

## Getting the balance right

How the Electricity System Operator  
(ESO) engages with you: Tell us what you  
think



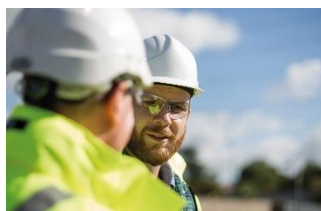


# Getting the balance right

## How the Electricity System Operator (ESO) engages with you: Tell us what you think

### What do we want to talk to you about?

The intention of this publication is to provide visibility of our engagement plans allowing busy people like you to plan and prioritise how you engage with us and our activities. It also provides much greater visibility than ever before of how we plan to capture input into our work and how we will collect performance feedback to help us improve the products and services we deliver.



The electricity industry is transforming at a ferocious pace. The role of the ESO in facilitating access to networks and markets, and delivering value for energy consumers is more important than ever. At the same time the number of interested parties and stakeholders that we deal with is growing every year. Meaningful engagement with this increasing stakeholder base is important to us to ensure we are delivering services to our customers and stakeholders that provide value. We need active stakeholder input into our work to reform the services we provide. Feedback on what we do and how we do it is also important to help drive improvement in our performance.

However, we are also conscious that in this rapidly changing industry there is an ever-increasing burden of stakeholder engagement with events, publications and consultations. The sheer volume of engagement can make it very challenging for you to prioritise your time and effort to ensure you are getting the information you need and providing input to changes that will impact your business. The phrase “Consultation fatigue” has become common usage. It is a challenge for us and the whole industry to get the balance right.

This document contains our current planned view of engagement for the rest of the year. It is based on what we have learnt over time and anecdotal feedback received from stakeholders on the topics they are interested in and the channels work for them.

We want to use this paper to start a conversation with a wide range of stakeholders on what and how we engage going forwards. There is a survey associated with this document through which we want to capture your preferences on how we engage and on what topics you would like us to engage you. However, if you don't want to fill in a [survey](#), or even read the rest of this document, don't worry we will be seeking to ask these questions through a range of our existing engagement channels including customer meetings and engagement forums that we run.

If you would like (a lot) more information on how we plan to seek input and feedback throughout the year, please *Driving Performance Through Stakeholder Engagement* document published alongside this discussion paper. We are grateful for the investment of your time and effort in helping us to improve the way we do our job and hope you will continue to talk to us about these topics.

### How we engage – want to know what we are doing?

We engage stakeholders through a wide range of channels including information published on our website, our publications, consultations, newsletters, engagement forums, webinars, customer meetings and surveys.

Our connections customers and balancing services providers have their own dedicated Account Managers to provide a single point of contact. We know that these interactions are valued but that sometimes stakeholders need access to more specialist skills and knowledge or it makes more sense for them to provide input directly into other parts of our business. We also use events, publications, consultations and newsletters to get detailed or updated information out to wider audiences. Our main channels are outlined below.

### Our main engagement Forums and events

*Electricity Operational Forum* – The “Ops Forum” is held three times per year. This is our principal face to face channel for sharing information and talking with market participants about system balance issues and balancing costs. We also utilise this forum to provide an opportunity for this audience to engage on a wide range of relevant topics including reform of balancing services, opening of markets for offering solutions to network issues the ESO and charging reform.

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<https://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/electricity/market-operations-and-data/electricity-operational-forum>

*The Information Systems (IS) Change Forum* – Run in parallel with the “Ops Forum” the IS Change Forum uses a trade fair type approach to allow stakeholders to talk to us about how our systems need to change, the progress we are making and the impacts for their businesses.

*Power Responsive Flexibility Forum* – Held three times per year, Power Responsive forums are targeted at Distributed Energy Resources (DER) including stakeholders including industrial and commercial (I&C) energy users, storage developers, small-scale generators, suppliers and aggregators, finance providers, energy experts and policy makers. with the aim of facilitating the participation of DER in balancing markets.

<http://powerresponsive.com/>

*Charging Futures Forum (CFF)* – Held quarterly, the Ofgem CFF aims to enable a wide range of industry stakeholders to learn, ask and contribute to charging reform. In our role as Lead Secretariat for the CFF we provide a one-stop shop for accessible information on charging reform and its implications for stakeholders both through the Charging Futures website and publications as well as the forum itself.

