



NETWORKS

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN 2022

DOC-091221-HGC

esbnetworks.ie



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01. INTRODUCTION



OUR ROLE

ESB Networks ensures electricity gets to the homes and businesses of our 2.3 million electricity customers in a safe and efficient manner every day, every hour, and every minute. We recognise that the environment in which we operate is changing rapidly driven by new policy and regulation, the advancement of technology and the changing needs and expectations of our customers and stakeholders.

This means the role of electricity is also changing, creating new challenges and opportunities. We understand that we have been entrusted with the responsibility to play a vital role in Ireland's energy future, but we cannot do this alone. Collaboration with our customers and all our stakeholders will be critical to achieving our vision for a clean electric future together and meeting Ireland's climate targets.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to set out our proposed stakeholder engagement strategy and plans for 2022. This document outlines ESB Networks areas of engagement focus for 2022, which has been framed by our business strategy and the needs of our stakeholders as determined through feedback and ongoing collaboration. It also includes in tabular format, lists and timings of our proposed engagement activities (consultations, publications, meetings, forums, working groups, events and webinars) proposed for the year ahead. These tables will also be published on our website which will allow us to provide regular updates on this plan to our stakeholders throughout the year.

We are committed to being proactive in ensuring that the network, and our organisation adapts and transforms. We look forward to working closely with our customers and all our stakeholders as we connect a clean electric future together and deliver enduring benefits for current and future generations. We are therefore publishing this document for consultation to allow our customers and stakeholders further opportunity to shape this plan for 2022 and beyond. We look forward to hearing your feedback which can be submitted directly to stakeholder@esbnetworks.ie.



Nicholas Tarrant

Nicholas Tarrant

Managing Director, ESB Networks

02. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

ESB Networks' "Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Framework", sets out our enduring engagement strategy to enable an open and ongoing dialogue with all our stakeholders. The framework identifies our stakeholders and the principles that guide our engagement, together with our proposed engagement methodology and our governance and control processes. We are currently undertaking an independent review and benchmarking exercise to identify possible improvements and revisions required.

Our stakeholders are the individuals, groups of individuals, communities or organisations that affect, or could be affected by, our activities, products or services and associated performance. Given our central role in the electricity industry connecting over 2.3 million homes, farms, communities, and businesses around the country, we have a very broad range of stakeholders. Since considerable changes are taking place within the energy sector at an unprecedented scale, we are fully aware that who we engage with and how is constantly changing.

Therefore, whilst we undertake an annual mapping exercise of our stakeholders to identify new groups in consideration of changing priorities, the segmentation wheel below is a working example of how we are looking to improve the granularity of our stakeholder mapping through further subgrouping/segmentation.

This will enable us to be even more purpose driven in how we conduct our engagement activities and help to ensure that we are driving inclusive engagement by not leaving any stakeholder group behind.



Figure 1: Working example of our Stakeholder Segmentation

OUR APPROACH

We recognise that the engagement approach needs to be tailored to the different needs of our stakeholder groups. Our principals and methodology of engagement are guided by the AA1000 stakeholder engagement standard¹ which is used by many leading organisations and network operators. The principals below underpin all our activities when engaging with our customers and stakeholders.

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

INCLUSIVITY	MATERIALITY	RESPONSIVENESS	IMPACT
Give people a say in the issues that impact them	Identify and be clear about the issues that matter	Act transparently on material issues	Engagement should positively impact customers, stakeholders and the business
We will engage widely with our customers and stakeholders	We will focus on the most relevant and significant issues that affect our customers, stakeholders and business	We will communicate and be transparent on the outcomes of the engagement process	We will monitor, measure and be accountable for the impact of our engagement actively

ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

We use a structured and systematic approach to engaging with our customers and stakeholders. This involves a cycle of planning, action, reporting, review and improvement.

PLAN	Planning is essential for effective stakeholder engagement. During the planning phase, we identify the purpose of engagement; which stakeholders need to be engaged; the timeline for engagement; what level of engagement is most appropriate; and the resources that are required to achieve success.
ACT	This involves implementing the planned engagement activities. Briefing stakeholders in advance sets the context and improves the quality of engagement. Engagement is conducted according to agreed ground rules and outputs are documented. Following engagement, an action plan is developed that sets out how we will respond to the outputs of the engagement. Finally, we communicate the engagement outputs and action plan with stakeholders.
REPORT	Reporting on stakeholder concerns and comments is important for effective engagement. Through this process, stakeholder concerns are better understood and acted upon. Reporting can be done both formally through reports and informally through regular updates and meetings. We address the actions outlined in the action plan and inform stakeholders of the outcome.
REVIEW	We seek to continuously improve our stakeholder engagement processes and outcomes by evaluating what was successful and what could be improved. This can be determined through feedback from stakeholders and through other performance indicators.
IMPROVE	By reviewing the feedback from our customers and stakeholders, we can ensure that the lessons learned are incorporated into subsequent engagement plans.

