

# Wider Access to the Balancing Mechanism

Onboarding and Registration  
Guidance for Suppliers and Virtual  
Lead Parties

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## Version Control

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**Version**   **Date**   **Change**

v.0.7	22/04/26	Updated the separate onboarding and process guidance into one document, added further clarity regarding process steps.
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## 1. Introduction

NESO enabled Wider Access to the Balancing Mechanism by creating a new route to market in 2019, this has promoted competition and provided the Electricity National Control Centre (ENCC) with greater access to flexibility.

Wider Access is continuing to lower cost to consumers, improve quality of service and contribute towards zero carbon operation of Great Britain's electricity system.

NESO has removed barriers to market by:

- Improving existing routes to market via the Supplier (SVA) route
- Developed new routes to market through framework changes
- Enhanced and developed new IT systems to improve data flows between NESO and market participants so that they are more efficient and effective.
- Introduced Small Aggregated Asset (SAA) Metering Capacity Route Derogation
- Introduced additional BAU operational metering standards for small scale assets

## 2. Routes to the Balancing Mechanism

There are currently 3 routes for entering the Balancing Mechanism:

1. The traditional route is via NESO’s Connections team who will guide you through this process. This requires a NESO Connection Agreement in the form of a BCA, BEGA or BELLA.
2. Supplier route, a Supply License must be held, and CUSC accession and Supplier Agreement with NESO is required.
3. Virtual Lead Party route, CUSC accession and VLP Agreement with NESO is required.

Route	Contract	BMU Category Type	Relevant NESO Team(s)
Traditional	Project specific Connection Agreement – (BCA, BEGA, BELLA)	Units are registered as Primary Balancing Mechanism Unit (PBMU)	<b>Connections Team</b> <a href="mailto:transmissionconnections@neso.energy">transmissionconnections@neso.energy</a>
Supplier – Via Wider Access	Role Specific Connection Agreement for Registered Supplier with Supply License.	Units are registered as Additional Supplier Balancing Mechanism Unit (ABMU)	<b>BM Registration Team</b> <a href="mailto:bm.registration@neso.energy">bm.registration@neso.energy</a>
Virtual Lead Party (VLP) – Via Wider Access	Role Specific Connection Agreement for VLP.	Units are Registered as Secondary Balancing Mechanism Unit (SBMU)	<b>BM Registration Team</b> <a href="mailto:bm.registration@neso.energy">bm.registration@neso.energy</a>

### 2.1 Traditional Route to the Balancing Mechanism

The traditional route requires signing a NESO Connection Agreement. These take the form of:

- ✓ Bilateral Connection Agreement (BCA)
- ✓ Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement (BEGA)
- ✓ Bilateral Embedded License Exemptible Large Power Station Agreement (BELLA)

*Note – BCAs are for new connections to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS). Embedded generators 50MW or over (not aggregated) can enter either a BEGA or a BELLA (depending on location).*

Through this process parties will be required to accede to the Connections Use of System Code (CUSC), through NESO and the Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) through Elexon.

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The NESO Connections Team are responsible for taking parties through the connection process to go live within the Balancing Mechanism. Please visit the Connections Team [website](#) for some more information.

## 2.2 Supplier Route to the Balancing Mechanism

The Supplier route requires a party to have a Supply Licence and be a registered supplier with Elexon who will issue 14 base BMU's. Parties **cannot** use these base BMU's to actively participate.

The Supplier route requires registration through the NESO Single Markets Platform (SMP). Parties will register Supplier Additional BMUs with both NESO and Elexon. Under this route aggregation is permitted but is limited to Grid Supply Point Groups (Distribution Network Owner areas). The minimum size for a Balancing Mechanism Unit is 1MW.

Through this process parties will be required to accede to the Connections Use of System Code (CUSC), through NESO and the Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) through Elexon.

The NESO Connections Team can share the agreement required to actively participate with Additional Supplier BMU's. This includes an appendix outlining the various technical and Grid Code requirements. The NESO Connections Team will process this agreement. More information can be found [here](#).

You will need to complete a Use Of System Application informing NESO of your intended route to market, NESO Connections Team will then issue you with an invoice for your application fee, once this is paid, you will be issued with a Supplier Agreement (and Connection Use of System Code (CUSC) if applicable) to be signed, NESO will then countersign the Supplier Agreement and return to you. Your countersigned copy of your agreement is required in order to proceed with your BM Registration.

