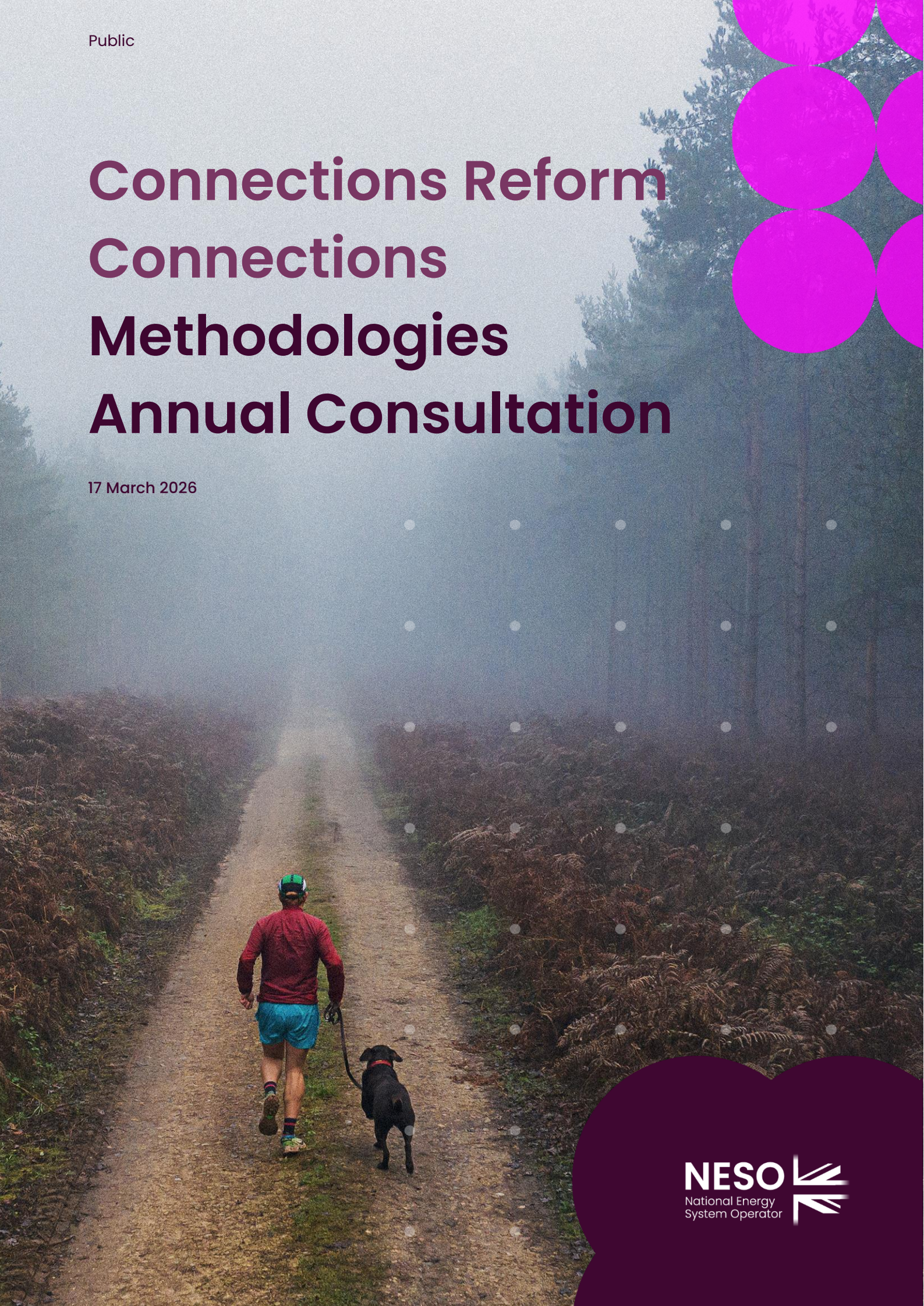
Public

Connections Reform Connections Methodologies Annual Consultation

17 March 2026



NESO
National Energy System Operator

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1. Executive Overview

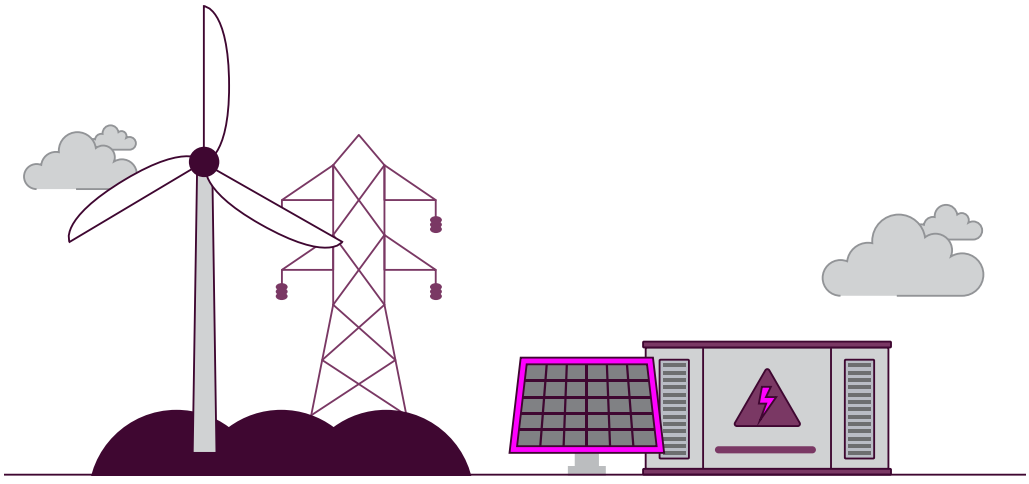
1.1 The Connections Methodologies include content on the approach to enduring application windows, as well as to the 'Gate 2 to Whole Queue' (G2TWQ) process. This enduring approach was consulted on as part of the process to introduce the Connections Methodologies prior to their approval by Ofgem in spring 2025.

1.2 While we have not yet undertaken an enduring application window, we have a licence obligation to periodically review the Connections Methodologies.

1.3 We now have experience of a window-based process through G2TWQ. Through this periodic review process, we have identified several areas of the Connections Methodologies where minor, clarificatory changes could be made to improve readability and operability in advance of the first enduring application window. The date of the first enduring application window will be confirmed through the joint industry governance process for Connections Reform.

1.4 We have also identified a small number of areas where more material changes to the Connections Methodologies could be beneficial. In addition, there are several areas where we are not proposing any change at this stage, but where we are interested in views to inform future thinking and potential future changes.

1.5 We are therefore seeking stakeholder views on a range of consultation questions and a marked-up set of Connections Methodologies, prior to submitting a suite of proposed Connections Methodology changes to Ofgem in spring 2026.



2. Context and Purpose

2.1 At the National Energy System Operator (NESO), we recognise the challenges facing our connections customers and the need to fundamentally reform the electricity transmission connections process to deliver a better customer experience and support clean economic growth across Great Britain (GB). This transformation of the process for connecting to the grid will ensure that only what is needed, when it is needed, and where it is needed is delivered.

2.2 After an 18-month collaborative design process involving NESO, Ofgem, government, network companies and industry, Ofgem approved[1] our ambitious 'TMO4+' package of proposals on 15 April 2025. This package included changes to industry codes and new Connections Methodologies[2] that, together with changes to licences, set the regulatory framework for a reformed connections process.

2.3 Following Ofgem's approval, on 30 April 2025 we published Connections methodologies update – *An overview of final amendments to the connections methodologies*[3]. Ofgem approved this update on 15 May 2025.[4]

2.4 In June 2025, we published the *EA Timeline*, which set out the detailed timeline for the G2TWQ stage of our Connections Reform programme. Since the closure of the G2TWQ application window on 26 August 2025, we have undertaken initial checks, formed the delivery pipeline and communicated the outcome. We are now concluding our detailed and duplication checks and beginning to issue Gate 1 and Gate 2 Offers to customers.

2.5 On 13 November 2025, we published a *Connections Methodologies Update* alongside a related letter to Ofgem and Ofgem's response[5]. The purpose was to communicate key process improvements and clarifications that allow more efficient implementation of the G2TWQ process.

2.6 On 22 December 2025, we published marked-up and clean CNDM and G2CM[6] documents to show how the key process improvements and clarifications in our November 2025 update were reflected in the CNDM and G2CM.

2.7 On 21 January 2026, we published a new set of Connections Methodology documents (excluding the *Project Designation Methodology*), showing only the CMP434 future application window content and presented in a more intuitive and

1 Decision on Connections Reform Package (TM04+), Ofgem, 15 April 2025.
2 *Gate 2 Criteria Methodology* (G2CM), *Connections Network Design Methodology* (CNDM) and *Project Designation Methodology* (PDM).
3 Connections Methodologies Update, National Energy System Operator, April 2025.
4 *Decision: Updates to Connections Methodologies, Ofgem*, 14 May 2025.
5 Connections Reform design documents and methodologies, National Energy System Operator.
6 As there were no changes to the *Project Designation Methodology*, we did not republish this document.

consistent format[7]. However, we have published this 'CMP435 removals' version of the *Project Designation Methodology* alongside this consultation. These are not live documents, but we have used them as the baseline for the changes marked up in this consultation. If you have any feedback on the amendments made to establish the revised baseline – that is, on the versions we published on 21 January 2026 for the G2CM and CNDM and today for the *Project Designation Methodology* – please let us know as part of this consultation process, and in response to the question in Section 4 below.