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

Different levels of stakeholder engagement are appropriate, depending on the purpose, materiality, desired outcome, time frame, resources, and level of interest.

The level of engagement that is appropriate is considered during the planning phase. This involves an assessment of the materiality of the subject matter of engagement, both for our stakeholders and our business, and includes an evaluation of potential impact and risk.

Issues of major significance involving high levels of investment, impact and risk will warrant greater levels of engagement.

Where the issue has lower significance and less impact, the provision of information may be more appropriate. In each case, we will discuss our approach with our stakeholders.

	INFORM	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
Characteristics	One-way engagement	Two-way engagement	Joint decision-making
Purpose	Provide information	Obtain feedback	Identify preferred solutions
Promise	Keep you informed	Listen and acknowledge	Incorporate recommendations
Tools	Documentation and media	Conferences, meetings and surveys	Workshops, seminars and surgeries



¹ AA1000 Stakeholder engagement Standard (2015) and AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Principles (2018) available at www.accountability.org/standards/

IMPROVING OUR STRATEGY

To enhance our stakeholder engagement approaches and the wider benefits that high-quality engagement can deliver for our customers and stakeholders we are currently undertaking a professional independent review of our existing stakeholder engagement strategy and approach.

As part of this review, our Engagement Framework will be benchmarked against international best practice specifically to identify possible improvements or revisions required.

Some specific targets for improving our engagement which we plan to deliver in 2022 include:

- > A metrics framework for measuring the impact of our stakeholder engagement for our stakeholders and business alike
- > A process for closing the feedback loop with our stakeholders, ensuring transparency of how stakeholder feedback is considered in our business

- > A process for improving the output focus of our engagement activities, together with a mechanism for capturing and driving actions resulting from our stakeholder engagement activities

OUR GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL

We recognise that effective stakeholder engagement is essential for the successful management of our business. As a strategic priority, it is led by the Directors and the senior leadership team and is seen as a vital activity at every level of the organisation.

The Stakeholder Engagement Team meets regularly with the Stakeholder Leads across the business to develop engagement plans and ensure implementation using appropriate methods and levels of engagement. They also work together to monitor outcomes, measure performance, provide feedback to customers and stakeholders, and seek opportunities to improve the overall engagement process

MANAGING OUR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

An internal Stakeholder Engagement Steering Group made up of stakeholder leads from across the business meets regularly to discuss planned engagement activities, review stakeholder feedback and agree proposed improvements and adjustments based on recommendations. This group which is led by the Stakeholder Engagement Team and chaired by the Managing Director, provides overall direction to the stakeholder engagement process for ESB Networks.

Stakeholder engagement forms a core element of our business processes and remains embedded in our business culture and is seen as the role and responsibility of every employee within the organisation.

