

Public

Gate 2 Criteria Methodology

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How to read this document

Welcome to our **Gate 2 Criteria Methodology** document. This document sets out the Gate 2 criteria for new applications and Gated Modification Applications that are required to meet the Gate 2 Criteria and the evidence requirements and assessment of this criteria.

This document will be reviewed and updated in line with the relevant ESO licence conditions.

This Methodology is applied under the reformed connection process introduced into CUSC as a result of CMP434 and needs to be read in the context of this process. CMP434 sets out the enduring process for applications and offers in Section 17 of the CUSC.



1. Purpose

This section introduces the purpose of the Gate 2 Criteria Methodology

The purpose of Gate 2 is to allocate confirmed connection dates, connection points and queue positions to projects that are viable and progressing and that are aligned with strategic energy plans.

This Gate 2 Criteria Methodology sets out the Gate 2 Criteria, which are in two parts:

- The Gate 2 "Readiness Criteria" – through a Readiness Declaration, a User will be required to provide evidence that their project is 'ready' by showing that it meets the "Gate 2 Readiness Criteria", which is set out within this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology, alongside detailing how the evidence required is submitted and verified; and
- The Gate 2 "Strategic Alignment Criteria" – a User will also need to meet one of these criteria, which are all set out within this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology, alongside the additional information or evidence a User needs to provide on their project to support the alignment assessment (against the relevant strategic alignment option/route).

For the avoidance of doubt, a User must (in respect of their project or the relevant stages of their project) meet both the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria and the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria to receive a Gate 2 Offer.

Please note that where we refer to Queue Management Milestones throughout this methodology, the requirements of that milestone (in accordance with the relevant published guidance) are also applicable to projects that do not have contracted milestones. For example, where 'M1' is required for the Development Consent Order Planning Route, a new applicant would need to provide evidence of having met 'M1' as part of the application process via the Readiness Declaration.



2. Scope

This section sets out the scope of the Gate 2 Criteria Methodology.

2.1 What is in scope of the Gate 2 Criteria Methodology and how does it fit in with Code, Licence and Guidance?

Methodology • Gate 2 Readiness Criteria Land related or Planning related • Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria As per section 6 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology • Evidence requirements and evidence assessment process	Code • Explicit requirement to provide Original Red Line Boundary at submission of Gate 2 Application (unless Gate 2 Criteria Methodology states otherwise); and what it must contain at a high level (both CUSC 17.7) with further detail provided in Gate 2 Criteria Methodology • Changes to Queue Management Milestones M1 and M3 (CUSC 16.3) • New Queue Management exception (CUSC 16.5) • Original Red Line Boundary compliance rule (CUSC 16.4.9) and impact of being outside compliance (CUSC Schedule 2, Exhibits 3 and 3A) • Requirement to carry out 100% duplication checks and use reasonable endeavours to check 100% of Gate 2 Readiness Criteria evidence provided (CUSC 17.10)
Licence • Requirement to have a Gate 2 Criteria Methodology, consult on it, keep “live” and be approved by Ofgem	Guidance • Queue Management – additional explanation on the new Queue Management exception set out in Code and how ongoing land and planning compliance works in practice • Letter of Authority / Letter of Acknowledgement – inclusion of equivalent land density test for Offshore and Energy Density values (and/or equivalents) for Offshore projects (including Interconnectors and or Offshore Hybrid Assets (OHAs) onshore converter stations)

Gate 2

2.2 Who does the Gate 2 Criteria Methodology apply to?

- Transmission connected (Generation¹ and Demand)
- Interconnectors, Offshore Hybrid Assets and Non-GB Projects²
- Large Embedded Generation (apply to NESO)³
- Small and Medium Embedded Generation (via DNO/Transmission Connected iDNOs, who apply on their behalf to NESO)³. This includes:
 - Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations;
 - Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations;
 - Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement⁴; and
 - Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement⁴.

Supporting Notes

¹ For the avoidance of doubt this includes storage.

² Generation located outside of Great Britain and the UK’s Exclusive Economic Zone, but which is directly connected to the GB Transmission System or Distribution System and is not connected to another market.

³ Embedded Generators will have to meet DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO requirements in addition to the Gate 2 Criteria outlined in this methodology.

⁴ Embedded Small Power Stations and Embedded Medium Power Stations wanting to request a BEGA will still be required to submit a BEGA application to NESO in addition to DNO/Transmission Connected iDNOs applying on their behalf to NESO.

3. Gate 2 Criteria Summary

This section sets out a summary of the Gate 2 Criteria

3.1 Summary of Gate 2 Criteria

Project stage must meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria (See Sections 4 and 5 for more detail) – either the requirements of Section 4 (Land) or Section 5 (Planning)

LAND (See Section 4) • Meet Minimum acreage requirements (or Offshore equivalent as set out in Section 4.1a); and • Provision of Original Red Line Boundary for site on which project is located; and • Secured Land Rights	or	PLANNING (See Section 5) • Submission of (and validation of) application for planning consent for projects following the Development Consent Order (DCO) process i.e. meeting the requirements of Queue Management Milestone M1. Note that we would expect the majority of projects to evidence meeting Gate 2 Readiness Criteria through the land route as per Section 4; however, this planning alternative allows projects that follow the DCO process (including to be granted Compulsory Purchase Order powers) an alternative route to meeting the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria; and • If following the Planning route, meeting Minimum acreage requirements and the provision of the Original Red Line Boundary for the site on which project is located must both be done as part of evidence of meeting Queue Management Milestone M2
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And Project technology stage must then meet one of the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria (See Section 6 for more detail)

- a) Eligible for relevant ‘protections’ as set out in Section 6.2; or
- b) Aligned to the capacities within the [CP30 Action Plan](#) as described in the Connections Network Design Methodology; or
- c) Designated as described in the Project Designation Methodology; or
- d) A project not within scope of the [CP30 Action Plan](#) and of a technology type listed in the table in Section 6.3

There will also be ongoing compliance requirements (See Section 7 for more detail)

Once a project technology stage has met the Gate 2 Criteria and the User has signed the Gate 2 Offer, there will be ongoing compliance requirements regarding the land and planning. These obligations are set out in CUSC Section 16 and expanded on further in the [Queue Management Guidance](#). However, Embedded Power Stations’ Queue Management Milestones and ongoing land compliance requirements will continue to be managed by DNOs or Transmission Connected iDNOs.

If following the Planning route to meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria, the ongoing land compliance requirements will apply from when the User has met Queue Management Milestone M2.

4. Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Land

This section sets out the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria if seeking to meet Gate 2 Readiness Criteria via evidence of secured land rights

4.1 Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights

In order to demonstrate that a User has secured the rights to lease or own the land (or already leases or owns the land) for the site on which their project is planned to be located, they must meet each of the following three criteria: (a)-(c)

a) Meet Minimum acreage requirements	b) Provision of Original Red Line Boundary	c) Secured Land Rights
This relates to 100% of the land which is required for their project to meet the Gate 2 criteria. This 100% requirement will be calculated using the Energy Density Table contained in the NESO guidance document, unless set out otherwise in the Gate 2 Criteria Methodology. Offshore specific arrangements will also be set out within such guidance.	As set out in CUSC Section 17, the User would also need to provide the Original Red Line Boundary for their project site showing the land they have secured.	Either: Option – any Option agreement must have a minimum 3-year period (unless discretion applied via this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology) from the date the Option is signed (and not the date the Gate 2 application is submitted). There will be an ongoing requirement for the User to keep the land under option by seeking further agreements (or keeping or extending the same agreement already in place) with the landowner until the connection date. The Option Agreement must be accompanied by (or contain within) a Form of Lease (also known as an Option to Lease) or a Purchase Agreement/Transfer (also known as an Option to Purchase). The form of lease must reflect the typical minimum operational timelines for that type of project and this will be a minimum of 20 years from the date of exercise of the Option unless the User can demonstrate, to the reasonable satisfaction of NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected IDNO, that the expected operational life of the project is less than 20 years e.g. in relation to test and demonstration projects. This minimum 20-year requirement is not applicable for a Purchase Agreement/Transfer; or Evidence of existing ownership via provision of the Official Copy of The Register of Title (known as Title Sheet in Scotland) and Title Plan where land registered at Land Registry, or via certification of title signed by the User’s solicitor (inclusive of Title Plan) where land not registered at Land Registry at the time of submission of the Gate 2 evidence; or Existing land lease with a remaining term of minimum of 20 years from the submission of the Gate 2 evidence, unless the User can demonstrate to the reasonable satisfaction of NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected IDNO, that the expected operational life of the project is less than 20 years e.g. in relation to test and demonstration projects.