## 2.3 Virtual Lead Party (VLP) Route to the Balancing Mechanism

The Virtual Lead Party (VLP) route requires registration through the NESO Single Markets Platform (SMP). Parties will register Secondary BMUs with both NESO and Elexon. Under this route aggregation is permitted but is limited to Grid Supply Point Groups (Distribution Network Owner areas). The minimum size for a Balancing Mechanism Unit is 1MW.

Through this process parties will be required to accede to the Connections Use of System Code (CUSC), through NESO and the Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) through Elexon.

The NESO Connections Team can share the agreement required to actively participate with Secondary BMU's. This includes an appendix outlining the various technical and Grid Code

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requirements. The NESO Connections Team will process this agreement. More information can be found [here](#).

You will need to complete a Use Of System Application informing NESO of your intended route to market, NESO Connections Team will then issue you with an invoice for your application fee, once this is paid, you will be issued with a Virtual Lead Party Agreement (and Connection Use of System Code (CUSC) if applicable) to be signed, NESO will then countersign the Virtual Lead Party Agreement and return to you. Your countersigned copy of your agreement is required in order to proceed with your BM Registration.

## 2.4 Small Aggregated Asset (SAA) Metering Capacity

As part of our ongoing commitment to remove barriers to participation in Distributed Flexibility, NESO has agreed to admit up to 300MW of small aggregated assets either as a Supplier or a Virtual Lead Party with relaxed metering requirements into the [Balancing Mechanism \(BM\)](#).

This allows for greater consumer participation in flexibility, allowing capacity from small scale assets, such as EV chargers and electric heating systems, to be used to balance the electricity system in real time by our control room. To enable this development, we will be allowing this capped cohort of assets - each with an individual capacity of less than 1MW - into the BM as part of an aggregated unit with relaxed requirements for operational metering.

Currently, the BAU standard requires metering for assets in the BM to deliver readings every second with an accuracy of +/- 1%. Following the Power Responsive [trial](#), SAA Metering Capacity has relaxed operational metering standards to allow small scale aggregated assets into the BM at, of +/-2.5% and 60-second metering reads. Guidance can be found [here](#).

If you are eligible for this route to market, you will be required to sign a Supplier or Virtual Lead Party SAA Metering Capacity Agreement, which captures these relaxed metering standards.

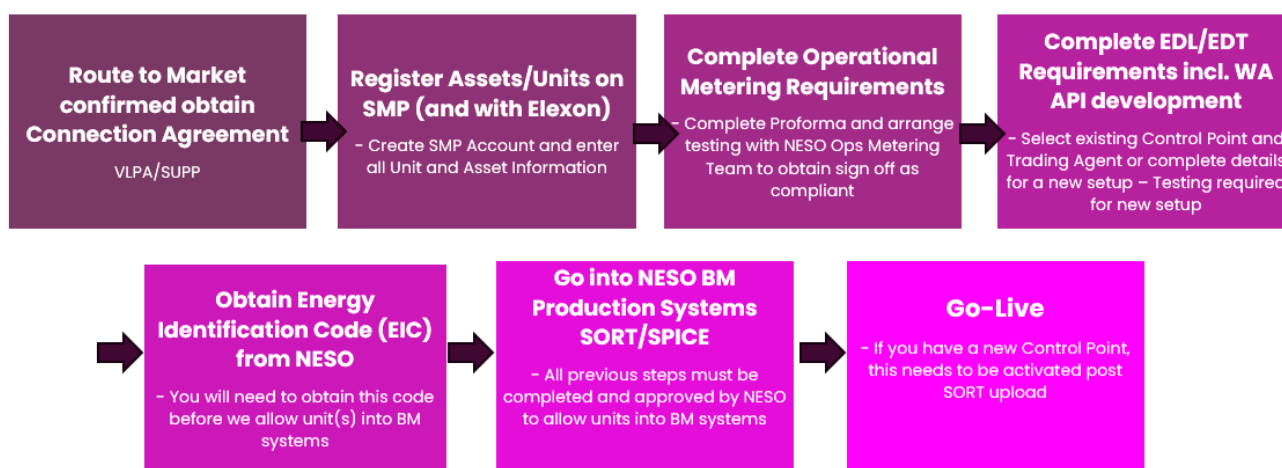
Please reach out to the Power Responsive Team for more information around eligibility

- [power.responsive@neso.energy](mailto:power.responsive@neso.energy)

### 3. Registration for Wider Access

#### 3.1 High Level Process Steps for Wider Access

The below shows the high-level process steps all Wider Access (so both Supplier and Virtual Lead Party) providers are required to go through from obtaining the correct Connection Agreement to Go-Live once uploaded into NESO BM Systems.