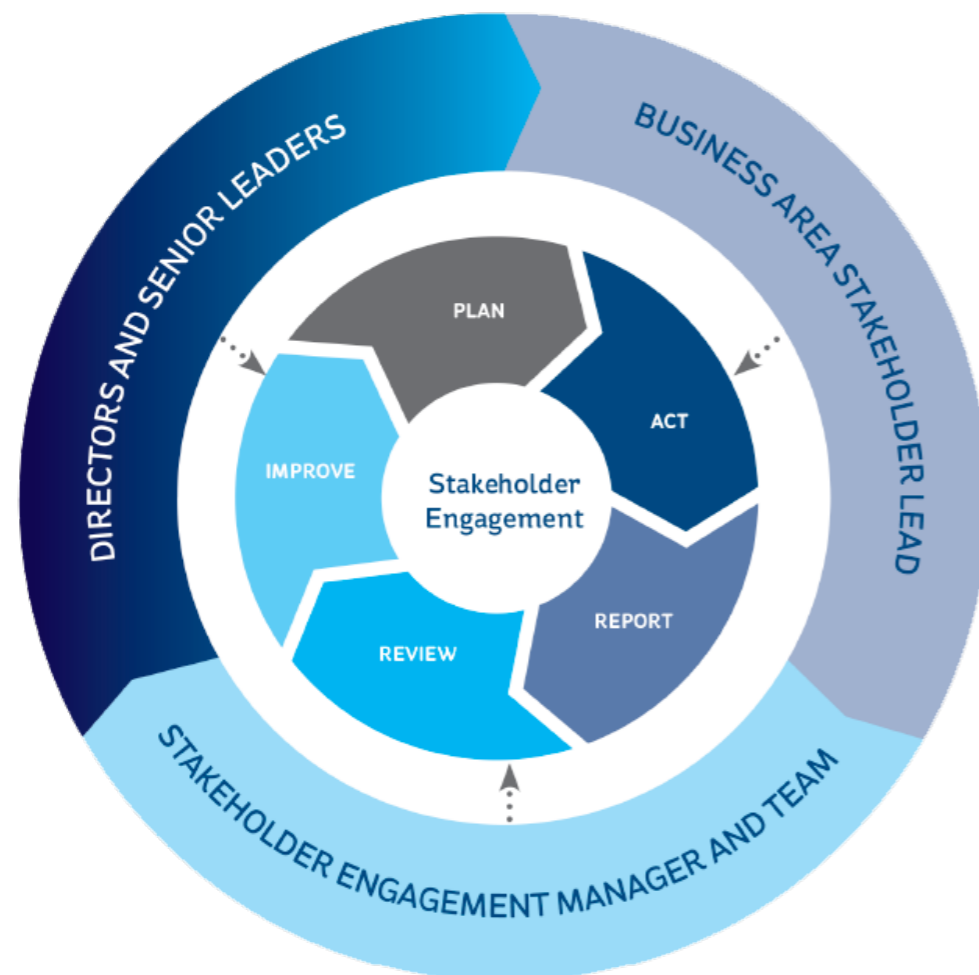


Figure 2: ESB Networks Stakeholder Engagement Governance and Control mechanism



03. HOW STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK IS SHAPING OUR ENGAGEMENT

We value the feedback we receive from our stakeholders which is enabling us to continually refine our engagement approach for the benefit of our stakeholders. Good engagement benefits our customers, stakeholders, the wider community, and our business.

When we engage with each other in a genuine two-way conversation, we can learn from each other, enabling us to make better decisions and work towards mutually beneficial outcomes. Ultimately, better engagement builds stronger relationships and gives us greater opportunities to achieve our business objectives. The earlier we engage with each other, the more likely these benefits will be realised.

For our customers and stakeholders, engagement provides opportunities to contribute to projects and programmes, have their issues heard and inform the decision-making process. It gives these groups better understanding of our priorities, increased ownership of outcomes and greater capacity to engage in how energy will be used in the future.

For ESB Networks, engagement provides insights by understanding changing priorities, tapping into specialist or local knowledge and gives us the opportunity to 'road-test' proposals or initiatives with stakeholders. It helps us identify emerging issues and risks and is central to us meeting our statutory obligations and better meeting customer needs.

Some key areas for improvement, as identified by our stakeholders that ESB Networks are continuing to improve include:

- > Measuring engagement performance specifically through the inclusion of a customer satisfaction survey for suppliers and generation customers and the development of clear set of engagement metrics to be inclusive of all stakeholders
- > Improving the transparency to our stakeholders of how their feedback is addressed internally within our business
- > Improving our website and its accessibility
- > Providing additional information on the ESB Networks website around connection policy, and connection standards

- > Providing earlier engagement to those seeking connection to the electricity distribution network and to address uncertainty around project time lines and costs and provision of clearer project-level updates
- > Provide evidence of improved collaboration between the two system operators and suggestion of a forum between the TSO, DSO, and the regulator to address connection challenges



During 2022 we will also continue to provide new initiatives and improved pathways to engagement for our stakeholders which we list in the appendix of this report. These channels and initiatives include:

- > Our Public Consultation and Response Process
- > ESB Networks various webinar series to support consultations for example our Innovation webinar series (Spring & Autumn)
- > External Stakeholder Panels (Innovation and Customer & Society Panels)
- > Bilateral meetings and workshops as requested
- > 'Heat Capacity Map' information on website and supporting webinar
- > Digital online services such as the Connections Portal & PowerCheck App
- > Published tables of Consultations, Publications and Events/Pathways to engagement
- > Improved Stakeholder website pages and newsletters
- > 'Lean Connections Project' key stakeholder engagements
- > Community engagement initiatives (e.g., Dingle Hub projects, Creation of a Community-led Renewable Energy Projects Liaison Panel, published Guidebook and FAQ section on the website)

ESB Networks very much appreciates our stakeholders ongoing support and feedback, and we will continue to look for new and innovative ways to engage with our stakeholders to ensure strong collaboration on our initiatives and activities throughout the year.



04. ESB NETWORKS STRATEGY TO 2030

We are at a critical point in the fight against climate change. In recent years, we have experienced the intensifying impacts of climate change in Ireland through extreme weather events. At ESB Networks, during electricity outages in severe weather, our crews work tirelessly to restore electricity and we know the impact that climate change is having on homes, businesses, and wider society.

We recognise the urgent need to take action and we are deeply aware that we have a responsibility to play a central role in ensuring that Ireland's climate action targets can be achieved.

Ireland has committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 through the government's Climate Action Plan (CAP) and this will create significant change in how we generate and use energy across every sector of society. Ireland's electricity system has been significantly decarbonised over the last decade, predominantly through the development of onshore wind energy.

We are a country rich in natural resources and over the coming decade, we will see the electricity system radically decarbonised with the CAP targeting 80% of electricity from renewables. This means that low carbon electricity will provide Ireland with an opportunity to also decarbonise many other sectors of our economy such as transport and heat through the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) and heat pumps.