4.1a Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Meet Minimum acreage requirements

Relates to 100% of the land which is required for their project to meet the Gate 2 criteria. This 100% requirement will be calculated using the Energy Density Table contained in the [NESO guidance document](#) unless set out otherwise in this section of the Gate 2 Criteria Methodology. Offshore specific arrangements will also be set out within such guidance.

Where a User has multiple project stages seeking to meet the Gate 2 criteria, the User will need to provide the acreage value for that specific project stage rather than a cumulative value for the whole Project.

Where there is more than one technology within a Project stage the User will need to meet the total minimum acreage requirements for each of the technologies in that stage unless otherwise agreed by NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO under the process set out in the [NESO guidance document](#).

Key Notes:

As set out in the [NESO guidance document](#), the Energy Land Density table will be reviewed annually by the NESO to take into account any updates or changes to technology types. The NESO will engage with industry prior to publishing any amendments to the table.

Energy Density values (and/or equivalents) for Offshore projects (including Interconnectors and/or Offshore Hybrid Assets (OHAs)) will be included in the [NESO guidance document](#). Please note that for Interconnectors, OHAs and Non-GB projects, the minimum acreage requirement will be in relation to whether the applied for capacity (in respect of Gate 2) and the onshore converter station area are consistent with the energy density table information.

Where the Original Red Line Boundary provided (under 4.1b of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology) has an acre per MW which is less than that in the Energy Land Density table, Users will need to justify why a reduced minimum acreage is appropriate for their Project Site for that stage. Users should proactively explain this on their Readiness Declaration and queries will be raised by the NESO or Transmission Connected iDNO/DNO with the User in an attempt to fully understand the context of why this is relevant for that project stage. However, in the event that NESO or Transmission Connected iDNO/DNO is not satisfied that the total land acreage provided meets the de minimis level, the minimum acreage requirement will not have been met.

Emerging technology types that are not represented in the Energy Land Density table will be treated on a case-by-case basis.

4.1a Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Meet Minimum energy density requirements calculation (Offshore process variation)

This variation applies in the case of a project securing an award for seabed lease from The Crown Estate (TCE) and/or Crown Estate Scotland (CES) in relation to energy generating projects in GB waters, such as wind, wave and tidal, and so not including interconnectors, OHAs and Non-GB Projects.

For such offshore projects (excluding Interconnectors, OHAs and Non-GB Projects), if the capacity that the User has requested in their Gate 2 Application equates to what has been awarded by TCE or CES, this will be sufficient in lieu of reference to the energy density table.

In the event this is not the case, the Offshore specific energy density table as set out in the [NESO guidance document](#) will be used to determine Gate 2 Criteria readiness in relation to the minimum seabed equivalent requirement. It is possible that only a portion of the project meets the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria, and the User will need to take necessary steps (e.g. staging Transmission Entry Capacity or reducing Transmission Entry Capacity) to match the energy density table in order to meet the minimum acreage equivalent requirement.

4.1b Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Provision of Original Red Line Boundary

As set out in CUSC Section 17, the User would also need to provide the Original Red Line Boundary for their project site per stage showing the land they have secured.

The project site is the main generation/demand site and excludes the cable routes or access roads or land needed for the network substation or land required for non-energy purposes (e.g. agricultural such as grazing sheep at a wind farm or solar installation or leisure usage such as mountain-bike tracks at a wind farm). Indicative areas for substations do not need to be depicted within the Original Red Line Boundary.

For the purpose of readiness, projects with multiple stages must provide a separate Original Red Line Boundary for each stage. However, it is also acceptable to use the same Original Red Line Boundary for each stage.

The criteria a User must meet here are as follows:

Show the Original Red Line Boundary of the site on which the project is located

- Original Red Line Boundary should be clearly marked;
- Where the Original Red Line Boundary covers multiple land parcels, it is recommended to include this on the Original Red Line Boundary (however this is not mandatory);
- Indicate the scale and orientation used;
- Explain any symbols, colours and abbreviations used;
- This does not need to show the project's cable route, or the land needed for a network substation or land used for non-energy purposes (e.g. agricultural such as grazing sheep at a wind farm or solar installation or leisure usage such as mountain-bike tracks at a wind farm);
- Where there is more than one technology within the Project Site, the User will not be required to provide an Original Red Line Boundary for each technology (apart from where a project stage has both an onshore and offshore component and the User will then need to separately show the Original Red Line Boundary and the Grid Coordinates for the onshore and offshore component). Note that the User will still need to provide the installed capacity for each technology and the Original Red Line Boundary will need to be large enough to encompass all technologies; and
- In addition, it is recommended to supply a GeoJSON file of the Original Red Line Boundary – however this is not mandatory.

Original Red Line Boundary must also show the following:

- **Location**
 - Site address including postcode (if available); and
 - Grid Coordinates (Longitude and Latitude in WGS84 decimal (and not degrees, minutes, seconds) format to 4 decimal places of Northerly, Easterly, Southerly and Westerly extreme coordinates of project site).
 - For the purpose of readiness, projects with multiple stages must provide separate grid coordinates for each stage. However, it is also acceptable to use the same grid coordinates for each stage.
- **Installed Capacity (expressed in whole MW or to one decimal place) for each technology per project stage**
 - Definition in CUSC Section 11; and
 - As per CUSC Section 17.7, the sum of the Installed Capacity provided within a Gate 2 Application and the capacity of any existing User's Equipment or Developer's Equipment at the same site (if any), must be equal to or greater than the total Transmission Entry Capacity or Developer Capacity or directly connected Demand MWs.
 - For Transmission Connected Demand Sites where the capacity is listed in MVA, Users should apply a unity power factor to convert to MW i.e. 100MVA would be 100MW.
 - Where a User has multiple project stages seeking to meet the Gate 2 criteria, the User will need to provide the Installed Capacity for that specific project stage rather than a cumulative value for the Project.
- **Total acreage secured within the Original Red Line Boundary in respect of the Project Site per project stage**

Ongoing compliance requirements regarding the Original Red Line Boundary are set out in CUSC Section 16 and expanded on further in the [Queue Management Guidance](#). Note that Embedded Power Stations' ongoing land compliance requirements will continue to be managed by DNOs or Transmission Connected iDNOs.

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights: Overview

User must provide evidence of secured land rights under one of the following methods:

Option Agreement – An option agreement is where the User enters into an agreement with a landowner for the right to buy or lease their land. The User has the option to purchase or lease the land (within a period defined in the agreement) but is not under obligation to do so. The User will usually pay a sum of money to the landowner for the right to exercise the option, known as an option fee. The User will usually be required to serve the landowner with an 'Option Notice' and pay a deposit at the point they wish to exercise the option.

Conditional agreements for leases, sale contracts, and missives will be treated similarly to Option Agreements and will be accepted provided the conditions are acceptable. A Promotion Agreement is only acceptable evidence if it meets the minimum requirements for evidencing relevant land rights as set out within this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology.

Although the length of Option agreements can vary, the Option agreement must be "live" and have a minimum 3-year period (unless discretion applied via this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology) from the date the Option is signed (not the date the Gate 2 application is submitted).

There will be an ongoing requirement for the User to keep the land under option by seeking further agreements (or keeping or extending the same agreement already in place) with the landowner until the connection date.

The Option Agreement must be accompanied by (or contain within):

- a Form of Lease (also known as an Option to Lease); or
- a Purchase Agreement/Transfer (also known as an Option to Purchase).

The Form of lease, must reflect the typical minimum operational timelines for that type of project and this will be a minimum 20 years from the date of exercise of the option unless the User can demonstrate, to the reasonable satisfaction of NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO, that the expected operational life of the project is less than 20 years e.g. in relation to test and demonstration projects. This minimum 20-year requirement is not applicable for a Purchase Agreement/Transfer (also known as an Option to Purchase); or

Evidence of existing ownership must be either:

- via provision of the Official Copy of The Register of Title (known as Title Sheet in Scotland) and Title Plan where land registered at Land Registry; or
- via certification of title signed by the User's solicitor where land not registered at Land Registry at the time of submission of the Gate 2 evidence; or

Existing land lease with a remaining term of minimum of 20 years from the submission of the Gate 2 evidence unless the User can demonstrate, to the reasonable satisfaction of NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO, that the expected operational life of the project is less than 20 years e.g. in relation to test and demonstration projects.

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights: Things to note when providing evidence

The secured land rights (apart from when related to Evidence of Existing Ownership) must be signed by both the User/Applicant and the landowner (or their authorised agent).

If the documentation is not signed by both parties, we require the counterpart signed by the landowner(s).

The User should also be the party who has entered into the secured land rights.

Where the User is not the party who has entered into the secured land rights, the User must provide a signed letter from the entity who holds the land rights stating that User has the rights to use the land.

However, we note in practice there are scenarios where connection agreements are held in one company and the land rights are put in the names of the specific SPV with both these companies under the direct control of the same parent company. In these cases, we will allow this requirement to be met via a signed letter from the director or authorised person, to explain the fact that the land rights company and applicant are under control of the same group company and that the land rights and connection offer will be within the same SPV at construction.

