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Our Ref: CNO/E/TH/252

Dear Nick

Request for Authority's consent to further defer Connection Offer Timelines for the Tidal Ventures Limited and Fair Head Tidal Energy Park Limited Connection Applications

Thank you for your letter of 24 October 2017 requesting further consent from the Authority for SONI to extend the required three month timeline to issue a connection offer to Tidal Ventures Limited and Fair Head Tidal Energy Park Limited Connection Applications.

Having considered your letter we grant an extension to 17 May 2018 for these connection applications as you request. We also wish to remind SONI that we remain of the view that granting of extensions should be the exception rather than the norm and so SONI should be mindful of this if considering further extensions in the future.

Background

SONI received connection applications for two tidal generation projects simultaneously on 17 June 2016, with a combined Maximum Export Capacity (MEC) of 200MW. The projects in question are Tidal Ventures Limited, seeking 100MW MEC for its project at Torr Head, and Fair Head Tidal Energy Park Limited seeking 100MW MEC for its project at Fair Head.

To date we have received and granted three requests from SONI to extend the required three month timeline to issue connection offers to the projects in question. The latest extensions, which we granted on 27 July 2017, are due to expire on 30 November 2017.

SONI's request for further connection offer extension

You ask for a further extension for these connection offers from 30 November 2017 to 17 May 2018 under Condition 25 of the TSO licence. We summarise the following information which SONI provides in support of its request as follows:

- The connection applicants are not in a position to accept the Least Cost Technically Acceptable (LCTA) option to connect the 200MW MEC (i.e. 100MW+ 100MW).¹
- The applicants are now undertaking further studies to understand whether to reduce the projects MEC to allow connection via a single circuit 110Kv overhead line, and so need to revise their applications accordingly.
- The proposed extension will therefore avoid the connection applicants, NIE Networks and SONI wasting time and resources by proceeding to develop a connection offer which the connection applicants have stated would not be acceptable to them.
- SONI has consulted both the connection applicants throughout the process. Both connection applicants support the request for extension.
- The applicants expect to complete their studies and submit a revised application to SONI on or before 2 February 2018.

The Authority's decision

The relevant section of the TSO licence is within Condition 25, Requirement to Offer Terms – Users and Connectees, paragraph 5 and 7. These clauses require a connection offer to be made not later than 3 months unless consent to a longer period has been approved by the Authority.

You now request a further extension of the limit as provided for in Condition 25 (7) from 31 July 2017 to May 2018 for both Tidal Connections.

We welcome that your request meets the minimum requirements and process for requesting and granting an extension as set out in our 31 May 2017 connections review decision paper.²

Having considered your request and reviewed the responses from Tidal Ventures Limited (Open Hydro) and from Fair Head Tidal Energy Park (DP Energy), the Authority is able to agree to the extension period requested.

We note that this extension letter will be published on our website. We will also keep a record of the information and decision on the Public Electricity Register as required by the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

We ask to be kept informed of progress regarding the connection application due on 2 February 2018 to ensure that the revised 90 day offer timeline is workable.

¹ An overhead line from the connection points at Ballycastle to the existing Transmission System at Kells via a 275kV single circuit to the existing transmission system.

² <https://www.uregni.gov.uk/sites/uregni/files/media-files/Electricity%20Connections%20Decision%20FINAL.pdf>

Yours sincerely,



Tanya Hedley
Director of Compliance and Network Operations

CC'd

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