ESB Networks will play a central role in making this a reality through ensuring that the electricity network, which serves our 2.3m electricity customers, is prepared and equipped to adapt to meet the changing needs of our customers and to support achieving Ireland's climate action targets.

ESB Networks provides the electricity infrastructure that transports electricity to all customers in Ireland through both the Distribution and the Transmission system. We carry out all the functions relating to the distribution system and build and maintain the transmission system which EirGrid plans and operates.

Our vision is to enable a clean electric future together with our customers who will be at the heart of this transformation. Our ambition is to build, maintain, operate, and develop the electricity distribution network to meet the needs of our customers, today and tomorrow.

'ESB Networks Strategy to 2030' which is due to be published early in 2022 will outline our commitments, and the actions that we will take between now and 2030 to deliver on a clean electric future together. We know that there are challenges ahead and this will not be easy, but we have a responsibility, and we plan to deliver on that to play a leading role and to support creating new opportunities for our customers to take part.

Collaborative action over the last decade has already positioned Ireland as a leader in global wind energy penetration on the electricity system. We are confident that through this same spirit of collaboration, and through openly adopting new and innovative ways of working and pioneering smart technologies, we will deliver on our vision and strategy; and in turn enable Ireland to achieve its climate targets.

We are committed to being proactive in ensuring that the network, and our organisation adapts and transforms. We cannot do this alone, and we look forward to working closely with our customers and all our stakeholders as we connect a clean electric future together and deliver enduring benefits for current and future generations.

05. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN FOR 2022

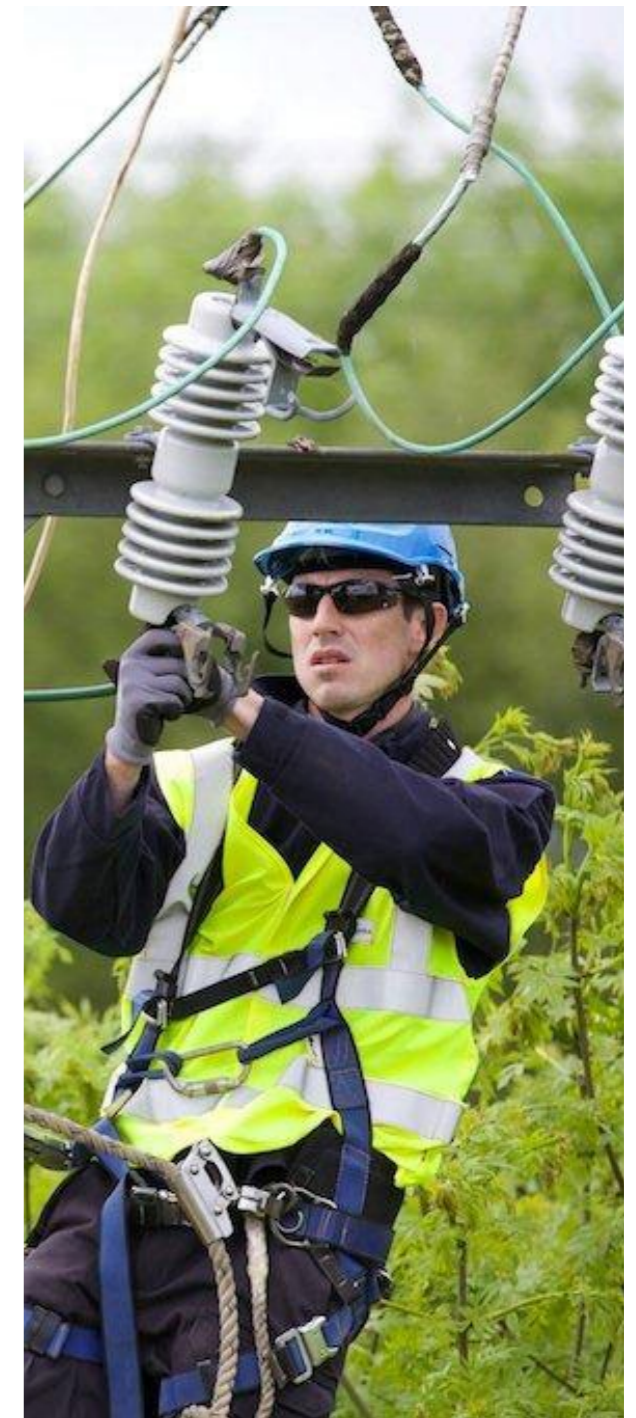
Our 'Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Framework' sets out the key areas for our stakeholder engagement activities which are aligned with our strategy and our pivotal role in securing a low-carbon society in Ireland.

