that they consider no changes to the Strategy to be appropriate at that time; and
  - (b) where the Authority, within 28 days of having been provided with that statement, directs them to do so:
    - (i) refrain from making any such changes to the Strategy as the direction may identify; and/or
    - (ii) make such other changes to the Strategy as the direction may identify.

*Post-Review Publication of the Strategy*

15. The **twelfth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for the publication of an updated version of the Digitalisation Strategy, following the completion of each review, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

*Archive of the Strategy*

16. The **thirteenth** requirement is that, following the first review of the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for an archive of all previously published versions of the Strategy to be maintained and published in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

**Disputes – Resolution by the Authority**

17. The provisions of paragraphs 18 to 20 shall apply only where the Licensee and SONI, having each negotiated with each other in good faith and used all steps within their respective powers to establish a common position, are:
  - (a) in the case of the fifth requirement of this Part A, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to a version of the Strategy to be proposed for adoption; or
  - (b) in the case of the eleventh requirement of this Part A, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to the changes (if any) to be proposed to the Strategy.
18. Where this paragraph applies, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly, at the same time as they comply with all other aspects of the fifth or the eleventh requirement (as the case may be), and by exception to the obligation to submit to the Authority a single joint proposal, submit to the Authority instead:
  - (a) a statement identifying clearly:

- (i) the matters on which they have been able to agree and which are therefore the subject of a single joint proposal; and
    - (ii) the matters on which they have not been able to agree and in respect of which they each make different proposals; and
  - (b) in relation to those matters on which they have not been able to agree:
    - (i) a statement of the proposal preferred by each of them, which shall include (where relevant) a draft of the provisions of the Strategy that they would each respectively prefer to be adopted; and
    - (ii) a reasoned explanation of why each company prefers its own proposal as against the alternative proposal made by the other.
19. Where this paragraph applies, the Authority may, at the same time as it exercises its other functions as described in the fifth or the eleventh requirement (as the case may be), resolve the matters in dispute between the Licensee and SONI by determining either to accept the proposal preferred by one of them or to follow an alternative approach identified by the Authority, and in either case shall direct the Licensee and SONI to adopt a version of the Strategy which is consistent with that determination.
20. Where this paragraph applies, references in the fifth or the eleventh requirement (as the case may be) to 28 days shall be read instead as being references to 56 days.

### Key Definition

21. For the purposes of this condition, a **Digitalisation Strategy** means a document which sets out clearly:
- (a) the objectives of both the Licensee and SONI in relation to the Digitalisation of their respective regulated businesses, identifying clearly how such objectives:

- (i) align with the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland, including the interests of those consumers in receiving a fair share of the benefits generated from the managerial and operational implementation of the Strategy; and
  - (ii) demonstrate the Licensee and SONI's understanding of the needs of their stakeholders and prioritise the meeting of those needs which will benefit energy consumers in Northern Ireland;
- (b) the intended means by which those objectives are to be achieved by each of them, including the resources requiring to be committed to the process of achieving those objectives;
- (c) such target deadlines, standards of performance and/or deliverable outcomes as are to be set by them so as to ensure that their progress towards meeting the objectives is clearly measurable; and
- (d) such processes as are to be established by them so as to ensure that:
  - (i) their progress by reference to the targets is regularly measured and reported on, in a manner that is transparent and accountable to energy consumers in Northern Ireland; and
  - (ii) corrective actions are promptly taken by them in any case in which the targets are not met, so as to ensure that all appropriate steps continue to be taken with a view to achieving the objectives and so protect the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland.

## PART B. THE DIGITALISATION ACTION PLAN

### The Principal Obligations

22. The Licensee must:
- (a) in conjunction and cooperation with SONI, take all steps within its power to ensure that they prepare, adopt and maintain a Digitalisation Action Plan in accordance with the requirements of this Part B; and
  - (b) take all steps within its power to comply with the provisions of the Plan insofar as they are relevant to the Transmission Owner Business.

### Preparation of the Digitalisation Action Plan

#### *The Form of the Plan*

23. The **first** requirement is that the Digitalisation Action Plan shall be structured so as to include separate sections, which shall respectively incorporate provisions:
- (a) specific to SONI in its role as the Transmission System Operator;
  - (b) specific to the Licensee in its separate:
    - (i) Transmission Owner Business; and
    - (ii) Distribution Business;
  - (c) common to both the Licensee and SONI; and
  - (d) requiring cooperation and joint working on the part of the Licensee and SONI.

#### *The Content of the Plan*



24. The **second** requirement is that the Digitalisation Action Plan shall be written so as to:
- (a) comply with any requirements specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance; and
  - (b) take into account any guidance, and be consistent with any principles or objectives, specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance.