2.8 The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the changes we are proposing to make to the Connections Methodologies, ranging from minor and clarificatory changes (which cover most of our proposals) to more material changes (of which there are a small number within our proposals). We are seeking views on these proposed changes to fulfil the requirements of our licence conditions, which are further explained in Section 3.

7 Connections Reform design documents and methodologies, National Energy System Operator.

3. Annual Consultation Process

3.1 Within the Electricity System Operator Licence, NESO has an obligation under E15-E17 to formally review the Connections Methodologies at least once in every 12-month period. This 12-month period commenced 56 days after Ofgem approved the Connections Methodologies i.e. 10 June 2025.

3.2 Following our review, we are required to submit a statement to the Authority setting out whether an update to the Connections Methodologies is required.

3.3 We undertook this review in early 2026 and, as a result, submitted a statement to Ofgem in early March 2026 confirming our initial view that an update is desirable, alongside the associated timetable. We have published a copy of this letter in parallel with this consultation.

3.4 We are now consulting with industry and interested parties on our proposed changes. The consultation period is 28 calendar days.

3.5 Within 60 days of the consultation closing, we are required to submit a further statement to the Authority. This submission will include:

i) a detailed explanation of the consultation process undertaken in the amendment of the Connections Methodologies
ii) a summary of views submitted by parties in the consultation responses and an explanation of how these were considered in the amendment of the Connections Methodologies
iii) copies of formal responses submitted as part of the consultation process
iv) an assessment of how the Connections Methodologies better facilitate the relevant methodology-related licence objectives

3.6 Upon receipt of the statement, our expectation under the terms of our licence is that the Authority will evaluate the submission and either approve or reject the content and form of each amended Connections Methodology. If rejected, the Authority may direct further action.

3.7 Further (and more specific) information on the above process can be found in the Electricity System Operator Licence.

4. General Methodology Change Considerations

4.1 In this section, we explain how we derived the baseline used for this consultation. We also set out several general areas where we are not currently proposing changes to the Connections Methodologies but may do so in future, and therefore invite general views.

4.2 The detail of the Connections Methodology changes we are proposing at this stage is set out in Sections 6 to 8 inclusive and in Appendix 1 to Appendix 3. These proposed changes are mostly minor and clarificatory, with only a few areas specifically targeted with questions in the main body of this consultation document rather than in the appendices.

4.3 We do not consider many of these changes to be material because they are either clarificatory in nature or have a low impact on stakeholders. This is a similar approach to the one taken for changes to the Connections Methodologies in Q2 2025 for the CMP435 clarifications.

4.4 However, we have included general consultation questions in case stakeholders wish to raise any important points on the minor or clarificatory changes, or on any other matters related to the Connections Methodologies, as part of this consultation process.

CMP435 removals baseline

4.5 As explained in Section 2, on 21 January 2026, we published a new set of Connections Methodology documents (without the *Project Designation Methodology*, which we have now published in parallel with this consultation) showing only the CMP434 future application window content and presenting the material in a more intuitive and consistent format. These changes faithfully represent a CMP434 version of the approved Connections Methodologies, with the CMP435 content removed or amended to reflect the arrangements for CMP434 without further change.

4.6 However, as CMP435 remains live and applicable to those that remain within the G2TWQ process, this content cannot be fully removed because some of it (though not all) remains applicable. We do not believe the *Project Designation Methodology* needs any CMP435 content to remain within it, as there were no project designations within CMP435. We also do not believe that the G2CM needs any CMP435 content to remain within it, as all readiness and strategic alignment checks will have been fully undertaken. However, while a large part of Section 5

within the CNDM has concluded, some elements remain in progress and will continue during the G2TWQ offers stage.

4.7 Therefore, within the version of the CNDM we are consulting on, we have reinserted a cross-reference in Section 5 to the version of the CNDM with the relevant content included. In this way, when the next iteration is approved by Ofgem, the relevant G2TWQ aspects will remain binding on the relevant parties.

Q1 Do you agree that we have accurately reflected the CMP434 specific content in the illustrative versions of the CNDM and G2CM published on 21 January 2026, and in the illustrative version of the *Project Designation Methodology* published in parallel with this consultation?

Please explain your rationale.

Battery oversupply

4.8 As reported in our *Connections Reform – Detailed Results Data* publication in January 2026[8], there is a significant oversupply of batteries with Gate 2 status compared with the capacities set out in the UK Government's *Clean Power 2030 Action Plan* (CP30 Action Plan). This oversupply is at both a zonal (across all zones) and GB level because those batteries met one or more of the protection clauses in the Connections Methodologies.

4.9 At a GB level, 83.2 GW of batteries have received Gate 2 status. Adding built and operational battery capacity at the close of the G2TWQ evidence submission window brings the total capacity of batteries either built, operational or with Gate 2 status to 90.6 GW. This is more than three times the capacity of 24–29 GW by 2035 set out in the UK Government's CP30 Action Plan.

4.10 The Connections Methodologies set out that further batteries can meet the Gate 2 criteria under future application windows, provided they meet the protection criteria. Given the significant oversupply of batteries compared with the GB permitted capacity, it is likely that only batteries that are 'ready' and that meet protection clauses 2b or 3a would meet the Gate 2 criteria in the next application window. Based on the outcomes of the G2TWQ process and the number and capacity of batteries that received a Gate 1 Offer but had submitted planning consent, we estimate that a further potential c.20.9 GW of batteries could meet protection clauses 2b or 3a in the next application window. If this were to occur, it would lead to an overall capacity (built and with Gate 2 status) of 121.5 GW of batteries – assuming no attrition in Gate 2 batteries beforehand – which would be

8 Connections Reform Detailed Results Data, National Energy System Operator, January 2026.

more than four times the capacity by 2035 set out in the UK Government's CP30 Action Plan.

4.11 There are clear downsides to battery oversupply:

- cost to consumers – because network companies could design and build a network to accommodate battery connections that are not ultimately needed
- delays to connection dates (for batteries and non-batteries) – because of reduced network delivery capacity and the need to design an efficient network across the full portfolio of customers (batteries require access to network infrastructure, for example substation bays or Grid Supply Points, that could otherwise be allocated to other technologies more closely aligned with the UK Government's CP30 Action Plan)

4.12 Given this material oversupply compared with the size of the likely battery services market in GB, it is quite likely that there may be significant levels of natural attrition in batteries. This could take the form of developers not signing their Gate 2 Offers under G2TWQ, self-terminating their Gate 2 connection agreements, or not applying for protections under the next application window[9]. However, natural attrition could take several years, if not longer, to have a material impact on battery volumes, which could exacerbate or extend the risks referred to above. We are therefore discussing with the government and Ofgem whether any further action should be taken to mitigate battery oversupply.

4.13 However, taking further action to mitigate battery oversupply also carries risks:

- cost risk to affected battery developers
- risk of 'overcorrection' (that is too large or insufficiently targeted an impact)
- loss of investor confidence due to further, potentially unexpected, policy changes

4.14 Any action would therefore need to be carefully considered and calibrated.

4.15 One option would be to introduce additional financial incentives for batteries – for example an additional financial security to be paid by batteries with Gate 2 agreements that are above the permitted capacities, which would be recovered when the battery connects. This could be calibrated so that, for example, it only applied to batteries more than [10%] above the permitted capacity, to mitigate the risk of causing undersupply or delays to nearer-term battery connections.

4.16 Any financial incentive would sit outside the Connections Methodologies (for example in the same way as CMP448, the Progression Commitment Fee). Within

9 Queue Management Milestones are unlikely to have a significant effect on Gate 2 batteries, as most Gate 2 batteries will already have met all or most of their Queue Management Milestones.

the specific context of the Connections Methodologies, an action that could be taken would be to disapply protection clause 3a (and, for completeness, protection clause 3b) for batteries so that only 'ready' batteries that meet protection clause 2b could meet the Gate 2 criteria in the next application window. This would ensure that batteries that had secured a CfD, Capacity Market contract, Ofgem cap and floor (for LDES), or a NESO 'Network Services' contract – and could therefore be considered genuinely needed – would be able to receive a Gate 2 Offer in the next application window. It would not have any effect on batteries that secured a Gate 2 agreement through the G2TWQ process. However, it would prevent additional batteries from receiving a Gate 2 Offer in the next application window, thereby avoiding further material oversupply.

4.17 We have not marked up any such change in the accompanying Connections Methodologies because we are keen to receive:

- views from industry more generally on battery oversupply
- strategic steer from the government and/or Ofgem

Q2 Do you have any views on battery oversupply? Would there be overall merit in any actions to seek to mitigate battery oversupply, including potential disapplication of protection clauses 3a and 3b for batteries applying in the next application window?