These areas of engagement continue to be further refined through stakeholder consultation and feedback to ensure they meet all our business, regulatory, stakeholder and customer needs in an ever-changing industry landscape. They are built on our commitments to our customers and stakeholders to:

- > Continue to provide a safe, reliable and affordable electricity service to all customers, including fuel-poor and vulnerable customers
- > Ensure that the customer remains central to our business and continuing to improve the overall customer experience
- > Ensure that engagement on 'business-as-usual' activities remains a key part of our overall stakeholder engagement process
- > Continue to maintain and develop the electricity network in order to ensure that it is robust, resilient and capable of dealing with increasingly difficult weather conditions in the face of climate change
- > Support the connection of increased amounts of low carbon energy generation, such as wind and solar energy and localised domestic and community-based energy schemes, to address the need to reduce carbon emissions and meet national targets
- > Continue to ensure that the electricity network supports economic growth, including the connection of new homes, businesses and large energy users
- > Plan and develop a smarter and more digitally connected network to enable new modes of network operation which are needed to support new energy usage patterns essential to a low-carbon society, such as increased use of electric vehicles, electrification of heating and customer participation in energy markets

FOCUS OF OUR ENGAGEMENT FOR 2022

While the key areas of engagement as set out in our 'Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Framework' are enduring, the following provides an overview of some of the key planned engagement initiatives for 2022.



INNOVATION



To innovate towards a clean electric future together ESB Networks collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders including communities, academic institutions, government entities and organisations, industry trade associations, electricity suppliers and generators, as well as new energy actors such as Demand Side Units (DSUs) and battery storage providers.

Stakeholder collaboration and engagement are essential parts of ESB Networks Innovation Strategy and take place at each step of our innovation process.

Objective: We acknowledge that the challenges posed by the transition to a low carbon economy are substantial and a collaborative approach to addressing these challenges is essential. We believe we have a role to support our external partners' research and innovation activities that are likely to make contributions to Ireland's targets for decarbonisation. Furthermore, we acknowledge that enabling the connection of greater levels of renewables and electrification of heat and transport can only be achieved by collaborating and engaging with our external partners, stakeholders, customers and communities.

Action: We will continue to collaborate and engage with our stakeholders via several channels. These include a public industry consultation on our overall innovation strategy, projects and activities in Q1 2022, further annual public consultations on our innovation activities, Spring & Autumn Innovation webinars, bilateral meetings and a range of targeted engagements with industry stakeholders.

Across our innovation project portfolio and pipeline, we continue to collaborate and build productive relationships with our partners and stakeholders and will disseminate the learnings, benefits and outcomes from our Innovation project through publications and other channels.

In response to COVID 19 restrictions our Spring and Autumn Innovation Webinar Series over the last two years have proved to be a welcome addition to our engagement channels and enabled a more agile approach to stakeholder engagement, the sharing of information on our innovation activities and the dissemination of project learnings and outcomes. Our innovation webinars continue to encourage interaction through open discussions via an online platform and were attended by a diverse group of stakeholders across government, industry, academia and representative associations. Our Innovation webinars recordings will continue to be made available to our stakeholders for reference and review.

Through our stakeholder surveys, webinars continue to be chosen as the preferred channel for dissemination and engagement. While restrictions continue, it is our intention to continue to hold our 2022 Spring and Autumn Innovation Webinar Series to share our innovation progress, discuss feedback we have received, and collaboratively consider how we tackle the transition to the network of the future.

Following stakeholder feedback and a call for expressions of interest in 2020 we established our Innovation Stakeholder Panel to provide a platform to enable open discussion and feedback with stakeholders from across all industry sectors on our Innovation strategy, projects and activities. The panel is represented by 19 members across 10 stakeholder sectors and were selected based on a number of criteria including diversity of sector and experience. The panel has met bi-annually since its establishment and ESB Networks would like to thank all the panel members for their ongoing support, feedback and input into our innovation strategy and activities. As per the Terms of Reference (TOR) the current panel members 18-month representation is coming to an end and through an expression of interest call we will be selecting the new panel in Q1 2022 and welcome new applications and current members to re-apply.

The objectives of this panel are to;

- > Guide us on areas that are changing in industry, the economy and our broader society (perhaps emerging concerns) and that may influence our thinking and planning
- > Enable us to brief key stakeholder groups on ESB Networks innovation projects and activities; for example, projects that fall under our three innovation road maps; Future Customer, Climate Action and Network Resilience
- > Create an additional channel for open and transparent external perspectives (and a sounding board) for the development of our Innovation Strategy and associated road maps to ensure that the implementation of our innovation project portfolio provides enduring benefits to our customers and business.
- > Early engagement on the selection, prioritisation and time-line planning of our innovation projects; by gaining a collaborative understanding of potential benefits and impacts of each proposed project to both our internal and external stakeholders

As the Dingle Electrification Project trials comes to a completion in 2021, in Q1 and Q2 of 2022 we will continue to disseminate learnings and outcomes from the project with the local community, partners and stakeholders through a range of channels.