The Secured Land Rights must not include landowner unilateral termination provisions.

Noting there will always be standard termination provisions, in principle an acceptable termination provision is one that is in the User's control. Conversely, an unacceptable termination provision is one that is fully in the landowner's control.

Note this is not applicable if following the "Evidence of existing ownership" route to readiness.

The User must provide evidence of secured land rights for all their Project Site stage(s) (as identified by their Original Red Line Boundary for each stage).

We strongly recommend that Users provide a composite plan as part of their Readiness Declaration showing the secured land rights boundaries to ensure comparison between this and each Original Red Line Boundary. Where this is not provided, and we cannot verify that there are secured land rights in place for each Original Red Line Boundary, we will request this to be provided as part of the detailed checks process.

Evidence of Secured Land Rights is required per land parcel within the Original Red Line Boundary for each stage.

There is no formal definition of what a land parcel is. However, in principle every title/existing lease/option agreement is a different parcel, irrespective of whether they are contiguous. Therefore, separate fields could be the same "parcel" if on the same title/existing lease/option agreement.

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights: Commercial Sensitivities

We note that land status information would need to be heavily caveated such that the User can withhold any information it deems commercially sensitive.

Therefore, redacted land agreements are allowed to be provided if only the financial/commercial information is redacted. We will ensure these are stored in a secure location with no ability for information to be accessible by anyone unless they have the authority to do so and must not be made public.

However, we will need to be satisfied that the land agreements provided meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria for Land (which in the case of the Option Agreement could be via one of the listed exceptions, set out in this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology). We will contact Users for further explanation as part of detailed checks if more than financial/commercial information has been redacted, which we reasonably believe could impact whether the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria have been met.

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights: Option Agreement

Option Agreement – must be “live” and have a minimum 3-year period (unless discretion applied via this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology) from the date the Option is signed (not the date the Gate 2 application is submitted).

There will be an ongoing requirement for the User to keep the land under option by seeking further agreements (or keeping or extending the same agreement already in place) with the landowner until the connection date.

What do we mean by a 3-year minimum option length?

- The Option agreement must have a minimum 3-year period (unless discretion applied via this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology) from the date the Option is signed (not the date the Gate 2 application is submitted). Note that the Option must continue to have at least a 3-year minimum period unless it meets one of the exceptions in this section of the Gate 2 Criteria Methodology.
- Noting that options are structured differently, and we do not wish to unnecessarily restrict a commercial negotiation, how the 3-year minimum option length is structured is in the User's control, but it needs to ensure e.g. that the landlord has no unilateral termination provision (except in the event of default by the tenant). Therefore, it would be acceptable for an option that includes an initial term and an allowed extension (that in total constitutes ≥ 3 years) that can be granted on payment of an extension fee by the User to the landlord e.g. a right to extend by a further period if a planning application has been submitted. We note that some Option Agreements can be automatically extended without the need for a newly signed Option Agreement. However, where this means the Option Agreement would appear to have expired, we require signed evidence that the extension has been activated. This evidence may be practically different in each case but could include confirmation from the landowners and/or the User's solicitor that the extension has been activated.
- The detailed checks to be undertaken are set out in Section 8 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology.
- A User having an exclusivity agreement is not sufficient evidence of such land rights.
- Additionally, Heads of Terms, which is a preliminary agreement that outlines the key terms and conditions and timescales for the User to secure an Option from the landowner to purchase or lease the land for the purposes of the proposed connection, is not sufficient evidence of such land rights.

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights: Option Agreement
Exceptions to Minimum Length period

Exceptions to 3-year minimum option length:

- Evidence from the User that having to have and/or maintain a 3-year validity detrimentally impacts development of the project. We will consider on a case-by-case basis, but the only exceptions we currently envisage to be considered in this regard are:
 - a test and demonstration project which would be around for a period less than 3 years; or
 - where the project is reasonably able to demonstrate that it does not need a further 3 years before it will enter into the lease (or purchase) e.g. the option is entered into just prior to construction, so although the project has or is seeking a connection date greater than 3 years away, it has less than 3 years left on its option, because there is less than 3 years before the project will expect to enter into the lease (or purchase).

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights: Option Agreement Exceptions to providing secured land rights (Compulsory Purchase Order)

Option Agreement Other Exception: Evidence of Compulsory Purchase Order Powers granted

Although, in most circumstances, the User should have secured land rights over all of their proposed project site before they make a Gate 2 Application, there are circumstances where a User may be unable to obtain the necessary land rights as they can only acquire all the land required, or part of the land required, through the granting of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers. This exception is only allowable under the following circumstances:

- At Gate 2 Application, the User must provide evidence of the granted CPO powers for all the land (or the relevant part) which may be acquired through those granted CPO Powers.
- At Gate 2 Application, the User must meet all the requirements under “Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Land” for the land that is not associated with the granted CPO Powers. Note that the Installed Capacity provided under section 4.1b should also include the land associated with the granted CPO Powers.
- At Gate 2 Application, the User must indicate on the Original Red Line Boundary as per section 4.1b (or provide a separate draft Original Red Line Boundary) the red line boundary for the land associated with the granted CPO Powers and also confirm the minimum acreage for this land, as per section 4.1a. Ongoing Original Red Line Boundary Compliance will be based on this information.
- At Queue Management Milestone M3 (at transmission or distribution), the User must provide evidence of secured land rights for the land (including any acquired through CPO powers) and re-confirm the Original Red Line Boundary and minimum acreage.

In Section 5 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology, we have included a planning alternative which allows projects that follow the DCO process (including to be granted Compulsory Purchase Order powers) an alternative route to meeting the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria via the submission of (and validation of) their application for planning consent (Queue Management Milestone M1 – at transmission or distribution). Where a User evidences to NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO, ahead of the Gated Application Window opening, that they need to follow an alternative planning process (other than the DCO route) in order to be granted Compulsory Purchase Order powers to secure relevant land rights, NESO may apply discretion on a case-by case-basis in respect of this aspect of the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria (in line with the above).

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights: Option Agreement
Exceptions to providing secured land rights (Probate)

Option Agreement Other Exception: User may be unable to complete the land option due to the ownership of a parcel of land being in probate following a death.

Although, in most circumstances, we believe that the User should have secured land rights over all their proposed project site before they make a Gate 2 Application, there is a circumstance where a User may be unable to complete the land option due to the ownership of a parcel of land being in probate following a death.

This exception will be allowable (even where all the land the User needs for the project is in Probate) under the following circumstances:

- At Gate 2 Application, the User must meet all the requirements under “Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Land” for the land not in Probate. Note that the Installed Capacity provided should also include the land under probate.
- At Gate 2 Application, the User must meet all the requirements under “Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Land” for the land that is not being acquired through Probate. Note that the Installed Capacity provided under section 4.1b should also include the land to be acquired through Probate.
- At Gate 2 Application, the User must indicate on the Original Red Line Boundary as per section 4.1b (or provide a separate draft Original Red Line Boundary) the red line boundary for the land being acquired through Probate and also confirm the minimum acreage for this land as per section 4.1a. Ongoing Original Red Line Boundary Compliance will be based on this information.
- At Queue Management Milestone M3 (at transmission or distribution), the User must provide evidence of secured land rights for the land that was in Probate and re-confirm the Original Red Line Boundary and minimum acreage.

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights: Option Agreement (Form of Lease or Purchase Agreement/Transfer)

The Option Agreement must be accompanied by (or contain within):

- a Form of Lease (also known as an Option to Lease) or
- a Purchase Agreement/Transfer (also known as an Option to Purchase).

The Form of Lease, must reflect the typical minimum operational timelines for that type of project and this will be a minimum 20 years from the date of exercise of the option unless the User can demonstrate, to the reasonable satisfaction of NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO, that the expected operational life of the project is less than 20 years e.g. in relation to test and demonstration projects. This minimum 20-year requirement is not applicable for a Purchase Agreement/Transfer (also known as an Option to Purchase).

As the contracted connection date will not necessarily be known at the time that the User is negotiating the Option Agreement with the landowner, the minimum 20 years will apply from the date of exercise of the option.

If the expected operational life of the project is less than 20 years e.g. in relation to test and demonstration projects, then Users should explain this within their Readiness Declaration and NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO will allow an exception here if the operational life of the project is evidenced to be less than 20 years.

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights: Existing Ownership

Evidence of existing ownership must be either:

- via provision of the Official Copy of The Register of Title (known as Title Sheet in Scotland) and Title Plan where land registered at Land Registry; or
- via the certification of title signed by the User’s solicitor where land not registered at Land Registry) at the time of submission of the Gate 2 evidence.