*Consideration of the Plan by the Authority*

25. The **third** requirement is that, before adopting the Digitalisation Action Plan, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) prepare a draft of the Plan and provide a copy of it to the Authority;
  - (b) prepare and provide to the Authority together with that draft such explanatory or supporting materials as are necessary to ensure that the Authority may understand clearly the purpose, aims and likely effect of the draft;
  - (c) provide to the Authority such further information or explanation in relation to the Plan as the Authority may request;
  - (d) make any changes to the draft of the Plan which the Authority may, within 42 days of having been provided with a copy of it, direct them to make; and
  - (e) treat that version of the Plan, including any changes directed by the Authority, as the final form of the document for the purposes of its adoption

**Adoption of the Digitalisation Action Plan**

26. The **fourth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall adopt the Digitalisation Action Plan by no later than 30 September 2026, or such later date as may be specified in a direction issued to each of them by the Authority pursuant to this paragraph 26.
27. The **fifth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for the publication of the Digitalisation Action Plan, following its adoption, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

### **Maintenance of the Digitalisation Action Plan**

#### *Reviews of the Plan*

28. The **sixth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall, from time to time, jointly review the Digitalisation Action Plan with the aim of ensuring that it remains accurate, up to date, fit for purpose and aligned with the Digitalisation Strategy, and shall in particular ensure that:
  - (a) in the case of the first such review, that review is completed by no later than the date which falls twelve months after the date on which the Plan was initially adopted; and
  - (b) in the case of each subsequent review, the review is completed by no later than the date which falls twelve months after the date of completion of the immediately preceding review.
29. For these purposes, a review shall be treated as having been ‘completed’ only when the seventh requirement of this Part B has been satisfied in respect of it.

#### *The Procedure for a Review of the Plan and its Consideration by the Authority*

30. The **seventh** requirement is that, for the purpose of each review of the Digitalisation Action Plan, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:

- (a) comply with such requirements and take into account any guidance, in relation to the conduct of the review, as is specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance;
- (b) prepare and provide to the Authority a document which:
  - (i) summarises their views as to the progress made in giving effect to the Plan since (as applicable) its initial adoption or the completion of the immediately preceding review;
  - (ii) specifies whether they propose to make or not make changes to the Plan, and in either case provides a clear and reasoned explanation for the proposal; and
  - (iii) sets out any changes to the Plan which may be proposed;
- (c) where the Authority, within 28 days of having been provided with that document, directs them to do so:
  - (i) refrain from making any such changes to the Plan as the direction may identify; and/or
  - (ii) make such other changes to the Plan as the direction may identify.

#### *Post-Review Publication of the Plan*

31. The **eighth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for the publication of an updated version of the Digitalisation Action Plan, following

the completion of each review, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

#### *Archive of the Plan*

32. The **ninth** requirement is that, following the first review of the Digitalisation Action Plan, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for an archive of all previously published versions of the Plan to be maintained and published in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

#### **Disputes – Resolution by the Authority**

33. The provisions of paragraphs 34 to 36 shall apply only where the Licensee and SONI, having each negotiated with each other in good faith and used all steps within their respective powers to establish a common position, are:
- (a) in the case of the third requirement of this Part B, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to a version of the Plan to be proposed for adoption; or
  - (b) in the case of the seventh requirement of this Part B, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to the changes (if any) to be proposed to the Plan.
34. Where this paragraph applies, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly, at the same time as they comply with all other aspects of the third or the seventh requirement (as the case may be), and by exception to the obligation to submit to the Authority a single joint proposal, submit to the Authority instead:
- (a) a statement identifying clearly:
    - (i) the matters on which they have been able to agree and which are therefore the subject of a single joint proposal; and

- (ii) the matters on which they have not been able to agree and in respect of which they each make different proposals; and
  - (b) in relation to those matters on which they have not been able to agree:
    - (i) a statement of the proposal preferred by each of them, which shall include (where relevant) a draft of the provisions of the Plan that they would each respectively prefer to be adopted; and
    - (ii) a reasoned explanation of why each company prefers its own proposal as against the alternative proposal made by the other.
35. Where this paragraph applies, the Authority may, at the same time as it exercises its other functions as described in the third or the seventh requirement (as the case may be), resolve the matters in dispute between the Licensee and SONI by determining either to accept the proposal preferred by one of them or to follow an alternative approach identified by the Authority, and in either case shall direct the Licensee and SONI to adopt a version of the Plan which is consistent with that determination.
36. Where this paragraph applies:
- (a) the reference in the third requirement to 42 days shall be read instead as being a reference to 84 days; and
  - (b) the reference in the seventh requirement to 28 days shall be read instead as being a reference to 56 days.