We will continue to collaborate with local communities on innovation projects in Limerick City and the Aran Islands, as we explore the impact and capabilities of new low-carbon and supporting technologies. In these projects, we are testing and trialling solutions which will help us to develop the decarbonised, decentralised and digitised electricity system of the future and we are working with customers and communities to better understand the impact of changing technologies and new, developing energy systems.

Measure: We will continue to measure the impact of our innovation stakeholder engagement activities through engagement impact surveys, website & social media metrics, innovation brand score, and stakeholder feedback.

ELECTRIFICATION OF HEAT AND TRANSPORT



ESB Networks has a central role to deliver on the electrification of heat and transport. Our imperative is to lead the transition to a secure & affordable low-carbon future, using clean electricity to drive carbon out of heat, transport and the economy.

Ireland already has one of the highest penetrations of renewable generation in the world and our distribution system has significant capability to connect large numbers of electric vehicles and heat pumps. Thus, increasing the use of the distribution system to electrify heat and transport represents a tremendous opportunity to cost effectively drive carbon out of the economy using clean renewable electricity for our transport systems and the heating of our homes and businesses.

The Climate Action Plan 2021 calls for up to 1 million electric vehicles and 600,000 heat pumps to be operational in homes and businesses by 2030. This will have implications for the development and operation of our network. We are developing network solutions and capability to enable this to happen, targeting a phased and least cost approach to ensure network readiness. As part of this, we engage and collaborate extensively with customers and stakeholders alike, to manage and evolve a cost effective, smart, sustainable and resilient distribution system that will enable our customers transition to electrified heat and transport.

In Q1 2021 we published our ESB Networks' Electrification of Heat and Transport Strategy which sets out the direction of travel ESB Networks is undertaking in this regard.

Objective: Our purpose in ESB Networks is to help our customers to live low carbon lives. In line with our published strategy, our electrification objectives relate to:

- > Removing ESB Networks policy barriers
- > Engaging, enabling, and empowering our customers to electrify
- > Ensuring Low Voltage (LV) network readiness

Action: We want to collaborate with our stakeholders to ensure a whole system approach is used to optimally develop and deliver on heat, transport and energy infrastructure. We will be cognisant of the requirements as set out by the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) which is part of the EU plan to reach zero emissions by 2050.

As a current example, we provide our customers and stakeholders with clear information and guidance in relation to the connection of Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers and heat pumps to the distribution system. The Electrification of Heat and Transport now has a dedicated new section on our website to inform the public on how ESB Networks is facilitating the electrification of heat and transport. This section, which has been updated accordingly throughout 2021 and will continue to be updated through 2022, providing information and guidance to the public relating to connection of EV chargers, solar panels and heat pumps.

We will ensure continuous collaboration with our stakeholders throughout 2022 through further consultation, publications, meetings and webinars to ensure a whole system approach is used to consider the needs of our customers and progress the optimal development of heat, transport and energy infrastructure as the market both changes and evolves. In particular our near-term focus is to work with our stakeholders to provide solutions to a number of issues that have already been identified.

Therefore, our immediate efforts will be to continue to work with stakeholders to determine how best to facilitate the connection at all power levels, public EV charge-point infrastructure to the distribution system. We will also continue to collaborate with our stakeholders to identify solutions for the installation of EV charging points in multi-unit developments and apartment blocks. A consultation 'New Solutions for Distribution Systems Interfaces for Public On-Street Charging' was commenced in 2020.

We have also provided comprehensive feedback and comments to the CCMA EV working Group have published the EV Charging Guidance Document. We also ensure continuous collaboration with our peer DNOs and international professional bodies such as CIGRE and CIRED.

Following the publication of our Electrification of Heat and Transport Strategy, a cross-company Electrification Strategy Implementation Group has been established to coordinate all DSO initiatives and activities, along with prioritisation of same, in support of and to deliver tangible results relating to the strategic objectives called out in our electrification strategy. We actively participate in working groups related to the adoption of LCTs in heat and transport with the UK Energy Network Association and will present papers at CIGRE and CIRED international conferences on our proactive approach in driving the low voltage system improvement using advanced data analytics modelling.

THE NATIONAL NETWORK, LOCAL CONNECTIONS PROGRAMME



The decarbonisation of Irish society relies on fundamental changes to how energy is generated and consumed. To enable these changes at the right pace and the right price, we will rely on the electricity network, and we need to make the connection between how renewable energy is generated, and how we use or store it. Every Irish home, farm, community, and business is being called on to play a part.

The National Network, Local Connections Programme has been established to work with, and for, customers to make this possible. To support Ireland's 2030 Climate Action targets ESB Networks have committed to:

- > Facilitate people in Ireland adopting up to 936,000 electric vehicles and 600,000 heat pumps
- > Connect up to an additional 10 GW of renewable generation at transmission and distribution level, so that we can charge our cars and heat our homes using renewable electricity
- > Operate on 80% or more renewable electricity in Ireland, which will mean running fully on renewables over a third of the time

As our electricity use grows and changes, our vision is that every Irish home, farm, community, business and distributed generator has the opportunity to participate in local marketplaces. These marketplaces will signal when it is a good time to use or store power, for example, when there is an abundance of energy available locally or nationally; or to save power when "turning on" could mean turning on costly or carbon intensive generation.