Where the User already owns the land at which the project is to be located, the User must either:

- Provide the Official Copy of The Register of Title (known as Title Sheet in Scotland) and Title Plan where registered at Land Registry; or
- Provide certification of title signed by the User’s solicitor where land not registered at Land Registry. This will need to confirm that the land interest is owned / vested in the User.

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights: Existing Land Lease

Evidence of existing land lease with a remaining term of minimum of 20 years from the submission of the Gate 2 evidence unless the User can demonstrate, to the reasonable satisfaction of NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO, that the expected operational life of the project is less than 20 years e.g. in relation to test and demonstration projects.

As the contracted connection will not necessarily be known at the time that this evidence is submitted, the minimum 20 years will be calculated from the date of submission of the Gate 2 evidence.

If the expected operational life of the project is less than 20 years e.g. in relation to test and demonstration projects, then Users should explain this within their Readiness Declaration and NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO will allow an exception here if the operational life of the project is evidenced to be less than 20 years.

4.1c Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Secured Land Rights (Differences of Approach)

In terms of securing land, there are minor differences of approach for Non-GB Projects, Offshore Hybrid Assets (OHAs) and Interconnectors and Innovation and Targeted Oil & Gas (INTOG) projects to reflect the practicalities of how they would meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria for Land/Seabed. These are shown in the table below:

All Technologies (Except Non-GB, OHAs and Interconnectors)	Non-GB, OHAs and Interconnectors
Secured the rights to lease or own the land/seabed (or already leases or owns the land/seabed) of the site on which the project is planned to be located as set out in the NESO guidance document .	Secured the rights to lease or own the land (or already leases or owns the land) for the Onshore Converter Substation i.e. in relation to HVDC connected projects. (In the unlikely event there is not to be an onshore converter substation for such projects – i.e. in relation to HVAC connected projects – this will be agreed on a case-by-case basis with NESO. This could include an Agreement for Lease, assessed under the criteria set out in Section 4 above.)

Other Differences of Approach
Innovation and Targeted Oil & Gas (INTOG) Projects
Secured relevant conditional seabed rights (for the site on which the project is planned to be located) through an agreement awarded by Crown Estate Scotland (CES) as a result of the INTOG Leasing Round.



5. Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Planning

This section sets out the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria if seeking to meet Gate 2 Readiness Criteria via evidence of submission and validation of the application for planning

5.1 Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Planning

We would expect the majority of projects to evidence meeting Gate 2 Readiness Criteria through the land route as per Section 4; however, this planning alternative allows projects that follow the DCO process (including to be granted Compulsory Purchase Order powers) an alternative route to meeting the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria.

The evidence requirement is:

- Submission of (and validation of) application for planning consent for projects following the Development Consent Order (DCO) process i.e. meeting the requirements of Queue Management Milestone M1 via DCO only.
- Other planning consent routes **(in exceptional circumstances)**

Where a User pre-agrees with NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO, ahead of the Gated Application Window opening, that they need to follow an alternative planning process (other than the DCO planning route) in order to be granted Compulsory Purchase Order powers to secure relevant land rights, NESO or the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO may apply discretion on a case-by case-basis in respect of this aspect of the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria (in line with the above evidence requirement). If this is agreed ahead of the Gated Application Window opening, Users will then need to provide in their Readiness Declaration evidence of meeting the requirements of Queue Management Milestone M1 for the appropriate planning route.



5.2 Gate 2 Readiness Criteria – Planning

When is evidence of secured land rights required?

- Considering that this route to meeting Gate 2 Readiness is meeting Queue Management Milestone M1, the ongoing compliance associated with Queue Management Milestone M1 (as referred in section 7.1 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology) would not be applicable. However, Users would still need to maintain compliance with Queue Management Milestones – this includes provision of Queue Management Milestone M3 (Secure Land Rights) which is the land route to meeting the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria.
- The Original Red Line Boundary and evidence of minimum acreage requirements (as set out in section 4 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology) must be provided as part of evidence of meeting Queue Management Milestone M2. The ongoing land compliance requirements against the Original Red Line Boundary (as referred in section 7.1 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology) will therefore apply from when the User has met Queue Management Milestone M2.
 - Note: Users seeking to meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria through the planning route that have met Queue Management Milestone M2 at the time of submitting the Readiness Declaration (or where they meet it prior to signature of the Gate 2 Offer) only need to provide the Original Red Line Boundary, installed capacity and evidence of minimum acreage requirements upon their signature of the Gate 2 Offer.

6. Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria

This section references the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria, one of which the User must meet

6.1 Gate 2 Strategic Criteria – Overview

In addition to meeting the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria (under either Section 4 or 5 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology), Users will need to meet one of the following Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria.

Projects will meet the Strategic Alignment Criteria by either being:

- a) eligible for relevant 'protections' as set out in section 6.2; or
- b) aligned to the capacities within the CP30 Action Plan as described in the Connections Network Design Methodology; or
- c) designated as described in the Project Designation Methodology; or
- d) a project not within scope of the CP30 Action Plan and of a technology type listed in the table in section 6.3.

Strategic Alignment Criteria a) is evidenced by the User unless set out otherwise in Section 6.2 and the User will need to confirm the Transmission Entry Capacity/Developer Capacity that they are seeking protections against on the Readiness Declaration they submit (Section 9).

For Strategic Alignment Criteria a), b) and d), the User must provide their technology type(s) via the Readiness Declaration they submit (see Section 9). Further clarity on Strategic Alignment Criteria b) and d) is set out in Section 6.3.

The User will meet the requirements of Strategic Alignment Criteria c) where NESO have designated a project, in accordance with the Project Designation Methodology.

If, for a staged or hybrid project, one stage or technology of the project is deemed to meet the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria and another is not, then the User will be issued with an offer only for the Gate 2 stage or technology of the project (unless identified as a Child technology as set out in Section 7.8.6 of the CNDM). For the avoidance of doubt under CMP434, and as per CUSC Section 17, only a Competent Gate 1 Application results in a Gate 1 Offer.

NESO will confirm to the User if they meet one of these criteria prior to the start of the Gated Design Process. If the User has met the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria and the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria, detailed checks will be carried out on that User's Gate 2 Readiness Criteria Evidence in the Gated Design Process. This is explained further in Section 8 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology.

For projects that are connected to a DNO or Transmission Connected iDNO, assessment against Strategic Alignment Criteria b) will be conducted by NESO on behalf of the DNO or Transmission Connected iDNO.

6.2 Strategic Alignment Criteria (a) – Protections

Eligible for relevant ‘protections’

Although the User is not required to do so, if they wish to be considered eligible for Strategic Alignment Criteria a), they will need to provide additional evidence as part of their Gate 2 Application. This is set out in this section, with the NESO’s checks on this evidence set out in Section 8.8 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology.

The evidence requirements are set out in this section 6.2 for the following protections and are summarised at the end of this section 6.2:

- Protection Clause 2b: Projects which are significantly progressed;
- Protection Clause 3a: Projects which submitted a planning application on or before 20th December 2024 and have since obtained planning consent (those who reapply in CMP434 only, unless the technology type is in an undersubscribed technology zone); and
- Protection Clause 3b: Projects which submitted a planning application on or before the closure of the CMP435 Gated Application Window (26 August 2025) and have since obtained planning consent (those who reapply in CMP434 only, unless the technology type is in an undersubscribed technology zone).

Protection Clause 3a and Protection Clause 3b only apply to Users who had Existing Agreements in relation to CMP435 and supplied evidence of meeting the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria (for the technology type(s) listed in that Existing Agreement) in the CMP435 Gated Application Window in relation to those Existing Agreements (this is what is meant by ‘those who reapply in CMP434 only’ above). However, this requirement will not be applied where the technology type seeking Gate 2 is in an undersubscribed technology zone.

The User will also need to confirm the Transmission Entry Capacity/Developer Capacity/Demand Capacity that they are seeking protections against and the technology type(s) on the Readiness Declaration they submit (see Section 9).

The following clauses apply in relation to the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria (a) only. **All Users will still be required to evidence that their project meets the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria** under either Section 4 or 5 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology, unless their project is selected by NESO for Gate 1 connection point and capacity reservation.

For the avoidance of doubt, Project technology stages which hold Gate 2 Agreements, or which are already in the process of being offered a Gate 2 Agreement, will not be able to better their allocated queue position by applying for these Protections.



Protection Clause 2b: Projects which are significantly progressed

Any project that meets the following conditions will be deemed to have met the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria. This clause guarantees a place in the CMP434 queue, even if the project exceeds the zonal or GB permitted capacity for its technology type (as set out within the CP30 Action Plan).