#### 3.2 Introduction to Registration

Wider Access refers to parties accessing the Balancing Mechanism as either a Supplier or as a Virtual Lead Party. Once parties have chosen the appropriate access route, they are required to register with both NESO and Elexon. This section outlines the steps required to register and relevant supporting information.

Parties seeking the Traditional route via a NESO Connection Agreement will be assigned a Connections Contract Manager (CCM) to take them through this process. The rest of the document is aimed towards the Supplier and VLP route.

Please be aware that under the European codes, Supplier and VLP registration timelines can take up to 5 months in total for the end-to-end process. We advise progressing discussions as early as possible. If this is your first BM application, you will need to have new credentials created in NESO systems and these will need to be tested. If you are already set up within NESO BM systems and are using the same credentials for your application, testing for these credentials is not required, making your application and registration quicker. All new BM Units, regardless of any previous registrations or connectivity with NESO systems, need to go into NESO BM System SORT, and this upload takes place once every 8 weeks.

Our BM Registration Guidance document found [here](#) outlines these timelines in more detail.

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### 3.3 Supplier Additional BMU Registration

Parties interested in the Supplier route will be required to register Additional Supplier BMU's with NESO and Elexon. These registrations can run in parallel. Steps required are below:

Review the [BM Registration Guidance Document](#).

Ensure you have the relevant agreements in place – relevant Supplier Use of System Agreement and CUSC, if you do not have these, the Connections team will assist. The NESO cost of obtaining your Supplier agreement is £5000 plus VAT. Please visit the Connections [website](#) for more guidance.

Engage with NESO BM Registration Team to review the unit details. The Team can advise you regarding the options around structuring BMUs.

Complete an Additional BMU Registration application for each of the ABMU(s) you are looking to register via the [Single Markets Platform](#)

The BM Registration Team will create and provide your Additional BMU ID(s) and approve your application. You will need this in order to register the unit with Elexon.

Register your BMU(s) with Elexon. This process can run in parallel to NESO registration process. Section below expands on Elexon registration.

Further documents and guidance to help are on the Wider Access Webpage which is [here](#)

### 3.4 Virtual Lead Party Secondary BMU Registration

Parties interested in the Virtual Lead Party route will be required to register Secondary BMU(s) with NESO and Elexon. These registrations can run in parallel. Steps required are below:

Review the [BM Registration Guidance Document](#).

Ensure you have the relevant agreements in place – relevant Virtual Lead Party Agreement and CUSC if you do not have these, the Connections team will assist. The NESO cost of obtaining your Virtual Lead Party Agreement is £5000 plus VAT. Please visit the Connections [website](#) for more guidance.

Engage with NESO BM Registration Team to review the unit details. The Team can advise you regarding the options around structuring BMUs.

Complete a Secondary BMU Registration application for each of the SBMU(s) you are looking to register via the [Single Markets Platform](#)

The NESO BM Registration Team will create and provide your Secondary BMU ID(s) and approve your application. You will need this in order to register the unit with Elexon.

Register your BMU(s) with Elexon. This process can run in parallel to NESO registration process. Section below expands on Elexon registration.

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Further documents and guidance to help are on the Wider Access Webpage which is [here](#).

### 3.5 Wider Access Requirement Comparison

Activity	Supplier	Virtual Lead Party
Agreement Type	Supplier Agreement	VLP Agreement
Agreement Cost	£5000 + VAT	£5000 + VAT
Where to Register BMU(s)?	SMP	SMP
SMP Application to be submitted to NESO BM Registration	One week prior to SORT cut-off date	One week prior to SORT cut-off date
BMU Category Type	ABMU	SBMU
Aggregate - within GSP Group	Yes	Yes
Minimum BMU Size	1MW	1MW
Operational Metering Required	Yes	Yes
Operational Metering to be booked with NESO Team	4 weeks prior to SORT cut-off date	4 weeks prior to SORT cut-off date
EDL/EDT Required	Yes	Yes
Register with Elexon	Yes	Yes
EIC Code Required	Yes	Yes

### 3.6 Elexon Registration

During the NESO registration process parties will also be required to complete the necessary registration steps with Elexon. These processes can run in parallel.

The requirements are outlined in the [BM Registration Guidance Document](#). These can be completed either on BSCP forms, or online via Elexon's Kinnect Portal.