## Key Definition

37. For the purposes of this condition, a **Digitalisation Action Plan** means a document which is designed to give practical effect to the Digitalisation Strategy by setting out in detail how the Licensee and SONI will, taking into account the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland and the needs of their stakeholders (where meeting those stakeholder needs will benefit energy consumers in Northern Ireland), make progress towards successfully delivering the work required to ensure the effective managerial and operational implementation and fulfilment of the Strategy.

### **PART C. THE DSAP INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDANCE**

38. The Authority may following consultation with the Licensee and such other persons as it considers appropriate, issue, and from time to time amend, a document which shall be known as the **DSAP Instructions and Guidance**, which may set out:
- (a) requirements to be complied with by the Licensee and SONI in relation to the form or content of the Digitalisation Strategy and the Digitalisation Action Plan;
  - (b) guidance as to the form or content of the Strategy and the Plan, which may include in particular a statement of principles and objectives with which the Strategy and the Plan are to be consistent; and
  - (c) requirements or guidance as to the conduct of any reviews of the Strategy and the Plan.
39. The DSAP Instructions and Guidance may incorporate such provisions as the Authority may from time to time consider appropriate, including in particular provisions as to:
- (a) how the Licensee and SONI should ensure that data which they control or produce is used to generate benefits for energy consumers in Northern Ireland;

- (b) the objectives and targets to be adopted as part of the Digitalisation Strategy and how they are to be measured; and
- (c) the means of ensuring that the performance of the Licensee and SONI in meeting the targets and achieving the objectives is made transparent and so that the companies may be publicly accountable for it.

## PART D. DEFINITIONS

40. For the purposes of this condition:

<b>Digitalisation</b>	means the transformation of a business by the use of digital technologies throughout the entire range of its activities so as to ensure that the business operates with maximum efficiency and is able to realise the full value (including in the form of public and stakeholder benefit which is aligned with the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland) of such data as it may from time to time control or produce.
<b>Digitalisation Action Plan</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 37.
<b>Digitalisation Strategy</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 21.
<b>DSAP Instructions and Guidance</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 38.

<b>Plan</b>	means the Digitalisation Action Plan.
<b>Review Paper</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 12.
<b>Strategy</b>	means the Digitalisation Strategy.
<b>SONI</b>	means SONI Limited acting in its capacity as the Transmission System Operator.

## Annex D – NIE Networks Distribution System Licence Condition

### Condition 46 Digitalisation

#### INTRODUCTION



1. This condition makes provision for the Licensee, working together with SONI, to produce a strategy and an action plan designed to facilitate the effective digitalisation of their regulated businesses, and it consists of four parts:
  - (a) **Part A** makes provision for the Licensee and SONI to prepare, adopt and maintain a joint Digitalisation Strategy;
  - (b) **Part B** makes provision for the Licensee and SONI to prepare adopt and maintain a joint Digitalisation Action Plan designed to give practical effect to the Strategy, and it requires the Licensee to take all steps within its power to comply with the relevant provisions of the Plan;
  - (c) **Part C** makes provision for the Authority to issue and amend a document known as the DSAP Instructions and Guidance, which may specify requirements as to the form and content of the Strategy and Plan and provide further guidance relating to those documents;
  - (d) **Part D** sets out various defined terms which are relevant to this condition.

## PART A. THE DIGITALISATION STRATEGY

### The Principal Obligation

2. The Licensee must, in conjunction and cooperation with SONI, take all steps within its power to ensure that they jointly prepare, adopt and maintain a Digitalisation Strategy in accordance with the requirements of this Part A.

## **Preparation of the Digitalisation Strategy**

### *The Form of the Strategy*

3. The **first** requirement is that the Digitalisation Strategy shall be structured so as to include separate sections, which shall respectively incorporate provisions:
  - (a) specific to SONI in its role as the Transmission System Operator;
  - (b) specific to the Licensee in its separate:
    - (i) Transmission Owner Business; and
    - (ii) Distribution Business;
  - (c) common to both the Licensee and SONI; and
  - (d) requiring cooperation and joint working on the part of the Licensee and SONI.

### *The Content of the Strategy*

4. The **second** requirement is that the Digitalisation Strategy shall be written so as to:
  - (a) comply with any requirements specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance; and
  - (b) take into account any guidance, and be consistent with any principles or objectives, specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance.