This clause applies to any application where the User can demonstrate one of the following prior to the closure of the CMP434 Gated Application Window:

- i. Holding a Contract for Difference (CfD) issued in accordance with the Energy Act 2013; or
- ii. Holding a Capacity Market contract issued in accordance with the Energy Act 2013 and relevant secondary legislation; or
- iii. Has regulatory approval from the Authority, in the form of either an LDES, Interconnector or OHA Cap and Floor agreement or Merchant Interconnector approval (via the relevant exemptions process with the Authority); or
- iv. Holding a live contract with NESO awarded through their 'Network Services' (previously referred to as 'NOA Pathfinders') processes e.g. Voltage Network Services, Stability Network Services or Constraint Management Intertrip Services¹; or
- v. Being the successful bidder(s) in an offshore wind leasing round process managed by Crown Estate Scotland or The Crown Estate, where such offshore wind leasing round process is associated with a co-ordinated network design process undertaken by NESO aligned with (or where prior analysis indicates, likely to be aligned with) the SSEP when it is published. NESO will confirm this in writing with the relevant successful bidder(s) and Crown Estate Scotland or The Crown Estate accordingly¹.

Where the support contracts in conditions i) to iv) are dependent on the project connecting by a certain date or within a certain date range, NESO and TOs will use best endeavours to provide a connection date that meets these requirements.

¹ Where a project has not met the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria, but NESO choose to reserve a connection point and capacity for it under the Gate 1 Connection Point and Capacity Reservation provision, this clause will also be applied if the project meets condition iii), iv) or v) to treat the queue position of the reservation as 'protected' for the purpose of queue formation.

Protection Clause 3: Projects which obtain planning consent prior to the closure of the CMP434 Application Window, having submitted a planning application on or before a specified date (those who reapply in CMP434 only, unless the technology type is in an undersubscribed technology zone)

Protection Clause 3a: Projects which submitted a planning application on or before 20th December 2024 and have since obtained planning consent (those who reapply in CMP434 only, unless the technology type is in an undersubscribed technology zone).

This clause applies to projects where the User had submitted an application for Planning Consent on or before 20th December 2024 and has since received planning consent (i.e. Queue Management M2) prior to the closure of a CMP434 Application Window. For the avoidance of doubt, an application that was submitted on or before 20th December 2024 but that was not yet validated by the Statutory Planning Authority would also qualify i.e. the requirements of Queue Management M1 do not need to have been met by 20th December 2024.

Projects benefitting from Protection Clause 3a **will be allowed to exceed both the zonal and GB permitted capacities** (as set out within the CP30 Action Plan) for the relevant technology.

Protection Clause 3b: Projects which submitted a planning application on or before the closure of the CMP435 Gated Application Window and have since obtained planning consent (those who reapply in CMP434 only, unless the technology type is in an undersubscribed technology zone).

This clause applies to projects where the User had submitted an application for Planning Consent that had been validated (i.e. Queue Management M1) on or before the closure of the **CMP435 Gated Application Window** (26 August 2025) and has since received planning consent (i.e. Queue Management M2) prior to the closure of a CMP434 Application Window.

Projects benefitting from Protection Clause 3b **will only be required to adhere to the GB total permitted capacity** (as set out within the CP30 Action Plan) for the relevant technology. Where there is a zonal permitted capacity outlined for the technology, and this is exceeded, the project will still receive a Gate 2 offer provided it does not exceed the GB total permitted capacity.

See Section 7 of the CNDM for how these projects will be ordered in the CMP434 queue formation exercise.

For the avoidance of doubt, Protection Clause 3 is not applicable to any projects which do not require planning consent.



Additional notes for protections

Protection for part of a project

If a User has only obtained planning consent or secured a support contract for part of a project, then **only that part will benefit from protection** under any of the clauses outlined in this section. As a result, there may be instances where both parts of the project meet the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria but receive different queue positions as a result of the queue formation process. There may also be instances where only the protected part of the project receives a Gate 2 offer and not the remainder of the project.

Summary of evidence required to be provided by the User – Protection Clause 2b

Protection Clause 2b: Projects which are significantly progressed	Notes:
• Provide evidence of holding a “live” Contracts for Difference Contract; or “live” Capacity Market Contract; or “live” Cap and Floor agreement or Merchant Interconnector approval (via the relevant exemptions process with the Authority); or “live” contract with NESO awarded through their 'Network Services' processes e.g. Voltage Network Services, Stability Network Services or Constraint Management Intertrip Services; or being the successful bidder in an offshore leasing round associated with co-ordinated network design undertaken by NESO aligned with (or where prior analysis indicates, likely to be aligned with) the SSEP when it is published.	• User will need to confirm the Transmission Entry Capacity/Developer Capacity/Demand Capacity that they are seeking protections against; and state the technology type on the Readiness Declaration they submit.



Summary of evidence required to be provided by the User – Protection Clause 3a and 3b

Protection Clause 3a: Projects which submitted a planning application on or before 20th December 2024 and have since obtained planning consent (those who reapply in CMP434 only, unless the technology type is in an undersubscribed technology zone)

- Provide evidence (i.e. the planning reference number) that the application for planning consent was submitted to the Statutory Planning Authority on or before 20th December 2024; and
- Provide evidence of meeting Queue Management Milestone M2.

Protection Clause 3b: Projects which submitted a planning application on or before the closure of the CMP435 Gated Application Window (26 August 2025) and have since obtained planning consent (those who reapply in CMP434 only, unless the technology type is in an undersubscribed technology zone)

- Provide evidence of meeting Queue Management Milestone M1, noting this must also show this was validated by the Statutory Planning Authority prior to the closure of the CMP435 Gated Application Window (i.e. on or before 26 August 2025); and
- Provide evidence of meeting Queue Management Milestone M2.

Notes:

On Queue Management Milestones

- User must provide evidence whether or not the project is currently subject to Queue Management and whether or not they have previously met the corresponding milestone(s).
- The evidence requirements for these milestones are detailed in the relevant Queue Management guidance (transmission or distribution) unless otherwise stated.

On Protections

- User will need to confirm the Transmission Entry Capacity/Developer Capacity/Demand Capacity that they are seeking protections against; and state the technology type on the Readiness Declaration they submit.



6.3 Strategic Alignment Criteria (b) and (d)

The table below shows the technologies that are in and out of scope of the CP30 Action Plan. In scope technologies must be assessed against the 2030 and 2035 capacity ranges as outlined in CNDM Section 7.4 before they can be deemed to have met the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria.

- Technologies that are listed in this table and are **not** in scope of the CP30 Action Plan will automatically meet the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria (under Strategic Alignment Criteria (d)).
- Any technologies **not** listed in this table will only be able to meet the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria by meeting Strategic Alignment Criteria (a) or (c).

Technology	In scope of CP30 Action Plan?	Breakdown in CP30 Action Plan	Technology	In scope of CP30 Action Plan?
Offshore Wind	Yes	GB-wide	Transmission-Connected Demand	No
Onshore Wind	Yes	Zonal ¹	Wave	No
Solar	Yes	Zonal ²	Tidal	No
Nuclear	Yes	GB-wide	Run-of-river Hydro	No
Low Carbon Dispatchable Power	Yes	GB-wide	Geothermal Power	No
Unabated Gas	Yes	GB-wide	Non-GB Generation	No
Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES)	Yes	GB-wide	Reactive Compensation	No
Batteries	Yes	Zonal		
Interconnectors	Yes	GB-wide		

The below table lists all technology definitions provided in the [CP30 Action Plan Connections reform annex](#) and additional technology definitions where required to provide further clarity. Technologies listed in this table and the table on the previous page will be kept under review and updated as required if definitions are updated or as new technology types emerge.

Technology	Definition
Low Carbon Dispatchable Power	Low Carbon Dispatchable Power technologies are ones which combust fuel to produce electricity and, by varying the rate at which fuel is burned, can respond to meet the needs of the grid with varying levels of flexibility. This category includes biomass, power BECCS, gas CCUS and hydrogen.
LDES	As outlined in DESNZ and Ofgem's Long Duration Electricity Storage: Technical Decision Document , an LDES asset must be capable of discharge at full power for at least eight hours, and full power must be at least 50MW or 100MW (depending on technology maturity). This also states that for the purposes of the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan pathway which will be used for connections, lithium-ion electricity storage projects will be treated as batteries.
Batteries	Refers to battery storage projects which do not meet the definition of LDES, as per the forthcoming LDES Technical Decision Document.
Nuclear	For the purposes of strategic alignment this means generating stations that use one of the following technologies: Advanced Gas Cooled Reactors, European Pressurised Reactors and Standardised Nuclear Unit Power Plant System Pressurised Water Reactors as projects using these technologies are referenced in Government's plan and are connected, in construction or post planning consent.
Non-GB Generation	Generation located outside of Great Britain and the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone, but which is directly connected to the GB Transmission System or Distribution System and is not connected to another market.
Run-of-river Hydro	Facility that channels flowing water from a river through a canal or penstock to spin a turbine. Typically, a run-of-river project will have little or no storage facility. Run-of-river provides a continuous supply of electricity (base load), with some flexibility of operation for daily fluctuations in demand through water flow that is regulated by the facility.
Geothermal Power	Geothermal power plants use steam to produce electricity. The steam comes from reservoirs of hot water found a few miles or more below the earth's surface. The steam rotates a turbine that activates a generator, which produces electricity.
Reactive Compensation	Reactive Compensation is the process of managing reactive power in electrical systems to improve efficiency, stability, and voltage quality. Note that this also applies to projects categorised as 'Synchronous Compensation', which fall under the 'Reactive Compensation' technology term.