Please explain your rationale.

Demand

4.18 The scope of TMO4+ and the Connections Methodologies includes projects connecting directly to the national electricity transmission system, and embedded (that is distribution-connected) generation and storage that require a Transmission Evaluation Assessment. Currently:

- all transmission-connected demand projects are deemed to strategically align, but they must meet the same readiness requirements as generation projects
- all embedded demand projects are out of scope, that is they do not need to meet any of the requirements in the Connections Methodologies or in the underpinning TMO4+ industry codes

4.19 In November 2025, Ofgem published an update on demand Connections Reform.[10] Ofgem said it would work with NESO and the government to address a recent surge in the volume of demand connections before the next connections application

10 Demand connections reform, Ofgem.

window. Ofgem published a further update and consultation in February 2026.[11] In these consultations, Ofgem set out three areas of work, summarised below:

- **Curate** – the Curate pillar of work aims to strengthen delivery pipeline entry and membership requirements to ensure the pipeline consists of viable demand projects capable of progressing to connection
- **Plan** – the Plan pillar aims to ensure the connections process delivers timely connections for strategic demand projects and wider government priorities for economic growth and decarbonisation
- **Connect** – the Connect pillar of work aims to accelerate and increase the number of physical grid connections for demand projects and operate an effective and secure system that includes increasingly large demand loads

4.20 The government has now published a consultation on aspects of the connections process it intends to change through amendments to the Connections Methodologies, the CUSC and licence conditions. This includes measures to prioritise strategic demand projects through reservation and reallocation of available capacity.

4.21 We have marked (in yellow) the changes the government proposes making to the Connections Methodologies to enable these prioritisation measures so that stakeholders can see all currently planned changes in one place. **However, we are not seeking views on the changes highlighted in yellow through this consultation.** Stakeholders with views on these proposed changes should respond to the government's consultation.[12]

4.22 We expect Ofgem to publish a further consultation later this year under the Curate pillar. This, and any further changes needed to strategically align the process for data centre connections, are likely to drive further changes to the Connections Methodologies beyond those marked up in yellow in the accompanying Connections Methodologies. The government and Ofgem have set out their intention to use powers under the Planning and Infrastructure Act to make these changes.[13]

4.23 One implication of this work is that relevant demand projects that currently have a Gate 2 status may need to meet additional requirements to retain any Gate 2 Offer they receive as a result of G2TWQ. Potential additional readiness requirements set out in Ofgem's February consultation include evidence of broader financial project

11 Demand connections reform, Ofgem.https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/call-for-input/demand-connections-reform

12 Accelerating electricity network connections for strategic demand, Department for Energy Security & Net Zero.

13 Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, Parliamentary Bills, UK Parliament.

backing, outline planning permission (submission or consent received), or full planning permission or consent.

4.24 Ideally, the Connections Methodologies would be amended to reflect the full range of demand policy changes across all pillars referred to above before the next application window. This would ensure the next application window can give full effect to government and Ofgem policy on demand.

4.25 However, it is possible that not all aspects of policy under the Curate and Plan pillars of work, in particular, will be finalised before the next application window. If this is the case, we intend to work with the government and Ofgem to consider whether any interim measures would be appropriate to ensure demand projects, particularly data centres, entering the pipeline are credible and deliverable, without unnecessarily delaying the next application window. In considering any such measures, it will be important to balance support for demand to drive economic growth while maintaining system security and efficient network design and development.

Attrition

4.26 Throughout the development and consultation process for the initial iteration of the Connections Methodologies, we considered (and asked for feedback on) the treatment of project attrition (that is, where projects exit the delivery pipeline before they connect) in setting and managing the permitted capacities for each technology. Due to using the upper ranges from the CP30 Action Plan and the existing arrangements (as articulated in the Connections Methodologies) for replacing projects that exit the pipeline, we did not include a percentage uplift to account for project attrition.

4.27 Within its TMO4+ decision, Ofgem generally agreed with our position on attrition but asked that we keep our assumptions on attrition under review as new information becomes available, including after receipt of Gate 2 evidence and following 'queue formation' (and then again after offer acceptance in future).

4.28 We currently have no new information that indicates changes to the Connections Methodologies or to the permitted capacities are required. To an extent, the case for including an uplift for attrition has lessened, as due to protections the allocations are now (or are expected to be through CMP434) greater than the CP30 Action Plan upper range for 2035 for some technology types, for example batteries and unabated gas.

4.29 We therefore continue to consider that we have sufficiently accounted for project attrition within the Connections Methodologies. As a result, we do not intend to

introduce any additional measures beyond those already included in the Connections Methodologies.

4.30 We welcome views from stakeholders on whether they consider changes to the Connections Methodologies might be required, now or in future, in relation to project attrition. Please refer to relevant information and data in any response. We will consider any new information provided prior to finalising our views on attrition for this iteration of the Connections Methodologies.

Hybrids

4.31 Throughout the development and consultation process for the initial iteration of the Connections Methodologies, we considered and asked for feedback on the treatment of hybrids in relation to the allocation of permitted capacities. By 'hybrids' in this context, we mean projects that have more than one technology at a single point of connection.

4.32 We set out that hybrid projects should be treated based on their impact on the system, and that permitted capacity should be considered in respect of each technology type within a hybrid, rather than in relation to the project as a whole. We also set out that we did not see a case for prioritising hybrid projects within 'queue formation' under the CNDM, particularly given that a large majority of the 'ready' projects with connection dates before the end of 2030 (pre-G2TWQ) were stand-alone, that is, not hybrid. To prioritise hybrid projects in 'queue formation' under G2TWQ would therefore have delayed the connection of those projects most likely to connect before the end of 2030 in favour of those projects less likely to connect by 2030.

4.33 However, we did set out in the Connections Methodologies (for G2TWQ and future application windows) that projects can seek for the battery element of a hybrid project to be export only (if co-located with generation) or import only (if co-located with demand) and receive a Gate 2 Offer for that battery (as we do not treat this as subject to the permitted capacity for batteries). This allows hybrid projects to use their battery 'behind the meter' to adjust the dispatch profile of their generation (or import profile of their demand).

4.34 Within its TMO4+ decision, Ofgem generally agreed with our position on hybrids but asked that we "continue to consider the case for alternative treatment of hybrid assets as the technology underpinning hybrid assets develops, and as the modelling of hybrid assets and their impact on the system improves" in future.

4.35 We would therefore like to establish an evidence case to consider potential differential treatment of hybrid projects in future.

4.36 We are aware that hybrid projects could provide network benefits by triggering fewer additional transmission reinforcements compared with a stand-alone project. However, we would also like to understand potential wider benefits of co-located projects. We are aware that some developers consider that their generation project would not be economically viable unless it is co-located with an import/export battery. However, the strength of this economic case is not currently clear to us, particularly in the context of the significant oversupply of batteries referred to earlier. We are also interested in evidence of wider transmission system operational benefits that could only be unlocked by co-located projects.

4.37 In considering any additional evidence, we need to consider the practical realities of how hybrid projects could be treated differently in future. Unless there is significant project attrition over the next few months, or until the government increases the permitted capacities via a new or updated strategic plan, the only technologies with any material undersupply against the 2035 permitted capacities are likely to be onshore wind and low carbon dispatchable. Therefore, the likelihood of hybrid projects meeting the Gate 2 criteria across more than one CP30 technology in the next application window is fairly low.

4.38 Although there may be limited opportunity for new hybrid projects to receive Gate 2 Offers in the next application window, there may be significantly increased opportunities within future application windows, particularly after the government has published the first Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) and more capacity is available to allocate to new projects. There may also be opportunities before then for Gate 2 hybrid projects to secure earlier queue positions via the capacity reallocation process set out within the CNDM.

4.39 In that context, and depending on the evidence case for hybrid projects established via responses to this consultation, we could consider:

i) prioritising additional (currently non-Gate 2) technologies within hybrids within a 'Gate 2 Tranche', that is, when adding projects to the back of the new delivery pipeline in future windows
ii) prioritising current Gate 2 hybrids for capacity reallocation, that is, when reallocating capacity and queue position after a project has exited the delivery pipeline

4.40 If we were to prioritise hybrid projects in such a way, we would need to be mindful of the relative priority of hybrid projects compared with other projects. For example, we consider it unlikely that there would be sufficient evidence to prioritise hybrids for capacity allocation or reallocation ahead of 'successful appeals', designated or 'protected' projects. However, hybrids could potentially be prioritised ahead of

other categories of projects. For example, being a hybrid could enable prioritisation ahead of the date a project secured readiness.

4.41 We welcome views from stakeholders on:

- the evidence case for differential treatment of hybrid projects in future
- how any such differential treatment could work, particularly with regard to future capacity allocation and reallocation

Please refer to relevant data or information in any response. We will consider any new information provided prior to finalising our views on hybrids for this iteration of the Connections Methodologies.

Repowering

4.42 We have received some stakeholder queries in relation to repowering, that is, where an existing connected project reaches the end of its operational or commercial life and is replaced by new generation technology at the same project site under the same connection agreement (which may need to be updated as a result). While we do not propose to make any changes to the Connections Methodologies in respect of repowering at this time, we would welcome views from stakeholders on the position below.