### *The Procedure Prior to Adopting the Strategy*

5. The **third** requirement is that, before adopting the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
  - (a) prepare a draft of the Strategy and publish that draft in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it;
  - (b) prepare and publish together with that draft such explanatory or supporting materials as are necessary to ensure that those who have an interest in the Strategy are able to understand clearly the purpose, aims and likely effect of the draft;
  - (c) allow all those who wish to make representations on the draft Strategy a reasonable opportunity (within a period of not less than 42 days from the publication of the draft) in which to do so; and
  - (d) carefully and conscientiously consider all representations received by the Licensee or SONI during the specified period with a view to assessing whether any changes to the draft Strategy are necessary or desirable in the light of those representations.
  
6. The **fourth** requirement is that, before adopting the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
  - (a) prepare a document which:
    - (i) summarises the representations received by them from interested parties in response to the draft Strategy; and
    - (ii) provides a clear and reasoned explanation of whether the Licensee and SONI propose to make or not to make any changes to the draft Strategy in respect of each of those representations;

- (b) publish that document in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it; and
- (c) send a copy of the document to the Authority.

#### *Consideration of the Strategy by the Authority*

7. The **fifth** requirement is that, having complied with the first to the fourth requirements of this Part A but before adopting the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) prepare a further version of the Strategy incorporating such changes (if any) as they consider appropriate in the light of representations received on the draft Strategy;
  - (b) provide to the Authority a copy of that version of the Strategy as the document which they propose for adoption;
  - (c) provide to the Authority such further information or explanation in relation to the Strategy as the Authority may request;
  - (d) make any changes to that version of the Strategy which the Authority may, within 28 days of having been provided with a copy of it, direct them to make; and
  - (e) treat that version of the Strategy, including any changes directed by the Authority, as the final form of the document for the purposes of its adoption.

#### **Adoption of the Digitalisation Strategy**

8. The **sixth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall adopt the Digitalisation Strategy by no later than 31 March 2026, or such later date as

may be specified in a direction issued to each of them by the Authority pursuant to this paragraph 8.

9. The **seventh** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for the publication of the Digitalisation Strategy, following its adoption, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

## **Maintenance of the Digitalisation Strategy**

### *Reviews of the Strategy*

10. The **eighth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall, from time to time, jointly review the Digitalisation Strategy with the aim of ensuring that it remains accurate, up to date and fit for purpose, and shall in particular ensure that:
  - (a) in the case of the first such review, that review is completed by no later than the date which falls two years after the date on which the Strategy was initially adopted; and
  - (b) in the case of each subsequent review, the review is completed by no later than the date which falls two years after the date of completion of the immediately preceding review.
11. For these purposes, a review shall be treated as having been ‘completed’ only when the ninth to the eleventh requirements of this Part A have been satisfied in respect of it.

### *The Procedure for a Review of the Strategy*

12. The **ninth** requirement is that, for the purpose of each review of the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) prepare and publish, in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it, a document (the **Review Paper**) which:
    - (i) summarises their views as to the progress made in implementing the Strategy since (as applicable) its initial adoption or the completion of the immediately preceding review;
    - (ii) specifies whether they propose to make or not make changes to the Strategy, and in either case provides a clear and reasoned explanation for the proposal; and
    - (iii) sets out any changes to the Strategy which may be proposed;
  - (b) allow all those who wish to make representations on the content of the Review Paper, and in particular on any proposal to make or not to make changes to the Strategy, a reasonable opportunity (within a period of not less than 42 days from its publication) in which to do so;
  - (c) carefully and conscientiously consider all representations received by the Licensee or SONI during the allowed period with a view to assessing whether any variations to the proposal set out in the Review Paper are necessary or desirable in the light of those representations; and
  - (d) comply with such other requirements and take into account any guidance, in relation to the conduct of the review, as is specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance.
13. The **tenth** requirement is that, before completing each review of the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) prepare a document which:

- (i) summarises the representations received by them from interested parties in response to the Review Paper; and
  - (ii) provides a clear and reasoned explanation of whether the Licensee and SONI propose to make or not to make any changes to the Strategy in the light of those representations; and
- (b) publish that document in such a manner as is likely to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest in it, and send a copy of it to the Authority.

*Consideration of the Strategy by the Authority following a Review*

14. The **eleventh** requirement is that, having complied with the eighth to the tenth requirements of this Part A, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) provide to the Authority a statement which either:
    - (i) identifies the changes they propose to make to the Digitalisation Strategy; or
    - (ii) explains that they consider no changes to the Strategy to be appropriate at that time; and
  - (b) where the Authority, within 28 days of having been provided with that statement, directs them to do so:
    - (i) refrain from making any such changes to the Strategy as the direction may identify; and/or
    - (ii) make such other changes to the Strategy as the direction may identify.