If you are a new Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) Party, you may need to go through Elexon Performance Assurance Board (PAB). Please do speak to Elexon about this and they will provide you with more information. Elexon are not able to formally register your BMU(s) and send this confirmation over to NESO until you have obtained PAB approval. In order to allow your BMU(s) into NESO systems, we require Elexon registration confirmation.

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For more information regarding the Elexon registration steps, costs and timescales please visit the Elexon [website](#).

Additional information regarding BMUs can also be found [here](#).

Please follow this [link](#) to learn specifically about VLP registration with Elexon.

For parties looking to be an Asset Metered VLP (AMVLP) please contact the market entry team at Elexon to understand requirements. AMVLP is an Elexon role, if you wish to be an AMVLP and access the BM, you will need to complete the VLP process with NESO.

For parties looking at becoming a Virtual Trading Party (VTP), please speak to Elexon. A VTP role alone cannot participate in the BM. To be in the BM, you would need to also become a VLP.

Please contact Elexon for more information on AMVLP and VTP - [market.entry@elexon.co.uk](mailto:market.entry@elexon.co.uk)

## 4. System Requirements for Accessing the Balancing Mechanism

### 4.1 Introduction to NESO System Requirements

There are several systems required before a unit can become active in the BM to ensure they have the ability to communicate with the Electricity National Control Centre (ENCC). These systems are:

- Electronic Dispatch Logging (EDL)
- Electronic Data Transfer (EDT) and Control/System Telephony
- Operational Metering data submission

In addition to communication systems and operational metering, providers also need to submit certain data sets for reporting purposes. These are flagged in the end of this section under Industry Reporting.

### 4.2 Control Room Communications – Electronic Dispatch Logging (EDL) and Electronic Data Transfer (EDT)

Electronic Data Transfer (EDT) and Electronic Dispatch Logging (EDL) are 2 systems which are used for control communications.

EDT allows the BMU to submit technical and commercial parameters about the unit and EDL allows the ENCC to send instructions to the BMU.

To ensure the appropriate communications systems are in place parties can:

- Utilise an existing connection that your business already has, or
- Utilise another company's connection with their agreement, or
- Use a third-party software provider connection, or
- Use the WA API – either a third-party software connection or you can develop this connection to NESO yourself

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## 4.3 Operational Metering

Active BMU's are required to supply operational metering data on the volumes they deliver, with variations depending on the type of generating technology.

Further guidance on operational metering can be found on the Wider Access webpage [here](#).

Operational Metering guidance for <100MW assets can be found [here](#) on the website.

Communication Standards Document is available on the website [here](#).

Once you have started your registration, you need to contact [OpsMetering@neso.energy](mailto:OpsMetering@neso.energy) as soon as possible to start the process of integrating into the operational metering system as this will take some time.

**It is essential you allow enough time** for testing with the Operational Metering Team, you need to have your testing time **booked in the with team 4 weeks prior to the SORT cut-off date**. This allows enough time for testing and any re-testing to be completed. This is crucial if you are targeting a specific BM system upload.

## 4.4 Industry Reporting

NESO operates the MODIS system to report market data for compliance with the European Transparency (ETR) and REMIT regulations. This includes unavailability data for generating and consumption units from Market Participants relating to Articles 7 and 15 of the ETR regulation.

This information is forwarded to ELEXON who publish [BM Reports](#) and share with ENTSO-e for publication on the European Transparency Platform.

Before submitting this data, participants need to request EIC (Energy Identification) Codes through our Local Issuing Office (LIO) – details here: [LIO for EIC codes | National Energy System Operator](#)

Obtaining this code is a requirement that needs to be completed before we will allow your BMU to go into NESO systems.

Once codes have been allocated, participants can contact our MODIS team at: [box.modis.business@neso.energy](mailto:box.modis.business@neso.energy) to arrange the setup of new units for new ETR and REMIT data submission.

## 5. Onboarding Process for Wider Access

### 5.1 Individual Steps for Onboarding and Registration

This section explains what steps are required to become registered to participate in the BM

The Single Markets Platform (SMP) Guidance Document is on the website [here](#) and will help you complete your SMP application.