4.43 At present, under the industry codes, the Connections Methodologies, and relevant associated guidance, for example the Gated Modification Guidance and the Material Technology Change Guidance, a project seeking to repower is treated similarly to a new project where the impact on the system is materially different from the existing impact.

4.44 If there is no or little impact on the system from the repowering, the project would essentially continue under its existing agreement, but updated to reflect the repowered connection to the extent required. However, where there would be a material change (for example a capacity increase and/or technology change), it would require a Gated Modification Application and would go through the 'queue formation' process within a CMP434 Application Window to identify a 'queue position' for the new capacity and/or new technology. This would then be provided with a new connection date and associated transmission works. This new capacity and/or new technology would be subject to being 'ready' and 'strategically aligned', as is the case for new capacity or projects, or any other material changes to projects with Gate 2 connection agreements.

4.45 The stakeholder queries posed to us relate to whether repowered projects should be given priority in 'queue formation', for example by advancing such projects to

the front of a Gate 2 Tranche within a CMP434 Application Window, similar to Project Designation.

4.46 We are not proposing to prioritise repowered projects in 'queue formation', as we consider that the arrangements set out above ensure fair treatment across projects. We also note that repowering projects, because they have an existing connected project, may in some cases already have the relevant land rights necessary to demonstrate readiness and may have secured land rights for some time. This would provide them with some advantages in terms of positioning in a Gate 2 Tranche within a CMP434 Application Window, as set out in CNDM Section 7.

4.47 However, we would welcome views from stakeholders on whether repowering should be treated differently, whether in 'queue formation' or otherwise. We will consider any new information provided prior to finalising our views on repowering for this iteration of the Connections Methodologies.

Q3 Do you agree with our views on attrition, hybrids and repowering?

Please explain your rationale.

5. Specific Methodology Change Proposals

5.1 Within the following Connections Methodology specific sections, we list each of the marked changes within the accompanying methodology documents.

5.2 For each, we provide a cross-reference to the marked methodology, an overview of the proposed change and the reason for the proposed change, and indicate the change classification.

5.3 There are a handful of more general areas of consideration in relation to each of the specific methodologies, which are set out in the methodology specific sections below. Depending on feedback on these areas, we may introduce further marked changes where appropriate.

5.4 The change classifications that we use in the appendices (in this order) are:

Category	Explanation
A: Material Change	The areas of marked change which we would specifically like to highlight and gain views on through a tailored consultation question
B: Policy and Evidence Change	Other areas of marked change which are less material but which we would specifically like to draw attention to, and where we welcome views in response to a more general question
C: Minor and Clarificatory Change	Areas of marked change that are minor in nature
D: Administrative Change	Spelling, grammar and formatting changes
E: Changes relating to demand projects that are being consulted upon by the government	These changes are marked in yellow highlight in the Connections Methodologies. They are not the subject of

	this consultation and are subject to a separate consultation by the government[14]

5.5 Please note that the above change classifications are only included in the change summary tables in the appendices. The following sections primarily focus on change classification 'A' or unclassified changes, that is, where we are not proposing marked changes within the methodologies at this point in time.

14 Accelerating electricity network connections for strategic demand, Grid Connections Reform consultation (2026), Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. https://energygovuk.citizenspace.com/energy-infrastructure-planning/grid-connections-reforms

6. Project Designation Methodology

6.1 We are proposing limited updates to the *Project Designation Methodology* as, in our view, there is limited reason to change the existing methodology. We consider that the methodology requires only minor refinement.

6.2 However, there are a number of other changes to the methodology that are subject to a separate consultation by the government on demand projects (as referenced in paragraph 4.20). These changes are highlighted in yellow and are intended to facilitate the ability of the government to identify demand projects it considers should be treated as designated. Please provide feedback to that separate consultation in relation to these changes.[15]

6.3 Changes we are proposing to make in response to feedback based on last year's designation process are described briefly below:

- we are proposing an update to the definition and application of Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) referenced in the *Project Designation Methodology*
- we are also proposing to add some wording to Section 2.2 (D) to suggest that, in certain circumstances, projects that have attained Queue Management M2 or M7 may have this status considered as an alternative indicator of maturity to TRL eight or nine

Q4 Do you agree with the changes we propose to the TRL and Section 2.2 (D) in the *Project Designation Methodology*? Are there any other essential changes that you think should be made to it?

Please explain your rationale.

6.4 We are not proposing to make any changes at this time related to this, but we would welcome views on whether further consideration of consumer benefits is needed within the *Project Designation Methodology*.

Q5 Do you think we should give further consideration to consumer benefits in future versions of the *Project Designation Methodology*?

Please explain your rationale.

15 Accelerating electricity network connections for strategic demand, Grid Connections Reform consultation (2026), Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

6.5 The table in Appendix 1 summarises the marked changes within the accompanying marked *Project Designation Methodology*.

7. Gate 2 Criteria Methodology

7.1 The majority of our proposed changes are as a consequence of running the Gate 2 evidence submission and the initial and detailed checking process in G2TWQ. The vast majority of these changes are intended simply to provide clearer wording, better reflect policy intent, or respond to interactions with customers during the G2TWQ process. However, there are also text changes that we are specifically consulting on which represent proposed policy changes. These areas, and others on which we are seeking views, are explained as follows:

a) We are proposing to remove the requirement for Users to have held an Existing Agreement and unsuccessfully applied (that is for Gate 2) in G2TWQ to be eligible for Protection 2b in CMP434.

The reason is that projects with new support contracts[16] are unlikely to have held an Existing Agreement at the time of CMP435 and then unsuccessfully applied in G2TWQ, as they would have been eligible for Protection Clause 2a.

Therefore, while this is technically a change, it makes the protection more appropriate for the original intent of such projects, that is so that those with support contracts (and are therefore considered to be 'needed') would have a route into the connections delivery pipeline even if there is no permitted capacity available at the time of their application.

We acknowledge that in some cases changes to the process for awarding support contracts may also be needed to unlock the ability to utilise this protection fully in future. However, any such changes are outside the scope of this consultation.

b) As not all our planned offshore wind reservations were successful due to offshore wind permitted capacity limitations, we are proposing to extend Protection Clause 2b to include offshore wind leasing rounds which have associated strategic network design undertaken by NESO.

This would apply only where NESO agrees that such project(s) have been through a strategic network design and should be protected.

We consider that this targeted extension of the protection will allow us to fulfil the original intent of Reservation when considered in the context of coordinated offshore network design.

16 As described in Section 6.2 of the *Gate 2 Criteria Methodology* in respect of Protection Clause 2b.

Q6 Do you agree with our proposal to amend Protection 2b in the manner set out in a) and b) above?

Separately, do you believe[17] that we should remove the requirement for Users to have held an Existing Agreement and unsuccessfully applied for Gate 2 in G2TWQ for Protection Clause 3a and/or Protection Clause 3b?

Please explain your rationale.

c) We are proposing to introduce a right for NESO, Transmission Connected iDNOs and/or DNOs (as appropriate) to indicate that the relevant project technology stage(s) within an application have failed strategic alignment before carrying out any of the initial or detailed checks, and prior to the 'queue formation' process. This would only be possible where a User applies for a technology type under Strategic Alignment Criteria b) in a technology zone which is oversupplied both zonally and nationally. This would also not apply where the applicant is applying under Strategic Alignment Criteria a) (Protections) or has obtained Strategic Alignment Criteria c) (Project Designation). This ensures that resources are not spent processing applications where it is known from the point of application that they have no chance of meeting the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria.

Q7 Do you agree with our proposal to allow applications to be failed quickly where the outcome is certain at an early stage?

Please explain your rationale.

d) We are proposing to remove the requirement for DNOs to provide a provisional view on CP30 alignment to NESO for small, medium and large embedded generators. We believe this is an unnecessary process step that can be removed without affecting the integrity of the 'queue formation' process, as NESO undertakes this role in full under CMP434 and there is therefore no need for a provisional stage. NESO and (i)DNOS can continue to collaborate on forecasting, and (i)DNOs could still undertake a provisional step if they wish, without this being an obligation within the Connections Methodologies.