*Post-Review Publication of the Strategy*

15. The **twelfth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for the publication of an updated version of the Digitalisation Strategy, following the completion of each review, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

*Archive of the Strategy*

16. The **thirteenth** requirement is that, following the first review of the Digitalisation Strategy, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for an archive of all previously published versions of the Strategy to be maintained and published in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

**Disputes – Resolution by the Authority**

17. The provisions of paragraphs 18 to 20 shall apply only where the Licensee and SONI, having each negotiated with each other in good faith and used all steps within their respective powers to establish a common position, are:
  - (a) in the case of the fifth requirement of this Part A, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to a version of the Strategy to be proposed for adoption; or
  - (b) in the case of the eleventh requirement of this Part A, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to the changes (if any) to be proposed to the Strategy.
18. Where this paragraph applies, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly, at the same time as they comply with all other aspects of the fifth or the eleventh requirement (as the case may be), and by exception to the obligation to submit to the Authority a single joint proposal, submit to the Authority instead:
  - (a) a statement identifying clearly:



- (i) the matters on which they have been able to agree and which are therefore the subject of a single joint proposal; and
    - (ii) the matters on which they have not been able to agree and in respect of which they each make different proposals; and
  - (b) in relation to those matters on which they have not been able to agree:
    - (i) a statement of the proposal preferred by each of them, which shall include (where relevant) a draft of the provisions of the Strategy that they would each respectively prefer to be adopted; and
    - (ii) a reasoned explanation of why each company prefers its own proposal as against the alternative proposal made by the other.
19. Where this paragraph applies, the Authority may, at the same time as it exercises its other functions as described in the fifth or the eleventh requirement (as the case may be), resolve the matters in dispute between the Licensee and SONI by determining either to accept the proposal preferred by one of them or to follow an alternative approach identified by the Authority, and in either case shall direct the Licensee and SONI to adopt a version of the Strategy which is consistent with that determination.
20. Where this paragraph applies, references in the fifth or the eleventh requirement (as the case may be) to 28 days shall be read instead as being references to 56 days.

### Key Definition

21. For the purposes of this condition, a **Digitalisation Strategy** means a document which sets out clearly:
- (a) the objectives of both the Licensee and SONI in relation to the Digitalisation of their respective regulated businesses, identifying clearly how such objectives:

- (i) align with the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland, including the interests of those consumers in receiving a fair share of the benefits generated from the managerial and operational implementation of the Strategy; and
  - (ii) demonstrate the Licensee and SONI's understanding of the needs of their stakeholders and prioritise the meeting of those needs which will benefit energy consumers in Northern Ireland;
- (b) the intended means by which those objectives are to be achieved by each of them, including the resources requiring to be committed to the process of achieving those objectives;
- (c) such target deadlines, standards of performance and/or deliverable outcomes as are to be set by them so as to ensure that their progress towards meeting the objectives is clearly measurable; and
- (d) such processes as are to be established by them so as to ensure that:
  - (i) their progress by reference to the targets is regularly measured and reported on, in a manner that is transparent and accountable to energy consumers in Northern Ireland; and
  - (ii) corrective actions are promptly taken by them in any case in which the targets are not met, so as to ensure that all appropriate steps continue to be taken with a view to achieving the objectives and so protect the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland.

## PART B. THE DIGITALISATION ACTION PLAN

### The Principal Obligations

22. The Licensee must:
- (a) in conjunction and cooperation with SONI, take all steps within its power to ensure that they prepare, adopt and maintain a Digitalisation Action Plan in accordance with the requirements of this Part B; and
  - (b) take all steps within its power to comply with the provisions of the Plan insofar as they are relevant to the Distribution Business.

### Preparation of the Digitalisation Action Plan

#### *The Form of the Plan*

23. The **first** requirement is that the Digitalisation Action Plan shall be structured so as to include separate sections, which shall respectively incorporate provisions:
- (a) specific to SONI in its role as the Transmission System Operator;
  - (b) specific to the Licensee in its separate:
    - (i) Transmission Owner Business; and
    - (ii) Distribution Business;
  - (c) common to both the Licensee and SONI; and
  - (d) requiring cooperation and joint working on the part of the Licensee and SONI.

*The Content of the Plan*

24. The **second** requirement is that the Digitalisation Action Plan shall be written so as to:
- (a) comply with any requirements specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance; and
  - (b) take into account any guidance, and be consistent with any principles or objectives, specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance.