We are entering a period of rapid change and uncertainty. Over the coming years, technologies will change as will the energy needs of Irish homes, farms and communities. We will need to be able to adapt to meet the changing needs and emerging challenges. Over the life of this programme, we will face uncertainties and risks. If we proceed too quickly, we increase the risk that customers will not be ready, or technologies will not be as mature. But if we do not proceed quickly enough, there is a risk that the solutions will not be in place when they need to be. Without taking the initial steps now, there is a risk that we and our partners could not replicate solutions that we pilot or commence a national roll-out until later in the decade. We will need

to commit people and capital to deliver this programme, and we are reaching a critical decision point regarding the level of resources to commit. ESB Networks serves, and is funded by, all electricity customers. All our customers will share in the benefit, but they will also share in the costs and the risk if we act too slowly or too soon. As such, we want to give all customers an opportunity to consult.

Objective: We need to ensure that we build an inclusive Network to support the energy requirements of the people of Ireland. In doing this, we need to listen and respect varying opinions and insights, we need to be transparent and communicative on the programme delivery plan, we must share knowledge with industry in an open and timely manner, we need to engage and collaborate with customers, communities, and industry. Together with industry and policy makers, we will not leave anyone behind.

We cannot deliver the National Network, Local Connections Programme in isolation. In the initial stages of this programme design, it was established that there will be a reliance on stakeholders across customers, communities, and industry. It will require the support of policy makers, and the participation of our customers, to deliver the National Network, Local Connections Programme.

By 2030, the ambition is that every home, farm, business, community, and industry group will have played a part in delivering the Programme and our challenge is trifold:

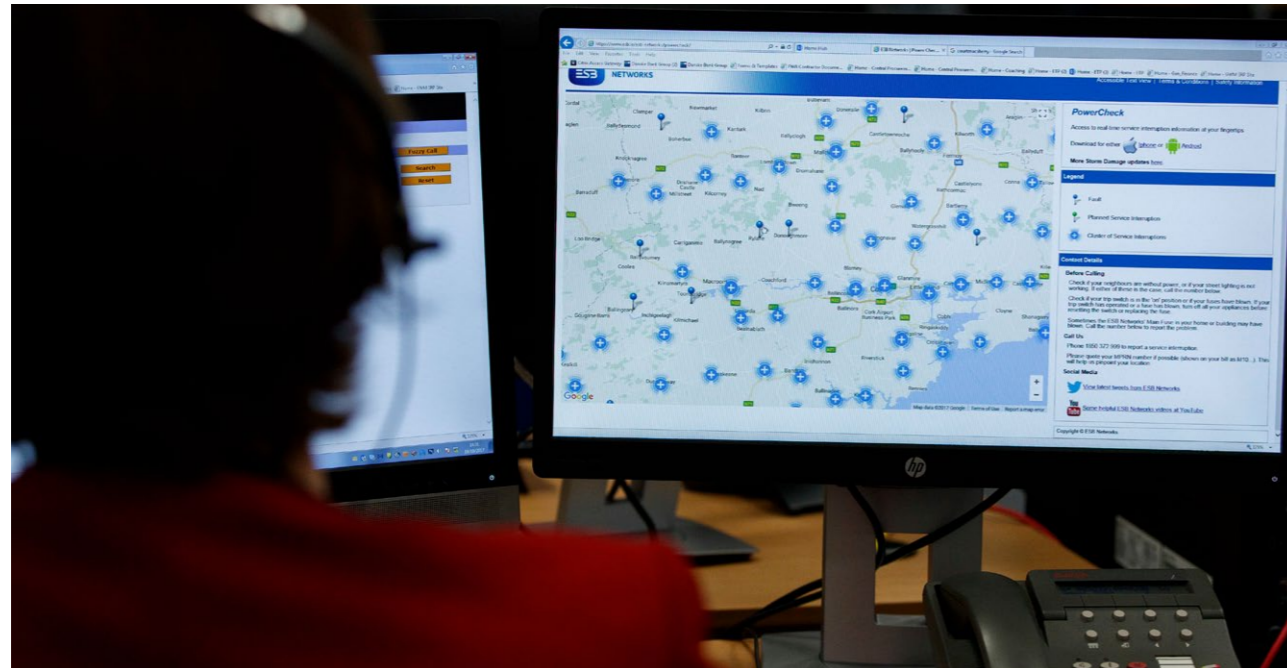
1. Firstly, how do we ensure our stakeholder views are reflected in the programme design and delivery?
2. Secondly, how do we engage in a timely, meaningful, and relevant way to ensure that we bring all stakeholders on this journey with us?
3. Thirdly, how do we ensure that we are moving at a pace and delivering at a scale that is in line with industry and customer expectation and need?