7.2 Further to the above, while we are not proposing to make further material changes to the G2CM at this time, we would also welcome views on potential future

17 We are particularly interested in hearing from projects that may only be eligible to apply for Protection Clause 3a and 3b if this change is made, to allow us to consider the potential scale of this change.

changes where stakeholder input is required before determining whether a change would be appropriate. These areas relate to:

- mandatory ORLB submission
- ORLB practical difficulties
- Probate/Application for Confirmation

These are explained further as follows:

a) We are considering whether the mandatory requirements set out in Section 4.1b of the G2CM remain appropriate. In relation to this, we note that requesting the ORLB in a GeoJSON or shape format would be beneficial for evidence checking processes However, we also recognise that not all stakeholders currently have the systems required to create or receive these file formats. We are therefore seeking views on whether it should become mandatory to provide the ORLB in a GeoJSON or shape format in future. While this would streamline the Gate 2 process for NESO, we acknowledge that it could create costs or impacts for stakeholders. We therefore welcome views on the value of introducing this as an additional mandatory requirement, to inform our consideration of whether to propose such a change in future.

b) We understand that some customers experienced practical difficulties when drawing their ORLB for their Project Site. There were areas included within the ORLB for the Project Site that were not relevant to our definition of the Project Site and/or included areas such as lakes which were still marked within the ORLB. We are therefore keen to hear views on any practical issues experienced when providing the ORLB.

c) In most circumstances, we believe that a User should have secured land rights for the Project Site (as set out in their ORLB) before making a Gate 2 Application. However, there may be circumstances where a User cannot obtain the land rights because the ownership of a parcel of land is in probate following a death. Section 4.1c of the G2CM states that: “Where the only land the User needs for the project is in Probate, it is not appropriate to provide a Gate 2 Offer to a User who has not secured any land rights”. This currently means that the exception only applies where the User has already secured land rights over some land but cannot secure the land rights for parcel(s) of land that are in probate. The original and ongoing reason for this restriction is concern that a project site with all land in the Probate/Application for Confirmation process could represent a lower readiness threshold compared with other land routes to readiness. However, as this situation is outside the control of the User, we are seeking views on whether this restriction should be removed in future, so that where the entire Project Site is in the

Probate/Application for Confirmation process it could be treated as a valid exception.

Q8 Do you have any comments on a) to c) above?

Please explain your rationale.

7.3 The table in Appendix 2 summarises the marked changes within the accompanying marked G2CM.

Q9 Do you have any other comments on the above, and/or any comments on the 'Category B' to 'Category D' changes we propose to the G2CM?

Please explain your rationale.

8. Connections Network Design Methodology

8.1 The majority of our proposed changes are as a consequence of running the G2TWQ process and gaining a better understanding of the practicalities of a 'queue formation' process. The vast majority of these changes are intended simply to provide clearer wording, better reflect policy intent, or reflect learning during the G2TWQ process. However, there are also text changes that we are specifically consulting on which represent proposed policy changes, particularly in relation to aspects of the capacity reallocation process. These areas, and others on which we are seeking views, are explained below.

Allocating projects to CP30 zones

8.2 In G2TWQ, the Point of Connection (PoC) stated in the Existing Agreement was used to determine the CP30 zone to which the project would be allocated in G2TWQ 'queue formation'. This was considered to best represent the impact the project would have on the transmission network.

8.3 In CMP434, new applications will not have a confirmed and contracted PoC. This means that, in order to determine a CP30 zone, NESO can use either the location of the land on which the project will be sited (and the grid coordinates provided in respect of the ORLB) or the PoC that the customer requests in their Gate 2[18] application.

8.4 We are considering using the location of the project site to determine the allocated CP30 zone, given that the relevant TO may ultimately choose to connect the project at a different PoC from the one requested in the Gate 2 application process. This aligns with the approach that SSEP analysis takes when considering the optimal spatial location for generation and storage.

8.5 However, where a User believes they have reason to be assigned to a different CP30 zone from where their project is located, we are also considering whether we should establish a process for the User to contact NESO in advance of their Gate 2 application. This would be with a view to discussing and potentially agreeing a CP30 zone change in advance of submission of the Gate 2 application where there is sufficient evidence that this would be an appropriate outcome.

8.6 The intention of the above would be to avoid any unintended consequences of 'queue formation'. For example, a customer in Zone A may fail to meet the

18 Or a Gate 1 Application, including Reservation, where NESO agrees to such a request for Reservation.

Strategic Alignment Criteria because there is no permitted capacity available in Zone A, even though their land might be geographically closer to a PoC in Zone B where permitted capacity is available.

8.7 These proposals have not been marked up as we would first welcome views on the general approach and any potential unintended consequences before considering the specific amendments required to implement the approach. Amendments would likely be made to CNDM Section 7.2 to reflect the CMP434 approach to what is included in CNDM Section 5.4.10 in the context of a G2TWQ process.

Q10 Do you have any views on the most appropriate way to allocate projects to CP30 zones in a Gate 2 Tranche?

Please explain your rationale.

Material technology change capacity risk

8.8 We are also seeking views on whether we should amend how Modification Applications for Material Technology Changes are treated within the Connections Methodologies, particularly when a User is requesting a change to or from a technology type with a CP30 permitted capacity.

8.9 Where a User seeks to change the CP30 technology type of their project, the permitted capacity associated with its original technology could become available to others. However, under the CUSC this permitted capacity cannot be released until the project seeking to change its technology accepts its new offer. This is because the User may choose not to accept the new offer and instead remain with the existing contracted technology.

8.10 This effectively means that the permitted capacity of the original technology type will be sterilised for a period of time, as the project will temporarily hold permitted capacity in both its original technology and its new technology until such time as it accepts or rejects its new offer.

8.11 We are considering whether it would be appropriate to ignore the original technology when calculating available permitted capacity for 'queue formation' purposes (that is consider the project to contribute only to the permitted capacity for its newly requested technology type). This would mitigate the risk of undersupply caused by a change in technology, but it would instead result in an oversupply of whichever technology type the User ultimately proceeds with.

8.12 The TO network studies would also need to account for the possibility of either the original or the new technology 'turning up' when assessing other nearby projects

(that is this may need to be assessed on a 'worst-case' basis across both technologies). This uncertainty would increase the complexity of the study process.

8.13 One option that would resolve both the permitted capacity and study complexity issues would be to amend the Modification Application process in the CUSC. For a Material Technology Change, a User could be required to relinquish the permitted capacity of their original technology type when submitting an application for a material technology change and give up their associated 'queue position' at that point in time.

8.14 We are not proposing such a change at this time, as we recognise that this would introduce significant change and User risk into the Modification Application process. However, we would welcome views for future consideration, particularly on any unintended consequences this may have for potentially reasonable requests for technology changes in future.

Q11 Do you have any views on the most appropriate way to fully address material technology change capacity risk in future?

Please explain your rationale.

Successful appeals

8.15 As noted in supplemental guidance related to the Ofgem decision on the determination of disputes, Ofgem will continue to explore the different outcomes that could be available and examine their feasibility in the event that a party is successful at determination. This implies that there may be situations in future where, following a successful appeal process, a developer is found to have been removed from an application window process (or received Gate 1 status within the application window process) in error and action is required to remedy this error. While a decision is yet to be taken on the different outcomes that could be available, we are consulting on what we consider to be a 'no regrets' change to maintain optionality related to the outcome of successful determinations or other relevant dispute processes.

8.16 The capacity reallocation process could potentially provide a remedy in some circumstances, but that may take time to deliver an appropriate outcome, as the capacity reallocation process first relies on appropriate capacity becoming available (for example through terminations).

8.17 We are therefore proposing to introduce a consistent fallback approach to the treatment of any such successful appeals in future.

8.18 We propose to place any such 'successful appeals' projects at the front of the Gate 2 Tranche within the next application window for 'queue formation' purposes, including ahead of any prioritised designated projects[19]. This would not remove the possibility of using the capacity reallocation process and/or any other potential remedy[20] to deliver an appropriate outcome for that project, where appropriate.

Capacity allocation and capacity reallocation processes

8.19 We have clarified the distinction between the capacity allocation process set out in CNDM Section 7.2 to Section 7.12 inclusive and the capacity reallocation process set out in CNDM Section 7.22 to Section 7.25 inclusive. We have also clarified the link between these two processes.

8.20 In simple terms:

- **capacity allocation** refers to the process whereby projects without a Gate 2 Offer or agreement (or that are in the process of being provided with one) are allocated capacity and issued a Gate 2 Offer[21] during an application window. Capacity allocation generally places such projects behind all currently contracted (or in the process of being contracted) Gate 2 projects in the delivery pipeline.
- **Capacity reallocation** refers to the process whereby projects with Gate 2 status are reallocated capacity that has been 'freed up' by a project exiting the connections delivery pipeline, where it/they previously held a better 'queue position'. Capacity reallocation therefore allows projects with Gate 2 status to secure an earlier 'queue position' and as a result potentially an improved connections offer or agreement.

8.21 We have done this by clarifying:

- what can adjust the capacity available to those newly applying in an application window
- when and how capacity may be reallocated by NESO and Transmission Connected iDNOs or DNOs
- when the capacity reallocation process may adjust the capacity available to be used in the capacity allocation process

8.22 In addition, we have simplified the capacity reallocation process within Section 7.22 to 7.25 inclusive by:

19 Any 'successful appeals' projects will be deemed to have met the Strategic Alignment Criteria and will therefore only be required to meet the readiness criteria.

20 In some very limited cases, it may be possible to instead 'insert' a 'successful appeal project' into the 'queue position' it would have received if an error had not been made and determine its connection date and works accordingly. We consider that any such cases are likely to be very limited, as the network design associated with all 'queue positions' may already have taken place by this stage, which would in turn set the basis for all connection offers. As such, we would only be able to progress with such an 'insertion' remedy in very limited circumstances and only if it had no material detrimental impact on other projects in the connections delivery pipeline, consumers, and/or the safe and secure operation of the system.