*Consideration of the Plan by the Authority*

25. The **third** requirement is that, before adopting the Digitalisation Action Plan, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) prepare a draft of the Plan and provide a copy of it to the Authority;
  - (b) prepare and provide to the Authority together with that draft such explanatory or supporting materials as are necessary to ensure that the Authority may understand clearly the purpose, aims and likely effect of the draft;
  - (c) provide to the Authority such further information or explanation in relation to the Plan as the Authority may request;
  - (d) make any changes to the draft of the Plan which the Authority may, within 42 days of having been provided with a copy of it, direct them to make; and
  - (e) treat that version of the Plan, including any changes directed by the Authority, as the final form of the document for the purposes of its adoption

## Adoption of the Digitalisation Action Plan

26. The **fourth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall adopt the Digitalisation Action Plan by no later than 30 September 2026 or such later date as may be specified in a direction issued to each of them by the Authority pursuant to this paragraph 26.
27. The **fifth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for the publication of the Digitalisation Action Plan, following its adoption, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

## Maintenance of the Digitalisation Action Plan

### *Reviews of the Plan*

28. The **sixth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall, from time to time, jointly review the Digitalisation Action Plan with the aim of ensuring that it remains accurate, up to date, fit for purpose and aligned with the Digitalisation Strategy, and shall in particular ensure that:
  - (a) in the case of the first such review, that review is completed by no later than the date which falls twelve months after the date on which the Plan was initially adopted; and
  - (b) in the case of each subsequent review, the review is completed by no later than the date which falls twelve months after the date of completion of the immediately preceding review.
29. For these purposes, a review shall be treated as having been ‘completed’ only when the seventh requirement of this Part B has been satisfied in respect of it.

*The Procedure for a Review of the Plan and its Consideration by the Authority*

30. The **seventh** requirement is that, for the purpose of each review of the Digitalisation Action Plan, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly:
- (a) comply with such requirements and take into account any guidance, in relation to the conduct of the review, as is specified by the Authority in the DSAP Instructions and Guidance;
  - (b) prepare and provide to the Authority a document which:
    - (i) summarises their views as to the progress made in giving effect to the Plan since (as applicable) its initial adoption or the completion of the immediately preceding review;
    - (ii) specifies whether they propose to make or not make changes to the Plan, and in either case provides a clear and reasoned explanation for the proposal; and
    - (iii) sets out any changes to the Plan which may be proposed;
  - (c) where the Authority, within 28 days of having been provided with that document, directs them to do so:
    - (i) refrain from making any such changes to the Plan as the direction may identify; and/or
    - (ii) make such other changes to the Plan as the direction may identify.

### *Post-Review Publication of the Plan*

31. The **eighth** requirement is that the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for the publication of an updated version of the Digitalisation Action Plan, following the completion of each review, in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

### *Archive of the Plan*

32. The **ninth** requirement is that, following the first review of the Digitalisation Action Plan, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly arrange for an archive of all previously published versions of the Plan to be maintained and published in such manner as to ensure that it will be reasonably accessible to all those who may have an interest in it.

### **Disputes – Resolution by the Authority**

33. The provisions of paragraphs 34 to 36 shall apply only where the Licensee and SONI, having each negotiated with each other in good faith and used all steps within their respective powers to establish a common position, are:
- (a) in the case of the third requirement of this Part B, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to a version of the Plan to be proposed for adoption; or
  - (b) in the case of the seventh requirement of this Part B, unable to reach agreement in all respects as to the changes (if any) to be proposed to the Plan.
34. Where this paragraph applies, the Licensee and SONI shall jointly, at the same time as they comply with all other aspects of the third or the seventh requirement (as the case may be), and by exception to the obligation to submit to the Authority a single joint proposal, submit to the Authority instead:
- (a) a statement identifying clearly:

- (i) the matters on which they have been able to agree and which are therefore the subject of a single joint proposal; and
    - (ii) the matters on which they have not been able to agree and in respect of which they each make different proposals; and
  - (b) in relation to those matters on which they have not been able to agree:
    - (i) a statement of the proposal preferred by each of them, which shall include (where relevant) a draft of the provisions of the Plan that they would each respectively prefer to be adopted; and
    - (ii) a reasoned explanation of why each company prefers its own proposal as against the alternative proposal made by the other.
35. Where this paragraph applies, the Authority may, at the same time as it exercises its other functions as described in the third or the seventh requirement (as the case may be), resolve the matters in dispute between the Licensee and SONI by determining either to accept the proposal preferred by one of them or to follow an alternative approach identified by the Authority, and in either case shall direct the Licensee and SONI to adopt a version of the Plan which is consistent with that determination.
36. Where this paragraph applies:
- (a) the reference in the third requirement to 42 days shall be read instead as being a reference to 84 days; and
  - (b) the reference in the seventh requirement to 28 days shall be read instead as being a reference to 56 days.