7. Gate 2 Criteria – Ongoing Compliance

This section summarises the ongoing compliance requirements in respect of land and planning

7.1 Gate 2 Criteria – Ongoing Compliance

Once a project has met the Gate 2 Criteria and the User has signed the Gate 2 Offer, there will be ongoing compliance requirements regarding the land and planning. These obligations are set out in CUSC Section 16 and expanded on further in the Queue Management Guidance.

If following the Planning route to meeting Gate 2 Readiness, the ongoing land compliance requirements will apply from when the User has met Queue Management Milestone M2 and as the Planning route to meeting Gate 2 Readiness is meeting Queue Management Milestone M1, the ongoing compliance referenced below associated with Queue Management Milestone M1 is not applicable.

Land

Whatever Installed Capacity in MW (expressed in whole MW or to one decimal place) is built within the Original Red Line Boundary, only 50% of that number can then be located outside of the Original Red Line Boundary. Where this Original Red Line Boundary MW calculation results in a number that is less than the total Installed Capacity, the total Installed Capacity will be reduced accordingly (and this may result in a Transmission Entry Capacity reduction). This is set out further in CUSC Schedule 2 Exhibit 3 Clause 7.5 (Onshore) and CUSC Schedule 2 Exhibit 3A Clause 7.4 (Offshore) in respect of directly connected projects.

Planning

As set out in CUSC Section 16, requirement to submit the application for planning consent (unless already met at the time of the Gate 2 Application) at the earliest of:

- i) the Queue Management Milestone M1 (“M1”) calculated back from the contracted completion date; or
- ii) M1 calculated forwards from the Gate 2 offer date (based on an agreed standard time period calculated from the date of the Gate 2 offer for each planning type) to move from Queue Management Milestone M3 (“M3”) to M1.

The requirements to meet Queue Management Milestones will continue to apply.

Note that Embedded Power Stations’ Queue Management Milestones and ongoing land compliance requirements will continue to be managed by DNOs or Transmission Connected iDNOs.

8. Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment

This section sets out the Gate 2 Criteria Evidence assessment process including what is being checked and by whom. This includes the assessment process for the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria and Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria

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 reserve the right to indicate that the relevant project technology stage(s) have 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), or has met Strategic Alignment Criteria d).

8.1 Summary of Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Summary of Evidence Requirements

User (Transmission Connected and Large Embedded Generation) to NESO	
Evidence Requirement	Section in Gate 2 Criteria Methodology
Readiness Declaration	Section 9
Original Red Line Boundary if seeking to meet Gate 2 Readiness criteria through land as per Section 4.1b of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology Note if meeting Gate 2 Readiness Criteria through planning route, the above will be provided at Queue Management Milestone M2	Section 4.1b
Evidence of secured land rights (can be redacted to address commercial concerns) as per Section 4.1c of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology; or submission of planning readiness criteria as per Section 5 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology	Section 4.1c (Land); Section 5 (Planning)
Evidence of meeting Strategic Alignment Criteria (if applicable)	Section 6.2 (for a). As per Section 6.1, Strategic Alignment Criteria (c) met where NESO have designated a project, in accordance with the Project Designation Methodology.
+ Gate 2 Application + Large Embedded Generation must have met requirements under Clause 17.6.8 of the CUSC	

8.2 Summary of Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Summary of Evidence Requirements

User (Small and Medium Embedded Generation*) to DNO/Transmission Connected IDNO	
Evidence Requirement	Section in Gate 2 Criteria Methodology
Readiness Declaration	Section 9
Original Red Line Boundary if seeking to meet Gate 2 Readiness criteria through land as per Section 4.1b of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology Note if meeting Gate 2 Readiness Criteria through planning route, the above will be provided at Queue Management Milestone M2	Section 4.1b
Evidence of secured land rights (can be redacted to address commercial concerns) as per Section 4.1c of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology; or submission of planning readiness criteria as per Section 5 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology	Section 4.1c (Land); Section 5 (Planning)
Evidence of meeting Strategic Alignment Criteria (if applicable)	Section 6.2 (for a). As per Section 6.1, Strategic Alignment Criteria (c) met where NESO have designated a project, in accordance with the Project Designation Methodology.
+ must have met requirements under Clause 17.6.8 of the CUSC	

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

8.3 Summary of Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Summary of Evidence Requirements

DNO/Transmission Connected IDNO (on behalf of Small and Medium Embedded Generation*) to NESO	
Evidence Requirement	Section in Gate 2 Criteria Methodology
Upon request from NESO, Readiness Declaration(s) that were provided to DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO for Small and Medium Embedded Generation*	Section 9
Provide the Grid Coordinates for the Original Red Line Boundaries that were provided to DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO for Small and Medium Embedded Generation*. Upon request from NESO, provide the actual Original Red Line Boundaries as per Section 4.1b of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology	Section 4.1b
+ Gate 2 Application	

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

8.4 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Level of checking

Checking of Gate 2 evidence undertaken prior to Gate 2 Offer

NESO for transmission connected and Large Embedded Generation

As set out in CUSC Section 17.10, there is a reasonable endeavours obligation to check 100% of Gate 2 Readiness Criteria evidence provided and an obligation to publish after the end of the Gated Design Process the percentage of detailed checks undertaken as a percentage of the total of Gate 2 Applications within the Gated Design Process that NESO, DNOs and IDNOs have carried out.

Conduct 100% of duplication checks (Original Red Line Boundaries for Gate 2 applications including those for Small and Medium Embedded Generation* and those that have already met the Gate 2 Criteria).

DNO/Transmission Connected IDNO for Small and Medium Embedded Generation*

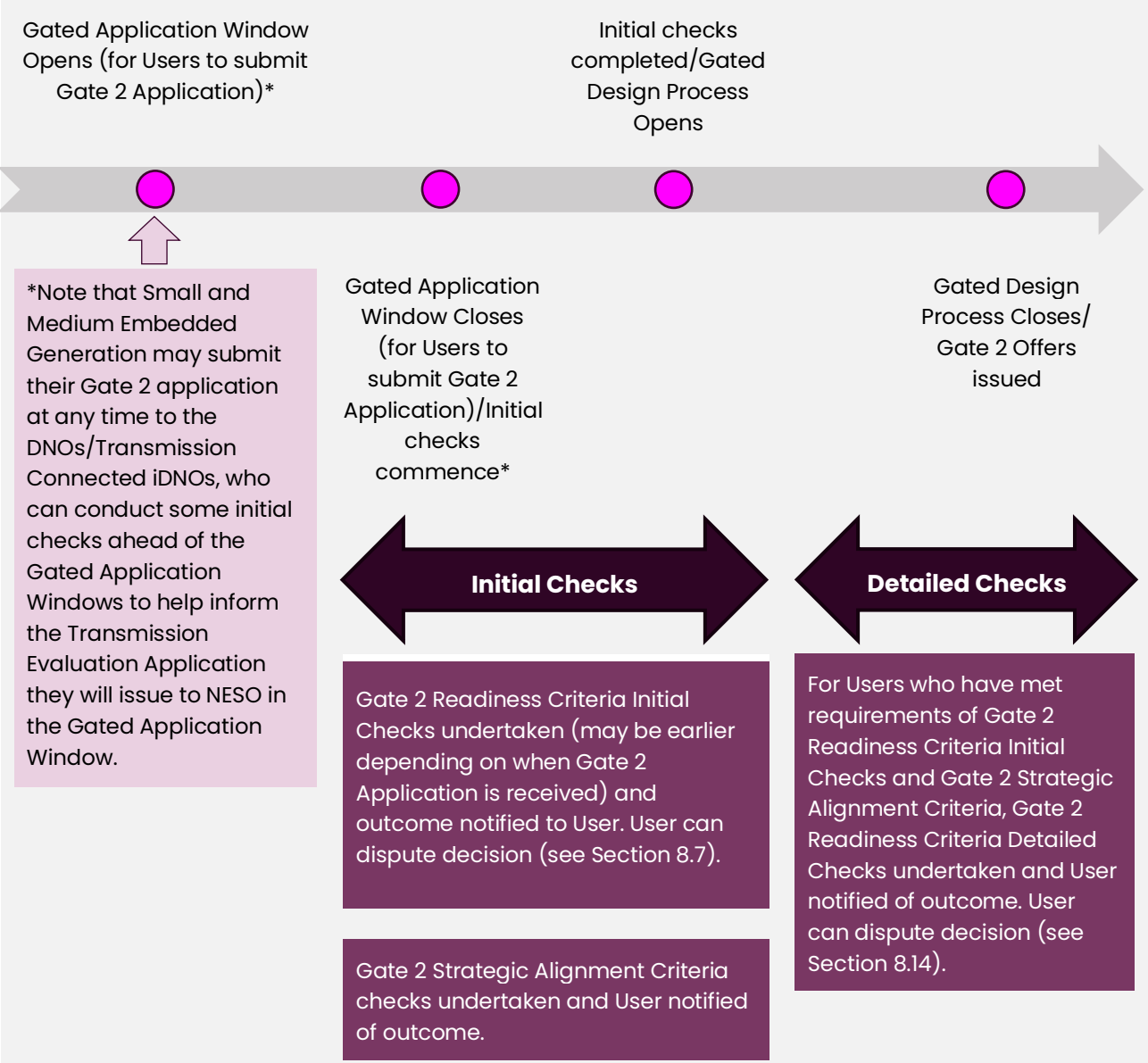
As set out in CUSC Section 17.10, there is a reasonable endeavours obligation to check 100% of Gate 2 Readiness Criteria evidence provided and obligation to inform NESO after the end of the Gated Design Process the percentage of detailed checks undertaken as a percentage of the total of Gate 2 Applications within the Gated Design Process for their licensed area.