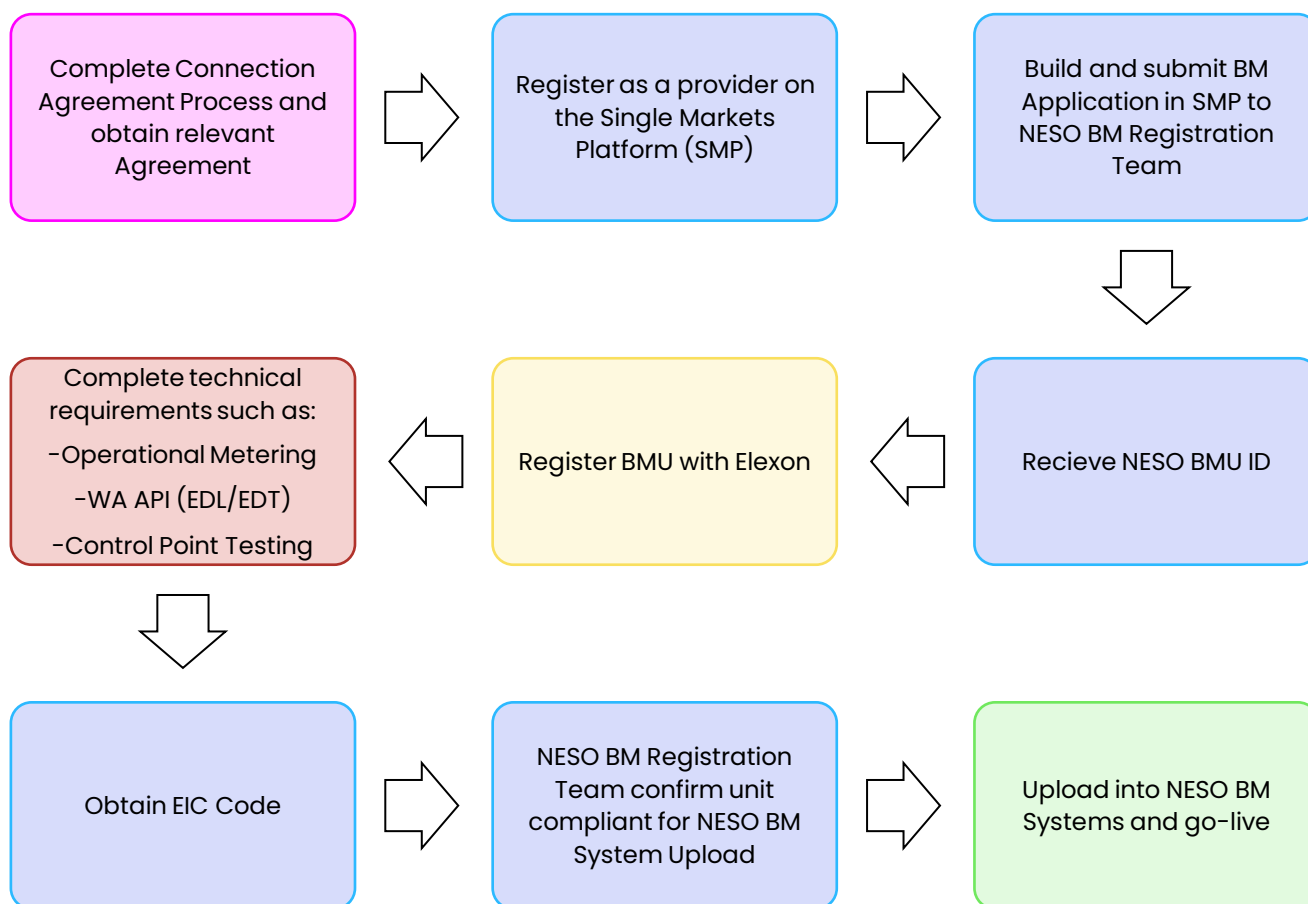
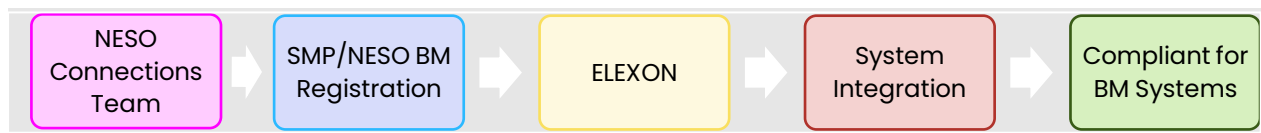
1. **Complete Use of System Application and send to the Connections Team.** The team will process this and provide you with the invoice. Once this invoice is paid, you will be issued with CUSC accession (if required) and a VLP Agreement to sign. You will sign and return these documents to the team for NESO countersignature and date. Once these documents have been countersigned by NESO and returned to yourselves you will need them to upload with your pre-qualification application. Further information regarding this process, and details on how to contact the team can be found [here](#)
2. **Request Single Markets Platform Access** using the guidance document linked above to begin building your application. You can start your application in parallel with completing the documentation mentioned above. You will need to have a NESO countersigned agreement to be able to submit your application.
3. **Begin building your SMP application**, the guidance on the link above can help you with the registration fields in SMP, however, if you have large aggregation of sub assets, you can use the SMP API to upload the information on your behalf. The SMP Team will be able to support you with this. *You need to have submitted your application to NESO BM Registration Team no later that one week before the SORT cut-off date to allow NESO to process, review and approve your application.*
4. **Enter/Create your Control Point, Trading Agent and Trading Point details into SMP** and assign these to your unit. The NESO BM Registration Team will assist you with this. If this is your first application, please reach out to the NESO BM Registration Team as they will need to create and share credentials with you. The team can be contacted at [Bmu.registration@neso.energy](mailto:Bmu.registration@neso.energy)
5. **The BM Registration Team will create and provide your BMU ID(s)**, this can be requested prior to the application being approved but only after the agreements are in place.
6. **Once your application is complete, please submit your application**, NESO BM Registration Team will review and approve. If there are any queries regarding your application, the team will reach out to you.
7. **Speak to Elexon**, they have processes which you will need to ensure you follow in parallel to NESO processes. Be aware that Elexon will have process timescales and deadlines which you will need to be aware of when completing NESO processes.