21 Or a Gate 1 Offer with Reservation.

- clarifying that capacity reallocation may offer benefits other than those related solely to earlier connection dates
- clarifying that capacity reallocation is different from requesting and being provided with an interim non-firm connection date
- making the process more clearly applicable only to those projects with (or in the process of being provided with) a Gate 2 agreement
- including projects with relevant support contracts and projects with successful appeals within the reallocation exceptions
- introducing a hierarchy for NESO to apply in the capacity reallocation process
- introducing the ability for NESO to delay capacity reallocation in exceptional circumstances
- removing the restriction that NESO may only reallocate capacity within a gated process, to expediate the capacity reallocation process where possible
- clarifying that the capacity reallocation process should not perpetuate permitted capacity oversupply
- amending the interaction between SSEP considerations, the capacity reallocation process and the capacity allocation process to ensure that capacity reallocation occurs independently of SSEP[22]
- introducing information exchange from Transmission Connected iDNOs and DNOs to NESO to facilitate accurate data for permitted capacity allocation

Protection Clause 3b and permitted capacity

8.23 As stated in the G2CM in Section 6.2, projects protected under Protection Clause 3b will only be deemed to meet the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria if there is capacity remaining in the 'GB total' permitted capacity. This will be determined once each technology zone has been 'provisionally' filled and rebalancing and substitutions have been conducted within an application window. This means that projects in undersupplied technology zones that are not protected will receive priority allocation of capacity over Protection Clause 3b projects in oversupplied technology zones.

8.24 While we do not foresee adverse impacts in the first CMP434 application window, adverse impacts could potentially arise in subsequent application windows. For example, we may encounter cases, most likely for onshore wind, where undersupply in certain zones (for example England and Wales for onshore wind) cannot be utilised because the 'GB total' permitted capacity for that technology has been exceeded due to oversupply resulting from protected projects in other zones (for example Scotland for onshore wind). While minor imbalances may be

22 SSEP considerations are instead assessed prior to any permitted capacity being transferred from the capacity reallocation process into the capacity allocation process, to be made available to new applicants within the next application window.

acceptable, if this results in significantly different outcomes from the CP30 Action Plan requirements, we may need to consider making some or all of the undersupply available to future applicants. While we propose to take no action at this time, we intend to keep this under review and will engage with SSEP colleagues once the outcome of the first CMP434 'queue formation' process is known.

8.25 The table in Appendix 3 summarises the marked changes within the accompanying marked CNDM.

Q12 Do you have any other comments on the above, and/or any comments on the 'Category B' to 'Category D' changes we propose to the CNDM?

Please explain your rationale.

9. Consultation Responses

9.1 **This consultation will close at 17:00 on 21 April 2026.**

9.2 We have provided a consultation response template alongside this document. We would appreciate it if responses are provided using this template. Consultation responses can be submitted to: box.connectionsreform@neso.energy.

9.3 Please note that the content of the Connections Methodologies in respect of the first application window under CMP434 was also consulted upon previously in 2024. Therefore, while we will consider all feedback, we do not plan to revisit previous policy decisions unless there is compelling new information or evidence, for example as a result of lessons learned during CMP435 or wider industry developments since the Connections Methodologies were last consulted upon and approved. There is a lower threshold for making clarificatory and minor changes to existing content, which represent the bulk of our proposed changes.

9.4 Responses will be treated as non-confidential and published by NESO on our website unless respondents indicate that they are confidential. All responses will also be shared with Ofgem to satisfy our licence conditions.

10. Next Steps

10.1 We will continue to progress this annual consultation process in accordance with the general process summarised in Section 3.

10.2 We are working with key stakeholders to determine the most appropriate timing for the next application window. Several factors are under consideration, including:

i) the operational readiness of NESO and network companies, and related G2TWQ dependencies (for example TOs need to have concluded certain steps within the G2TWQ process before they can begin certain steps in the next application window, most notably network design and offer creation)
ii) relevant wider policy changes (for example the government and Ofgem publications on demand referenced in Section 4)
iii) customer project delivery and investor confidence.

10.3 We will announce further information about when the next application window will open in due course. We currently estimate that the most appropriate period may be Q3 2026. This would allow the next application window to run on the basis of the versions of the Connections Methodologies consulted upon and submitted to Ofgem in summer 2026 (subject to the nature and timing of Ofgem's decision).

10.4 We will also start to engage more widely with industry on how the reformed connections process may evolve in future, for example prior to or once the first SSEP is in place, and in the context of the government's Reformed National Pricing programme. Further information on planned engagement will follow in due course, and feedback provided to this consultation will be considered in that context where appropriate.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Project Designation Methodology

Methodology Reference	Topic	Overview	Rationale	Change Classification (Section 5.3)
Page 10 (Footnote 4)	Project Designation Criteria: New technologies and/or highly innovative category	Alternative criteria or definition eligibility of TRL.	To provide better clarity, optionality and ease of application to energy innovations.	A
Page 10 Section 2.2.9	Project Designation Criteria: New technologies and/or highly innovative category	NESO will consider projects that have attained Queue Management M2 or M7 as an alternative to TRL 8 or 9.	To provide better clarity, optionality and ease of application to energy innovations.	A
Page 21 Section 5.1.5	New technologies and/or highly innovative category	For projects seeking designation under new technologies and/or highly innovative category, include a requirement for evidence of attaining Queue Management M2 or M7 status, or an equivalent stage of development as an alternative to TRL.	To provide better clarity, optionality and ease of application to energy innovations.	A
Page 4 Section 1.1.2, 1.1.3	Purpose of this document: how projects will be designated	Minor amendment to clarify that designated projects with a Gate 2 agreement may be eligible for an improved connection (replacing 'acceleration') via the	To align with CNDM.	B

		capacity reallocation process.		
Page 7 Section 2.1.4	The categories of projects that can be designated	Minor amendment to clarify that projects that have a Gate 2 agreement, or that are within scope of the Gate 2 criteria, can be considered for designation.	To replace references to projects in the current delivery pipeline or, in future, the reformed delivery pipeline, as this is no longer relevant.	B
Sections 2.1.1(d), 2.2.9, 3.5.2, 3.5.4, 4.1.3.3, Footnote 3	New technologies and/or highly innovative category	Slight amendment to the clause that projects designated under this category, in addition to not being within the scope of the UK government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan (CP30 Action Plan), must not correspond with a technology outside the scope of the CP30 Action Plan that meets Strategic Alignment Criterion (d).	The specific technologies that are deemed to have met Strategic Alignment Criterion (d) are wave, tidal, non-GB generation, run-of-river hydro, geothermal power, reactive compensation and transmission-connected demand. These will not be considered for designation.	C
Page 14 Section 3.5.2	New technologies and/or highly innovative category	Amended text to replace 'acceleration' with 'improvement of connection'.	Projects in the above technologies do not require designation to enter the reformed connections delivery pipeline and are not eligible to apply for designation under Category D. They can however seek designation for improvement of connection purposes	C

			under Categories A, B, C or E.	
Page 15 Section 3.6.1	Key characteristics of categories of projects that can be designated: Very Long Lead Time Projects	Removed the estimated available date for the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan.	As this is not essential content.	C
Sections 3.5.2, 4.1.1.3, 4.1.4.3	New technologies and/or highly innovative category	Replaced 'contract' with 'offer'.	For better accuracy.	D
Page 3 Section 1.1.1	Purpose of this Document	Minor changes such as adding a preamble before listing other methodologies and removing unnecessary phrases relating to the purpose of the document.	Tidy-up changes.	D
Sections 1.1.5, 1.2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.4, 2.2.3, 2.2.12	Government Strategic Demand Projects	New designation Category F for Strategic Demand Projects identified by the UK government.	The UK government can identify strategic demand projects which will be treated as though they had been designated by NESO.	E
Page 8 Section 2.2.3	Project Designation Criteria: Government Strategic Demand Projects	For Category F projects, the UK government will publish its decision-making process and its decisions on which projects NESO should treat as designated projects.	The UK government can identify strategic demand projects which will be treated as though they had been designated by NESO.	E

Sections 3.1.3, 4.2.3, 5.1	Key characteristics of categories of projects that can be designated	Clarifies that this section does not describe the characteristics of Category F: UK government identified demand projects.	This will be made available by the UK government.	E

Appendix 2: Gate 2 Criteria Methodology

Methodology Reference	Topic	Overview	Rationale	Change Classification (Section 5.3)
Page 27 (Section 6.1) Page 39 (Section 8.3) Page 43 (Section 8.7)	Strategic Alignment Criteria	Remove the requirement on DNOs to provide a provisional view on CP30 alignment to NESO.	As this is an unnecessary and complex process step, it can be removed without impacting the integrity of the 'queue formation' process.	A
Page 28 (Section 6.2)	Protections – General	Remove the requirement for applicants to have had an existing agreement and unsuccessfully applied (for Gate 2) in CMP435 to be eligible for Protection Clause 2b.	As there could be projects with new support contracts that did not hold an Existing Agreement and/or did not apply in CMP435, this provides a route for such projects to apply for this Protection in CMP434.	A
Page 29, 32 (Section 6.2) Page 44 (Section 8.7)	Protection 2b	Extend Protection Clause 2b to add in offshore wind leasing rounds which have associated strategic network design undertaken by NESO (only where NESO agrees such project(s) should be protected).	As there would be no route to market for these customers at this time, and one of the original aims of Reservation was to be able to protect such projects in CMP435.	A