<http://www.chargingfutures.com/>

*Customer Connections Seminar* – This event provides an opportunity for transmission connections customers to engage with the ESO, as well as the three GB onshore Transmission Owners, on all topics relating to network connections. It is generally held annually with one event in Scotland and one in England. Events will be held this year on 3<sup>rd</sup> October in Glasgow and 10<sup>th</sup> October in London.

*Future Energy Scenarios (FES) conference and workshops* – The FES Conference marks the publication of the FES document and offers stakeholders the chance to talk to us about the content of the scenarios and how they are created. The scenarios always throw up very interesting insights which we also discuss with stakeholders at this event. We also hold workshops with a very wide range of stakeholders throughout the Autumn to get input into our approach and analysis.

<http://fes.nationalgrid.com/>

*The Charging and Settlements Forum* - This event is for those who pay BSUoS, TNUoS or Ancillary services. The event aims to explain the charges, as well as give any relevant updates from other topics areas, and to get feedback from our customers. In 2017 there were separate events for BSUoS and TNUoS. This combined event attempts to minimise travel time for those customers who are shared by both of the teams. It will also help to ensure consistency in our approach with our customers who pay charges and settlements.

*ENA Open Networks Project* – The Open Networks Project is a major energy industry initiative that will transform the way our energy networks work, underpinning the delivery of the smart grid. This project brings together 9 of UK and Ireland's electricity grid operators, respected academics, NGOs, Government departments and the energy regulator Ofgem. The ESO is a proactive member of the project leading on several key deliverables including the Future Worlds consultation.

<http://www.energynetworks.org/electricity/futures/open-networks-project/>

*RIO2 engagement events* – We are seeking stakeholder input to inform our priorities for RIO2 and to detail around our business plan proposals. Information on upcoming events can be found here:

<http://yourenergyfuture.nationalgrid.com/electricity-system-operator/get-involved/>

We also make extensive use of webinars to offer a more agile approach to engaging with us on a range of topics including the outcome of Ancillary services tenders, reform of balancing services and our engagement plans for RIO2.

### Consultations for 2018/19

We sometimes use formal consultations to gather written evidence and input from a range of stakeholders on important changes we would like to make. We understand that written consultations are not always the most accessible way for stakeholders to provide us with input on topics that matter to them. Whilst we plan to continue to use this channel to engage on important topics, and it is a good way of ensuring your voice is heard and providing the evidence base, we want to make it clear that we are happy to use alternative less formal channels to talk to stakeholders about any of the topics on which we are planning to consult.

Throughout the rest of the year we will be consulting on key topics including:

- ESO Vision and Forward Plan 2019-21
- ESO RIIO2 and Business Plan
- SO Innovation Priorities
- Future Network Operability
- Changes to response and reserve contracts
- The replacement for the Transmission Outage Generator Access (TOGA) system
- Updated Balancing Services Procurement Guidelines
- We are also heavily involved in supporting the ENA Open Networks Consultation on Future Worlds

### Newsletters

We publish several newsletters on specific topics targeted at different audiences including:

- *Future of Energy Newsletter* – Bi- monthly updates on energy futures research signposting how to engage with the SO on the development of the FES.
- *Future of Balancing Services Newsletter* – Provides monthly updates on changes to balancing services, highlighting consultations and opportunities to feed in to the ESO's development process.
- *Power Responsive Newsletter* – Provides regular updates on industry changes relevant to DERs.
- *RIIO2 newsletter* - Provides regular updates on RIIO-2 work and invite them to our bi-monthly webinars for further information on selected topics.
- *BSUoS Circular* – Monthly updates on BSUoS related issues including billing issues, system changes, forecasting news, cost impacts on BSUoS, annual events, news roundup.

### Proactive engagement

In addition to the above channels we often visit our customers and stakeholders to talk to them about topics that are of interest. One approach that allows us to engage with a wider audience “on their terms” is via industry associations to whom we would like to offer an open invitation for us to come to talk about topics that would be of interest to them or their members.

### Tell us what you think

We have a lot of information on which forums people find useful and evidence that our more agile approaches are the right way to go, for example Charging Futures podcasts attracting a growing audience. However, given the ever-increasing pace and complexity of industry change we want to step back and take a look at the bigger picture.

We want to know what you think about the channels we use to engage and the topics that we focus are engagement on. Could we make better use of your time? Would you like us to offer more opportunities to engage on certain topics? Are we missing an opportunity to optimise our channels and your time?