Upon request from NESO, provide copies of Readiness Declaration(s) for Small and Medium Embedded Generation* that they believe have met the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria, but it will still be the DNO/Transmission Connected IDNO that assesses these. Note that the data submission(s) (which includes data from the Readiness Declarations), that is provided by the DNO/Transmission Connected IDNO to NESO associated with the Gated Application Window, is considered to meet the CUSC requirement for DNO/Transmission Connected IDNOs to provide the Readiness Declarations.

Provide Grid Coordinates for the Original Red Line Boundaries to NESO for Small and Medium Embedded Generation* that they believe have met Gate 2 Readiness Criteria. Also, upon request from NESO, provide any requested Original Red Line Boundaries they have received. (NESO will carry out duplication checks against these Original Red Line Boundaries).

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

8.5 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Timing of Checks



8.6 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Initial Checks (Gate 2 Readiness Criteria)

Initial checks – Gate 2 Readiness Criteria

These will be carried out prior to the start of the Gated Design Process. These checks will be carried out by NESO apart from in respect of Small and Medium Embedded Generation*, which are undertaken by their DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO. Note that as Small and Medium Embedded Generation can submit their Gate 2 application at any time, the DNOs/Transmission Connected iDNOs could conduct some initial checks ahead of the Gated Application Window.

Below is a list of the Gate 2 Criteria Readiness initial checks that we will undertake. We will keep under review if any of the Gate 2 Criteria Readiness detailed checks as set out in section 8.91. 8.11. 8.12 or 8.13 can be carried out prior to the start of the Gated Design Process.

Evidence provided by User	Check
Readiness Declaration	All mandatory fields completed
Received the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria Evidence – land or planning?	Check document can be opened and is a land/planning document
Received Original Red Line Boundary (if meeting Gate 2 Readiness Criteria through secured land rights)	Check it can be opened and is a red line boundary and includes all the mandatory information as set out in 4.1b of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology
Connection Application or Modification Application	Application is Competent as per CUSC Section 11

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

8.7 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Initial Checks (Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria)

Initial checks – Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria

As well as the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria initial checks, there will be Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria checks (as set out in Section 6, of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology) undertaken prior to the start of the Gated Design Process. Below is a list of the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria checks:

Strategic Alignment Criteria	Carried out by NESO	Carried out by DNO/Transmission Connected IDNO
a) eligible for relevant 'protections' as set out in section 6.2 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology	Yes, see section 8.7 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology	Yes, see section 8.7 of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology
b) aligned to the capacities within the CP30 Action Plan as described in the CNDM	Yes, as set out in the Connections Network Design Methodology and carried out by NESO on behalf of the DNO or Transmission Connected IDNO	No, carried out by NESO on behalf of the DNO or Transmission Connected IDNO
c) designated as described in the Project Designation Methodology	Yes, as set out in the Project Designation Methodology	N/A – although if a DNO/Transmission Connected IDNO identifies a Small or Medium Embedded Generation* project, which they believe should be designated, they can notify NESO
d) a project not within scope of the CP30 Action Plan and of a technology type listed in the table in section 6.3	As per Strategic Alignment Criteria b)	As per Strategic Alignment Criteria b)

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

Initial checks – Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria

Although the User is not required to do so, if they wish to be considered eligible for Strategic Alignment Criteria a), they will need to provide additional evidence as part of their Gate 2 Application as set out in section 6.2. These checks will be carried out by NESO apart from in respect of Small and Medium Embedded Generation*, which are undertaken by their DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO. These checks are:

- Verifying evidence of meeting Queue Management Milestones M1 and M2 (for Protections 3a and 3b) in accordance with the checks detailed in the relevant Queue Management Guidance (Transmission or Distribution).
- Where the User evidences that they hold a “live” Contract for Difference (CfD); or “live” Capacity Market (CM) Agreement; or have “live” Cap and Floor arrangements in place (or Merchant Interconnector approval via the relevant exemptions process with the Authority) or have a “live” contract with NESO awarded through its ‘Network Services’ processes; or are a successful bidder in an offshore leasing round (but only where this is as described in Section 6.2). This will be checked by NESO or DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO with the body that issued these i.e.
 - LCCC for CfD; or
 - NESO for CM, Network Services Contract and if a successful bidder in an offshore leasing round (but only where this is as described in Section 6.2); or
 - the Authority for Cap and Floor arrangements; and/or
 - through a review of public information e.g. there is a CfD and CM register, etc.

Note that for Strategic Alignment Criteria a), b) and d), the User needs to provide their technology type(s), via their Readiness Declaration, and this will be verified (where relevant) against the existing agreement. Additionally for Strategic Alignment Criteria a), the User will need to confirm the Transmission Entry Capacity/Developer Capacity/Demand MWs that they are seeking protections against via their Readiness Declaration, noting that If a User has only obtained planning consent or secured a support contract for part of a project, then only that part will benefit from protection – this will also be verified.

As per Section 6.1, Strategic Alignment Criteria (c) is met where NESO have designated a project, in accordance with the Project Designation Methodology.

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

Initial checks – Gate 2 Readiness Criteria and Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria

Apart from Small and Medium Embedded Generation*, NESO will notify the User if they have met the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria initial checks and Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria. The DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO will do likewise in respect of the Small and Medium Embedded Generation* that has applied to them in the Gated Application Window.

This notification would be issued prior to the start of the Gated Design Process.

All Users who have met the requirements of the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria initial checks and the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria will be taken forward into the Gated Design Process (assuming a competent application). They will be assumed (due to their Readiness Declaration) to have met the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria unless they subsequently do not meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria detailed checks.

All Users who do not meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria initial checks prior to the start of the Gated Design Process can dispute that decision* but will not be included in the Gated Design Process.

A User can dispute the NESO’s decision in accordance with CUSC Section 7.4. Note that for Small and Medium Embedded Generation*, it would be the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO that makes the decision on whether the User meets the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria so these Users would raise their dispute to the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO. If the User does raise a dispute, the next steps for their application will be determined by the outcome of the dispute process.

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

8.8 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Detailed Checks (Gate 2 Readiness Criteria)

Detailed checks – Gate 2 Readiness Criteria

All Users who have met the requirements of the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria initial checks and the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria will be taken forward into the Gated Design Process (assuming a competent application). They will be assumed (due to their Readiness Declaration) to have met the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria unless they subsequently do not meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria detailed checks, which will be undertaken up until the end of the Gated Design Process, although we aspire to do these as early as possible within the Gated Design Process. Below is a list of the Gate 2 Criteria Readiness Detailed checks and who is responsible for checking:

Check	Who
Verification of Director(s) that signed the Readiness Declaration	NESO, apart from in respect of Small and Medium Embedded Generation*, which are undertaken by their DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO
Overlapping Original Red Line Boundaries ("Duplication Check")	NESO (including in respect of Small and Medium Embedded Generation*)
Secured Land Rights Evidence meets minimum acreage requirements as set out in section 4.1a and requirements as set out in section 4.1c	NESO, apart from in respect of Small and Medium Embedded Generation*, which are undertaken by their DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO
Evidence of submission and validation of application for planning consent i.e. meeting the requirements of Queue Management M1	NESO, apart from in respect of Small and Medium Embedded Generation*, which are undertaken by their DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

8.9 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Detailed Checks (Verification of Director(s) that signed the Readiness Declaration Letter)

Verify that the Director, for Limited and plc companies is active on Companies House at the time of their Gate 2 Application.