Page 38 (Section 8)	Checks	Where a User applies for a technology type under Strategic Alignment Criteria b), in a technology zone which is oversupplied both zonally and nationally, then NESO, Transmission Connected iDNOs and/or DNOs can indicate it has failed strategic alignment before carrying out any of the initial and detailed checks, and prior to the 'queue formation' process. This does not apply where the User is seeking Strategic Alignment Criteria a) (Protections) or has obtained Strategic Alignment Criteria c) (Project Designation).	Clarity for customers and streamlines the process where the outcome is known with certainty prior to doing checks and undertaking 'queue formation'.	A
Page 12 (Section 4.1b)	Original Red Line Boundary	Change the requirement to provide Grid Coordinates for the Project Site from 3 to 4 decimal places.	Based on learning from CMP435 evidence submission and checking process, for sites with small ORLB, 3 decimal places was in some cases insufficient to demarcate a project site at suitable granularity, and so we think that 4 decimal places will provide a better balance.	B

Page 33 (Section 6.2)	Queue Management Milestones	Transmission Connected Users who have already met a Queue Management Milestone will need to submit evidence even in the unlikely event (under CMP434) that NESO have already confirmed to the customer that it has been met.	As it is less relevant in CMP434, as most projects will not have contracted milestones when they apply for Gate 2, and it aligns with the current Distribution process.	B
Page 11 and 12 (Section 4.1b)	Original Red Line Boundary	Being clearer in the Methodology about what the Project Site is. Clarifying that for the purpose of readiness projects with multiple stages, the same ORLB and Grid Coordinates (in decimal format) can be used for each stage. Also added clarity on ORLB requirements where a stage has onshore and offshore components.	Clarity for customers based on learning from CMP435 evidence submission and checking process.	B
Page 17 (Section 4.1c)	Land Readiness – Option Agreement	Removal of the following Option Agreement Exception (that relates to the 3-year minimum requirement): "Connection Date less than 3 years away (in which case the Option agreement should cover the period until the connection date unless	As unlikely to be relevant for CMP434, but if it is, there is still an 'Other' category in the Exceptions. Also, if this is not removed, there is a risk that customers with indicative connection dates will mistakenly	B

		the project meets any of the below exceptions)".	seek this exception route based on those dates.	
Page 8 (Section 4.1) Page 13 and 21 (Section 4.1c)	Land Readiness – Existing Ownership	Where the land registry has been updated, clarify that the title plan is also required as evidence to verify the location against the Project Site ORLB.	Clarity for customers based on learning from CMP435 evidence submission and checking process.	B
Page 14 (Section 4.1c) Page 50 and 51 (Section 8.12)	Land Readiness – Important Clarifications	Clarity on acceptable signing requirements for secured land rights evidence, that is, in relation to counterparts and a written explanation.	Clarity for customers based on learning from CMP435 evidence submission and checking process.	B
Page 7 (Section 3) Page 24 (Section 5.1) Page 46 (Section 8.8)	Planning Readiness	Be clear that the planning route (Development Consent Order) to readiness meets Queue Management M1, that is the removal of the ability to become 'ready' through this route where the planning submission has not been properly verified by the Planning Inspectorate.	Clarity for customers who are seeking readiness through the Development Consent Order planning route.	B
Page 47 (Section 8.9)	Who can sign the Readiness Declaration?	Clarify that the Director must be active on Companies House at the time of the application.	Clarity for customers based on learning from the CMP435 evidence submission and checking process.	B

Page 3 (How to read this document)	Scope	Direct those with Gate 2 agreements who are looking to submit a Modification Application to the Gated Modification Guidance to see if and how they need to go through the Gated application process.	So customers know where to check if they need to go through the gated process and whether they need to submit a Readiness Declaration.	C
Page 4 (Purpose)	Queue Management Milestones	Clarify that even if projects do not have contracted Queue Management Milestones, they need to meet the requirements of that milestone in accordance with the relevant published guidance, where those milestones are relevant.	So customers know the evidence they need to provide to meet Queue Management M1 and M2, where applicable.	C
Pages 7 (Section 3), 9 (Section 4.1a), 11, 12 (Section 4.1b)	Staging	Clarify where we require information per project stage.	Clarity for customers when submitting evidence.	C
Page 7 (Section 3)	Route to Readiness	Clarify that each project stage (not technology per stage) must either seek readiness via land route or readiness via the planning route (DCO).	Clarity for customers seeking readiness for multiple stages.	C
Page 8 (Section 4), Page 9 (Section 4.1a), Page 11 (Section 4.1b)	Land Readiness	Remove references to CMP427 (which is the CUSC Modification that introduced the requirement to provide a Letter of Authority).	Clarity for customers as a Letter of Authority is not sufficient evidence to meet Gate 2 criteria.	C

Page 9 (Section 4.1a)	Minimum Acreage	Clarify that Minimum Acreage is to be represented per stage, not a cumulative project number.	Clarity for customers and robust data.	C
Page 12 (Section 4.1b)	Installed Capacity	Clarify how transmission-connected Demand Sites provide their installed capacity in MW.	Clarity for customers and robust data.	C
Page 12 (Section 4.1b)	Installed Capacity	Clarify that Installed Capacity is to be represented per stage, not as a cumulative project number.	Clarity for customers and robust data.	C
Page 13 (Section 4.1c) Page 16 (Section 4.1c) Page 18 and 19 (Section 4.1c)	Land Readiness – Option Agreement	Clarity that Conditional Agreements and Promotion Agreements would be acceptable evidence as long as they meet the minimum requirements for evidencing relevant land rights. Clarity on requirements where Option Agreements are automatically extended (and would appear that they are no longer 'live' unless evidence of such extension). Clarify the Option Agreement exceptions that relate to the 3-year minimum requirement and those that relate to the provision of actual	Clarity for customers based on learning from CMP435 evidence submission and checking process.	C

		secured land rights, that is Probate and CPO Powers Granted.		
Page 8 (Section 4.1) Page 13 and 20 (Section 4.1c)	Land Readiness – Form of Lease and Purchase Agreement/Transfer	Clarify Form of Lease and Purchase Agreement/Transfer wording and clarify that the Purchase Agreement does not need to be valid for at least 20 years from the date the option is exercised as this is a purchase.	Clarity for customers based on learning from CMP435 evidence submission and checking process.	C
Page 14 (Section 4.1c) Page 15 (Section 4.1c)	Land Readiness – Important Clarifications	Recommendation to provide a composite plan as part of the Readiness Declaration showing the secured land rights boundaries to ensure comparison between these boundaries in the composite plan and each land parcel in the ORLB(s). Clarify what is meant by land parcels. Clarify the requirement for the land rights holder to provide a signed letter stating the User/Applicant has rights to use the land where the User/Applicant is not the land rights holder (even if the User/Applicant is within the same	Clarity for customers based on learning from CMP435 evidence submission and checking process.	C

		company group as the land rights holder). Clarity on what is and is not acceptable in relation to redaction of secured land rights evidence. Clarity on what is and is not an acceptable termination right.		
Page 8 (Section 4.1) Page 13 and 21 (Section 4.1c)	Land Readiness – Existing Ownership	Where the land registry has not been updated, clarify what we mean by a solicitor's certificate of title and remove reference to Title Deeds, as it is impractical to provide these. Clarify that the Official Copy of The Register of Title is known as a Title Sheet in Scotland.	Clarity for customers based on learning from the CMP435 evidence submission and checking process.	C
Page 50 and 51 (Section 8.12)	Land Readiness Detailed Checks	Clarify the land readiness detailed checks. The updated text relates to: acceptable signing requirements acceptable termination rights secured land rights must cover at least the Project	Clarity for customers based on learning from the CMP435 evidence submission and checking process.	C