## Key Definition

37. For the purposes of this condition, a **Digitalisation Action Plan** means a document which is designed to give practical effect to the Digitalisation Strategy by setting out in detail how the Licensee and SONI will, taking into account the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland and the needs of their stakeholders (where meeting those stakeholder needs will benefit energy consumers in Northern Ireland), make progress towards successfully delivering the work required to ensure the effective managerial and operational implementation and fulfilment of the Strategy.

### PART C. THE DSAP INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDANCE

38. The Authority may following consultation with the Licensee and such other persons as it considers appropriate, issue, and from time to time amend, a document which shall be known as the **DSAP Instructions and Guidance**, which may set out:
- (a) requirements to be complied with by the Licensee and SONI in relation to the form or content of the Digitalisation Strategy and the Digitalisation Action Plan;
  - (b) guidance as to the form or content of the Strategy and the Plan, which may include in particular a statement of principles and objectives with which the Strategy and the Plan are to be consistent; and
  - (c) requirements or guidance as to the conduct of any reviews of the Strategy and the Plan.
39. The DSAP Instructions and Guidance may incorporate such provisions as the Authority may from time to time consider appropriate, including in particular provisions as to:

- (a) how the Licensee and SONI should ensure that data which they control or produce is used to generate benefits for energy consumers in Northern Ireland;
- (b) the objectives and targets to be adopted as part of the Digitalisation Strategy and how they are to be measured; and
- (c) the means of ensuring that the performance of the Licensee and SONI in meeting the targets and achieving the objectives is made transparent and so that the companies may be publicly accountable for it.

## PART D. DEFINITIONS

40. For the purposes of this condition:

<b>Digitalisation</b>	means the transformation of a business by the use of digital technologies throughout the entire range of its activities so as to ensure that the business operates with maximum efficiency and is able to realise the full value (including in the form of public and stakeholder benefit which is aligned with the interests of energy consumers in Northern Ireland) of such data as it may from time to time control or produce.
<b>Digitalisation Action Plan</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 37.
<b>Digitalisation Strategy</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 21.
<b>DSAP Instructions and</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in

<b>Guidance</b>	paragraph 38.
<b>Plan</b>	means the Digitalisation Action Plan.
<b>Review Paper</b>	has the meaning given to that expression in paragraph 12.
<b>Strategy</b>	means the Digitalisation Strategy.
<b>SONI</b>	means SONI Limited acting in its capacity as the Transmission System Operator.

## Annex E

### Article 14(2) Licence Modification Notice

#### THE NORTHERN IRELAND AUTHORITY FOR UTILITY REGULATION NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 14(2) OF THE ELECTRICITY (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1992 (AS AMENDED)

#### MODIFICATIONS PROPOSED TO SONI LIMITED'S ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION LICENCE

The Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (hereafter referred to as “the Authority”) hereby gives notice under Article 14(2) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as “the Order”) as follows:

1. The Authority proposes to modify the licence granted to SONI Limited (the “Licensee”) under Article 10(1)(b) of the Order authorising it to participate in the transmission of electricity (the “Licence”).
2. The proposed modifications are to include in the Licence a new condition (Condition 43) as set out at Annex B to the document “Consultation on Proposed Licence Modifications regarding Digitalisation to NIE Networks Transmission, Distribution and SONI Electricity Licences” (“the Consultation”), of which this notice also forms part. Annex B to the Consultation should be treated as incorporated into this notice by reference.
3. The principal purpose of the proposed modifications is to implement and give legal effect to our policy position, as set out in the Consultation, for SONI to work together with NIE Networks Limited and jointly develop, adopt, maintain, and publish and comply with a Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan.
4. The Consultation provides a full statement of both the effects of the proposed modifications and the reasons for them in section 2 and should be treated as incorporated into this notice by reference. The Authority is provisionally satisfied that the proposed modifications, are best calculated to meet its statutory objectives and duties at Article 12 of the Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 as it is in the interests of consumers for SONI to operate with maximum efficiency and realise the full value of data it controls or produces including to produce consumer benefits.
5. The Authority has, pursuant to Article 14(4) of the Order sent a copy of this notice to the Licensee, the Department for the Economy and the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland and published it on the Authority's website for the purposes of bringing to the attention of persons likely to be affected by the making of the proposed modifications.

6. Any representations with respect to the proposed modifications may be made to the Authority by no later than 26 November 2024 at 17:00.
7. Contact details for making representations are set out in the Consultation.