If a company is not listed on Companies House, we will utilise publicly available information to verify authorised individuals. However, we recommend that a Covering Letter is provided if clarification is required regarding an organisation, including where a change of ownership could happen whilst the Gate 2 Application is progressing.

If the verification check is failed, then the User does not meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria and they will not receive a Gate 2 Offer (however, they are not precluded from applying into the next Gated Application Window).

The User may be asked to clarify evidence, but they cannot submit new evidence e.g. the User cannot send a new Readiness Declaration with a different Director signing it.

The same Director that signed the Readiness Declaration should sign any clarified evidence, but where this is not possible / practicable a different Director can sign clarified evidence (or an authorised person, as set out in Section 9 below).

A User can dispute NESO’s decision in accordance with CUSC Section 7.4. Note that for Small and Medium Relevant Embedded Generation, it would be the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO that makes the decision on whether the User meets the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria so these Users would raise their dispute to the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO.

8.10 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Detailed Checks (Overlapping Original Red Line Boundaries (“Duplication Check”))

Original Red Line Boundaries provided and any overlapping boundaries identified

NESO contacts all the Users where boundaries overlap and seeks clarity from the Users. As there is an opportunity to explain overlaps on the Readiness Declaration templates, which we encourage Users to do, we will first check the Readiness Declaration templates for any explanation of overlaps before reaching out to the parties involved. If there is no explanation on Readiness Declaration templates or it is not clear, then we will conduct further enquiries with all Users where it is not reasonably demonstrable that the same land can be used by two or more different Users/projects.

If such an overlap can be demonstrated as being reasonably possible (in relation to that same land being able to be used by two or more different Users/projects), then the overlap will be acceptable from the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria perspective. This decision will be at the discretion of NESO using reasonable judgment based on the evidence presented by the different Users/projects.

In the event an overlap is deemed to be unacceptable by NESO, impacted Users will be further required to submit specific information to confirm their appropriate right to the land within their relevant Original Red Line Boundary. Such information may include a signed letter of confirmation from the landowner(s) to NESO confirming the appropriate User that should be utilising the land. The User that is not able to provide such confirmation statement(s) will be deemed to not have met the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria.

NESO will confirm any overlaps which interact with Small and Medium Embedded Generation’s* Original Red Line Boundaries and in this scenario will seek support from DNOs/Transmission Connected iDNOs to help resolve.

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

8.11 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Detailed Checks (Secured Land Rights Evidence meets minimum acreage requirements)

Verify that each Original Red Line Boundary provided (under 4.1b of this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology) has an acre per MW which meets the minimum acreage requirements Energy Land Density table unless different requirements have been agreed between NESO and User in accordance with the prevailing [NESO guidance document](#).

8.12 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Detailed Checks (Secured Land Rights Evidence meets requirements of 4.1c)

- The secured land rights evidence provided meets the Gate 2 Readiness minimum criteria.
- There are “live” secured land rights in place for all the land at the project site, as shown by the relevant Original Red Line Boundary.
- Technology or Technologies applied for in the Gate 2 Application are not prohibited from being built under the secured land rights evidence.
- The secured land rights (apart from where related to Evidence of Existing Ownership) are signed by both the User and the landowner (or their authorised agent). Where the documentation is not signed by both parties, we will accept the counterpart signed by the landowner(s).
- The User is the party who has entered into the secured land rights or the User has provided a signed letter from the entity who holds the land rights stating that User has the rights to use the land. Where connection agreements are held in one company and the land rights are put in the names of the specific SPV with both these companies under the direct control of the same parent company, we will accept a signed letter from the director or authorised person, to explain the fact that the land rights company and applicant are under control of the same group company.
- There are no landowner unilateral termination provisions included in options and leases, except in the event of default by the tenant.
- The User may be asked to clarify evidence, but they cannot submit new evidence e.g. the User cannot just send a new land Option but may be asked to clarify how the Option meets the criteria (if not clear).
- A party that has been informed that they have not met the Gate 2 criteria can raise a dispute under CUSC Section 7.4. Note that for Small and Medium Embedded Generation*, it would be the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO that makes the decision on whether the User meets the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria so these Users would raise their dispute to the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO.

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

As well as reviewing the land rights documentation provided by Users, we may utilise public sources of data (if available) to verify evidence of land rights. We may also explore use of Artificial Intelligence tools to support evidence checks.

8.13 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Detailed Checks (Evidence of submission and validation of application for planning consent (DCO))

Evidence of meeting Queue Management Milestone M1 via DCO only will be verified in accordance with the checks detailed in the relevant Queue Management Guidance (Transmission or Distribution). Checks will ensure that the location of the site, technology and capacity are in line with the Gate 2 Application, and that the application for planning consent is valid.

Where Small and Medium Embedded Generation* seeks to meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria through this route, it would need to provide the evidence as set out above to the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO.

If NESO decide that the User does not meet this Gate 2 Readiness Criteria, the User can dispute NESO’s decision in accordance with CUSC Section 7.4. Note that for Small and Medium Relevant Embedded Generation, it would be the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO that makes the decision on whether the User meets the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria so these Users would raise their dispute to the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO.

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

8.14 Gate 2 Criteria Evidence Assessment – Detailed Checks (Outcome)

Detailed checks – Gate 2 Readiness Criteria

Apart from Small and Medium Embedded Generation*, NESO will notify the User if they have met the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria detailed checks.

This notification would be by the end of the Gated Design Process, but we will aspire to complete the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria detailed checks as early as possible within the Gated Design Process.

The DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO will do likewise in respect of the Small and Medium Embedded Generation* that has applied to them in the Gated Application Window (although it will be NESO who will notify the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO on outcome of any overlapping Original Red Line Boundaries (i.e. the “Duplication Check”) and then the DNO/Transmission Connected iDNO will need to inform the Small and Medium Embedded Generation* project).

All Users who do not meet the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria detailed checks can dispute that decision, but they will not receive a Gate 2 Offer as part of the Gated Design Process. If a dispute is raised, the next steps for their application will be determined by the outcome of the dispute process.

* Includes Relevant Embedded Small Power Stations, Relevant Embedded Medium Power Stations, Embedded Small Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement and Embedded Medium Power Stations with a Bilateral Embedded Generation Agreement.

9. Readiness Declarations

The document that Users will submit to demonstrate Gate 2 Readiness Criteria

9.1 Readiness Declaration – General

The User will need to provide a Readiness Declaration to support how they meet the Gate 2 Criteria. The Readiness Declaration must be signed by a Director of the User applying.

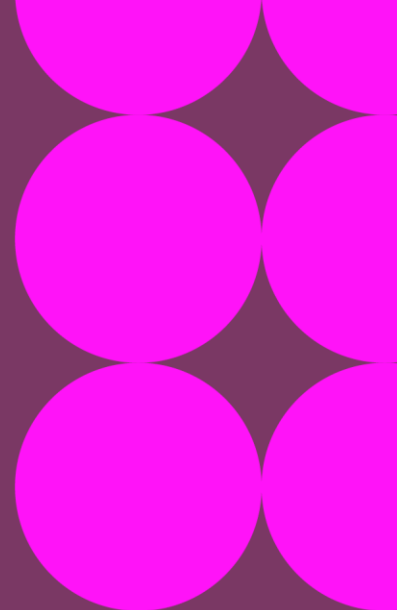
- Where the Director is not a statutory director (i.e. a director of a Company that is not on Companies House), the Director must provide a signed letter stating that they are a person authorised to make this declaration on behalf of the User/Applicant.
- The Director (even if not a statutory director) is allowed to authorise a person to sign the Readiness Declaration on their behalf by providing a letter signed by the Director as part of their Gate 2 application.

Note that Users may also be asked for information in the Readiness Declaration to support Queue Formation (as per the requirements of the Connections Network Design Methodology).

There is a requirement on NESO to publish some information provided in the Readiness Declaration on a Gate 2 Register. The information that needs to be published will be set out in the Readiness Declaration. However, Users will be provided with the opportunity in the Readiness Declaration to opt out of such information being published for their project.

This Readiness Declaration will be published separately to this Gate 2 Criteria Methodology ahead of the Gated Application Window opening and will set out the questions, evidence, supporting notes and clarification as to which fields are mandatory to populate.

NESO and individual DNOs/Transmission Connected iDNOs will confirm how they wish to receive these Readiness Declarations, which may be via a system. However, the requirements as set out in the Readiness Declaration will be the same whichever medium is used.



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