		Site (as shown on the ORLB) technology being applied for needs to be permitted under the secured land rights evidence provided What is being checked for in User letters where land rights not held by the User/Applicant)		
Page 24 (Section 5.1)	Planning Readiness (Exceptional Route)	Clarify the requirements for the exceptional planning route to readiness, that is to be clearer it is an exception process, etc.	Clarity for customers considering seeking readiness through the planning route, but who do not have a Development Consent Order.	C
Page 26 (Section 6.1)	Strategic Alignment Criteria	Clarify for staged or hybrid projects, if one element of the project meets the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria and another does not, the Customer will be issued with an offer only for the Gate 2 element.	Clarity for customers on what a Gate 2 Offer would include in this regard.	C
Page 37 (Section 8.1) Page 38 (Section 8.2)	Strategic Alignment Criteria	Clarify that we do not request evidence of meeting Strategic Alignment Criteria b and d.	As could be misleading for customers if not removed, as this is not a choice and it depends	C

			on the technology.	
Page 28 (Section 6.2)	Protections – General	Clarify the part-protections in a way that applies to CMP434.	Clarity for customers on how the part protections are still applicable.	C
Page 28, 30, 32, 33 (Section 6.2)	Protections 2b, 3a and 3b	Clarity on description of Protections 2b, 3a and 3b and further clarity on evidence requirements for Protections 3a and 3b, including in relation to the meaning of 'those who reapply in CMP434 only'. Clarify that it should be 'state' rather than 'evidence' technology type.	Clarity for customers on the description of, applicability of and evidence for each of the Protections 2b, 3a and 3b.	C
Page 28, 30, 32, 33 (Section 6.2)	Protections 2b, 3a and 3b	Clarify that Projects which hold Gate 2 agreements, or which are already in the process of being offered a Gate 2 Agreement, will not be able to improve their CMP435 allocated 'queue position' by applying for these Protections.	Clarity for customers on the description of, applicability of and evidence for each of the Protections 2b, 3a and 3b.	C
Page 44 (Section 8.7)	Protection 2b	Network Services contracts were not included in the list but should have been added for completeness and provided clarity that the support contract	Clarity for customers on the requirements of Protection 2b.	C

		needs to be 'live' as per the submission checking process.		
Page 30 (Section 6.2) Page 44 (Section 8.7)	Protections 3a and 3b	As Protections are intended to be based on managing the risk of customers' interactions with the planning process, clarify that this does not apply to projects that do not require planning consent and therefore Protection 3a and 3b are not an option for such projects.	Clarity for customers who do not require planning consent, so they are aware that Protections 3a and 3b are not applicable.	C
Page 47 (Section 8.9)	Who can sign the Readiness Declaration?	Clarity for customers that where they resubmit evidence to clarify evidence submitted, the same Director who signed the Readiness Declaration should sign any clarified evidence unless it is not practicable.	As there may be occasions when it is impractical for the same Director to sign any clarified evidence, for example, if they are on holiday or no longer a Director of the User.	C
Page 54 (Section 9.1)	Who can sign the Readiness Declaration?	Clarify that a Director, even if not a statutory director, can authorise another person to sign the Readiness Declaration on their behalf by providing a letter signed by that Director as evidence as part of their Gate 2 Application.	Clarity for customers based on learning from the CMP435 evidence submission and checking process.	C

		Clarify that where they are not a statutory director (that is, a director of a Company not on Companies House), they must provide a letter signed by the Director confirming that they are a person authorised to make the declaration on behalf of the User/Applicant.		
Page 54 (Section 9.1)	Capacity Allocation	Users may be asked for information in the Readiness Declaration to support 'queue formation' (as per the requirements of the Connections Network Design Methodology).	Clarity for customers when submitting evidence.	C
Page 54 (Section 9.1)	Gate 2 Register	Users will have the option, via their Gate 2 Readiness Declaration, to opt out of the data they provide (as set out in Section 9.1) being published.	Clarity for customers that there will be a Gate 2 Register and there is an option to opt out.	C
Various	General	Formatting, numbering/referencing, missing words, and consistency changes.	Tidy-up changes.	D

In addition, please note that in the illustrative version published in January 2026, which we have used as the baseline for the above changes, the text on Page 20 (Probate – Section 4.1c) was the same as that on Page 19 (Compulsory Purchase Order – Section 4.1c). This was a publishing error, as the text in the version published in December 2025 (the live version) was correct. We have therefore corrected this error in this version published for consultation, but this change is not a marked change.

Appendix 3: Connections Network Design Methodology

Methodology Reference	Topic	Overview	Rationale	Change Classification (Section 5.3)
7.2.9–10 7.2.15 7.6 9.4	Strategic Alignment Criteria	Remove the requirement on DNOs to provide a provisional view on CP30 alignment to NESO.	As this is an unnecessary and complex process step which can be removed without impacting the integrity of the 'queue formation' process.	A
7.3.2 7.3.3 7.3.10 7.5.2	Ordering the Gate 2 Tranche	Noting that any successful appeal projects (if any) will be placed at the front of their Gate 2 Tranche.	Addition to reflect a proposal on where such projects would be placed within the capacity allocation/'queue formation' process.	A
7.22–7.25	Capacity Reallocation	To reflect a clearer distinction between the capacity allocation process and the capacity reallocation process, and to make the capacity reallocation process simpler and more effective.	To provide more detail in terms of how capacity reallocation will work across windows and phases, and how a hierarchy will be applied within the reallocation process.	A
7.8.2	Hybrid Projects in the Gate 2 Tranche	Providing detail on the practical approach to the 'lower of' calculation and additional text to ensure applicants cannot circumvent permitted capacity limits.	To ensure the 'lower of' calculation is clear and does not have any unintended consequences in the context of CMP434.	B

7.10	Gate 1 Reservations in the Gate 2 Tranche	Providing additional detail on what a Gate 1 reservation may do and where it may be positioned within the 'queue formation' process.	For example, Gate 1 can be for a connection point and/or capacity and may be at the end of the relevant Phase 1 or Phase 2 segment of the Tranche.	B
Page 3	Added Text	Made it clearer that gated modification applications are in scope of the CNDM.	CMP434 will also contain gated modifications as well as new applications, so it should be clearer that they are covered by the CNDM.	C
5	Gate 2 to Whole Queue Assessment	Clarifying when this still applies.	To clarify that this remains valid for all relevant parties and applies until completion.	C
6.4	Indicative Connection Date and Location	Minor tracked changes.	For example, adding 'connection' in front of the date and changing the example from storage to solar to provide a more representative example.	C
6.5 (excluding 6.5.9)	Connection Point and Capacity Reservation	Minor changes to clarify or delete items that are no longer relevant.	For example, removing undersupply references and making other minor clarifications.	C
6.5.9	Connection Point and Capacity Reservation at Gate 1	Clarification that some reservations are not bound by Permitted Capacity.	To prevent a potential misunderstanding.	C

6.6	Anticipatory Investment	Minor changes to clarify or delete items that are no longer relevant.	For example, removing undersupply references and making other minor clarifications.	C
7.2.4	Strategic Alignment	Change to Protections 2b, 3a and 3b only.	To more accurately describe the CMP434 protections, as per G2CM.	C
7.2.13	Installed Capacity	Clarifying that the latest figures for Installed Capacity (built capacity) and the capacity in the delivery pipeline will be used at the time 'queue formation' is undertaken.	To clarify what will be counted and when in relation to capacity and therefore 'queue formation'.	C
7.2.15 7.2.16	Partial Capacity in a Phase	New text to clarify how projects which partially align with Permitted Capacity in a phase will be treated.	To clarify that for Phase 1 only a partial match is needed, and for Phase 2 the full project capacity must be aligned, as per CMP435.	C
7.3.1 7.4	Ordering the Gate 2 Tranche	Clarifying that all projects in a new Gate 2 Tranche are generally allocated behind all projects from previous windows. As Section 7.3.1 no longer applies, as there was no CMP435 undersupply reservation, that reference has also been removed.	Clarifying so that there is no confusion about 'window jumping'.	C

7.3.3–7.3.7 (and Figure 9)	Ordering the Gate 2 Tranche	Providing greater detail on ordering the delivery pipeline in relation to planning consent and support contract dates.	To make the CMP434 'queue formation' approach clearer, including aligning with G2CM amendments.	C
2.3.1 4.2.5 6.5.1 6.6.4 7.3.1a 7.11	Utilising previous undersupply reservations	We have removed the section on reservation for undersupply (and references to this elsewhere).	As there was no reservation for undersupply in CMP435, these steps are no longer applicable in CMP434.	C
7.14.2	Approach to the Gated Design Process	Rephrasing of the paragraph to make it easier to read.	For example, changes to structure and deletion of certain words (note this does not change how the Tranche will be formed).	C
9	Roles and Responsibilities	Various minor changes to reflect the above changes where they impact the roles and responsibilities of the parties.	To ensure parties continue to understand their CNDM roles and responsibilities.	C
2.3 2.4	Miscellaneous minor changes	Syntax or other minor changes such as changing 'gated mod apps' to 'gated modification applications', moving publications in Section 2.4 from the Future Policy table to the Existing Policy table due to them becoming effective, and removing references to	To more accurately reflect certain text and or to articulate a point more clearly.	D

		undersupply which was a CMP435 concept and is no longer applicable in the context of CMP434.		
4.2	Establishment of CND data sets	Minor changes such as removing references to undersupply and clarifying that date protection must be met (where applicable).	To remove a CMP435 concept and make a clarification.	D
6.2	Purpose of a Gate 1 Application	Minor tracked changes.	Syntax.	D
Various	General	Formatting, numbering/referencing, missing words, and consistency changes.	Tidy up changes.	D
6.5.1	Reservation	Introduction of an additional category of reservation.	As the UK government could identify strategic demand projects and direct reservation.	E

NESO
Faraday House
Warwick Technology Park
Gallows Hill
Warwick
CV34 6DA
United Kingdom

Registered in England and Wales
No. 11014226

neso.energy

NESO
National Energy System Operator