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8. **WA API Development if required**, if you are developing the WA API yourself, you will be asked to provide names for the API sandbox development environment. API development starts from here. The team can be contacted at [box.wideraccessapi@neso.energy](mailto:box.wideraccessapi@neso.energy)
9. **Operational Metering**, you will need to contact the Operational Metering Team to begin Operational Metering requirements for your connection - [OpsMetering@neso.energy](mailto:OpsMetering@neso.energy).
10. **Obtain your Energy Identification Code (EIC)** through our Local Issuing Office (LIO) – details here: [LIO for EIC codes | National Energy System Operator](#)

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## 5.2 High Level Process Flow Chart for Wider Access



## 6. Requirements for NESO BM Systems Upload

### 6.1 NESO BM Systems

NESO BM Registration Team will use the information provided in your SMP application to update BM Systems – **S**ystem **O**peration in **R**eal **T**ime (SORT), and **S**cheduling **P**rocess in a **C**ontrolled **E**nvironment (SPICE).

SORT is the system used in the Control Room by the Energy Team to instruct assets – using BOAs (bid offer acceptances). This system has a planned upload for new units to become visible to the Control Room once every 8 weeks. The dates are published in advance in the BM Registration Guidance on the website. There is a cut-off date, an upload date and a backup date. the cut off date is the date you need to be aiming to have all requirements completed by. The upload date is the day the Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) Teams within NESO complete the upload. The backup date is there in case the upload date cannot go ahead.

SPICE is used the Control Room by the Strategy Team for planning and scheduling assets. SPICE can be updated by the BM Registration Team at any point, there is no planned upload for the system.

### 6.2 Checklist for Requirements to be completed for SORT

NESO Registration Requirements to be completed by SORT Cut-off date	
✓	SMP Application completed and approved by NESO BM Registration Team
✓	Elexon Registration (from Elexon) must be received by NESO BM Registration Team
✓	Any new EDL/EDT connections and trading agent/credentials need to be set up and tested.
✓	All Operational Metering to be completed and have this signed off by the NESO Operational Metering team.
✓	You need to have obtained your Energy Identification Codes (EIC) through our Local Issuing Office (LIO).
✓	If you are using the WA API, all WA API units must pass BPITS test before they can be uploaded into SORT. The NESO BM Registration Team will issue you with a valid certificate.

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Once the above have been completed, your unit will be prepared for NESO BM System SORT Upload.

Any new connections will have their control point activated shortly after the upload and be able to go live usually within a few days. NESO will co-ordinate this with you directly.

NESO BM System uploads – often referred to as the SORT upload, takes place every 8 weeks. We publish a cut-off date, an upload date, and a backup date. The cut-off date is the date you need to have all the above requirements completed by. **If they are not completed by this date, we are unable to enter your unit into the SORT upload**, you will then need to complete the requirements and enter the next one on the schedule. The backup date is provided in case due to any critical system reasoning we need to revert to another date for the upload. If the backup date is to be used, you will be notified by the NESO BM Registration Team.