Dated this 1st day of October 2024



**John French**

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

**cc**

**Raymond Gormley, CCNI  
Sarah Brady, DfE  
Kevin O'Neill, SONI Limited**

## Annex F

### Article 14(2) Licence Modification Notice

#### **THE NORTHERN IRELAND AUTHORITY FOR UTILITY REGULATION NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 14(2) OF THE ELECTRICITY (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1992 (AS AMENDED)**

#### **MODIFICATIONS PROPOSED TO NIE NETWORKS LIMITED'S ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION LICENCE**

The Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (hereafter referred to as "the Authority") hereby gives notice under Article 14(2) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as "the Order") as follows:

1. The Authority proposes to modify the licence granted to NIE Networks Limited (the "Licensee") under Article 10(1)(b) of the Order authorising it to participate in the transmission of electricity (the "Licence").
2. The proposed modifications are to include in the Licence a new condition (Condition 43) as set out at Annex C to the document " Consultation on Proposed Licence Modifications regarding Digitalisation to NIE Networks Transmission, Distribution and SONI Electricity Licences" ("the Consultation"), of which this notice also forms part. Annex C to the Consultation should be treated as incorporated into this notice by reference.
3. The principal purpose of the proposed modifications is to implement and give legal effect to our policy position, as set out in the Consultation, for NIE Networks Limited to work together with SONI and jointly develop, adopt, maintain, and publish and comply with a Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan.
4. The Consultation provides a full statement of both the effects of the proposed modifications and the reasons for them in section 2 and should be treated as incorporated into this notice by reference. The Authority is provisionally satisfied that the proposed modifications, are best calculated to meet its statutory objectives and duties at Article 12 of the Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 as it is in the interests of consumers for NIE Networks Limited to operate with maximum efficiency and realise the full value of data it controls or produces including to produce consumer benefits.

5. The Authority has, pursuant to Article 14(4) of the Order sent a copy of this notice to the Licensee, the Department for the Economy and the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland and published it on the Authority's website for the purposes of bringing to the attention of persons likely to be affected by the making of the proposed modifications.
6. Any representations with respect to the proposed modifications may be made to the Authority by no later than 26 November 2024 at 17:00.
7. Contact details for making representations are set out in the Consultation.

Dated this 1<sup>st</sup> day of October 2024



**John French**

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

**cc**

**Raymond Gormley, CCNI**  
**Sarah Brady, DfE**  
**Carl Hashim, NIE Networks**

## **Annex G**

### **Article 14(2) Licence Modification Notice**

#### **THE NORTHERN IRELAND AUTHORITY FOR UTILITY REGULATION NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 14(2) OF THE ELECTRICITY (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1992 (AS AMENDED)**

#### **MODIFICATIONS PROPOSED TO NIE NETWORKS LIMITED'S ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION LICENCE**

The Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (hereafter referred to as “the Authority”) hereby gives notice under Article 14(2) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as “the Order”) as follows:

1. The Authority proposes to modify the licence granted to NIE Networks Limited (the “Licensee”) under Article 10(1)(b) of the Order authorising it to participate in the distribution of electricity (the “Licence”).
2. The proposed modifications are to include in the Licence a new condition (Condition 46) as set out at Annex D to the document “ Consultation on Proposed Licence Modifications regarding Digitalisation to NIE Networks Transmission, Distribution and SONI Electricity Licences” (“the Consultation”), of which this notice also forms part. Annex D to the Consultation should be treated as incorporated into this notice by reference.
3. The principal purpose of the proposed modifications is to implement and give legal effect to our policy position, as set out in the Consultation, for NIE Networks Limited to work together with SONI and jointly develop, adopt, maintain, and publish and comply with a Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan.
4. The Consultation provides a full statement of both the effects of the proposed modifications and the reasons for them in section 2 and should be treated as incorporated into this notice by reference. The Authority is provisionally satisfied that the proposed modifications, are best calculated to meet its



statutory objectives and duties at Article 12 of the Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 as it is in the interests of consumers for NIE Networks Limited to operate with maximum efficiency and realise the full value of data it controls or produces including to produce consumer benefits.

5. The Authority has, pursuant to Article 14(4) of the Order sent a copy of this notice to the Licensee, the Department for the Economy and the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland and published it on the Authority's website for the purposes of bringing to the attention of persons likely to be affected by the making of the proposed modifications.
6. Any representations with respect to the proposed modifications may be made to the Authority by no later than 26 November 2024 at 17:00.
7. Contact details for making representations are set out in the Consultation.

Dated this 1<sup>st</sup> day of October 2024



**John French**

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

**cc**

**Raymond Gormley, CCNI**  
**Sarah Brady, DfE**  
**Carl Hashim, NIE Networks**