These challenges are interlinked, and our communications and consultation approach will be required to address these.

Action: In Q4 2021 we are consulting on a suite of 11 consultation documents which set out our proposed approach to deliver on different aspects of the programme.

Each of these individual documents provides different insights and speaks to different areas of interest and different stakeholders. Throughout the period of consultation (October – December 2021), we will look to understand what this programme may mean to our stakeholders. Is it important that we act now, invest in developing the technologies and services that would allow a national roll-out commencing in 2024/2025 and to do this we need to reflect our stakeholder's priorities when there are trade-offs to consider as we develop local flexibility markets? In our consultation period we want to hear all views, coming from the perspective of households, business, community, or industry.

On the following page is a snapshot of our 11 current consultation documents (published for consultation in October, 2021):



Our Consultation Framework Consultation Paper, published in October, 2021 sets out the overall engagement strategy and approach for the National Network Local Connections programme of work. This document sets out:

- > Our stakeholders' initial perspectives, and how we are applying these insights
- > How we will engage over the life of the programme, in an insight driven way
- > The role of consultation and communications in supporting piloting, continuous improvement, and making it real for customers and communities

It is critical that we implement solutions that optimally meet the wishes and needs of the customers and industry participants of Ireland. In developing proposals, we have taken time to seek and utilise stakeholder input from round tables and focus groups, as well as to research and utilise exemplar international experiences. This has enabled us to develop the proposed approaches within our consultation framework document.

Measure: While we have confidence that our proposed framework can meet the overall programme objectives, we are open to change and, as a result, we have prioritised a transparent and consultative approach and in Q4, 2021 we have published this document to seek stakeholder feedback. In order to determine the success of our engagement we are seeking and measuring feedback under a number of headings including.

SELECTION CRITERIA Do our stakeholders believe proposed approach in identifying, recruiting and listening to our stakeholders is effective? Are there other steps we should take?

TARGET LOCATIONS As we begin to roll out in pilot locations, will the proposed approach (insight driven communications, continuous monitoring, engagement and listening) be effective?

NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATING we are seeking views on the number of stakeholders in each category (stakeholders, targeted stakeholders, everybody else) we should reach at each stage in the programme?

TYPES OF CUSTOMERS PARTICIPATING Are there groups of customers who are more at risk of being left behind? How can we address this? Who should we work with?

PILOTING How do you think we could support stakeholders through piloting? How could we leverage piloting to support general awareness and education?

It is also important to us that we maximise the overall value of the programme across our stakeholders. As such, we invite perspectives on additional considerations that we could fold into our approach:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES Are there customer and stakeholder learning objectives we should prioritise?

CUSTOMER & POLICY OBJECTIVES Are there key customer or societal objectives we should focus on through our consultation and communications approach?

CUSTOMER EDUCATION AND AWARENESS What do our stakeholders believe the key opportunities to drive customer education and awareness will be?

SUPPLY CHAIN What other parts of the supply chain should we focus on engaging?

The National Network, Local Connections Programme will rely on the participation of stakeholders, customers, and communities across the country. As such, we want to give all electricity customers an opportunity to get involved in our consultation process – from generators, to industry, to homes, farms and communities. By the end of 2021 we will hit a decision point on how and where we commit the resources within the programme, whether there is a need to drive towards a national roll-out in 2024 / 2025, or whether to take a more measured pace and begin to scale closer to 2030.

<p>Piloting Roadmap Illustrates how we propose to adopt a "discovery led" approach to piloting and the feed into the longer-term, national roll-out.</p>	<p>Consultation Framework Sets out the approach to building customer and stakeholder awareness, ownership and participation over the life of the programme.</p>	<p>Flexibility Multiyear Plan Sets out a proposed roadmap for rolling out local flexibility markets and solutions across the Irish distribution system. Including the proposed timelines, releases and annual targets.</p>	<p>Data Platforms and Dashboards Proposes a roadmap for rolling out new online interfaces to homes, farms, communities and businesses across Ireland to help us build a shared awareness of our local energy systems, and the impact of our actions on our individual, regional and national carbon footprint.</p>
<p>Signal & Data Exchange Roadmap to Requirements for DER Integration Proposes clear, timely and transparent data and signalling requirements associated with new DER (Distributed Energy Resources) technologies to allow them to participate flexibly in the new market.</p>	<p>2030 Power System Requirements Sets out the robust, multi-scenario analysis of changes to the Irish electricity system over the coming decade and the likely power system requirements (or "technical scarcities") to meet customer needs on the power system.</p>	<p>Operational Systems Roadmap Shares the outcome of a current state technology review, and the proposed future technology roadmap for operation system upgrades and deployments. These relate in particular to Distributed Energy Resource Management System (DERMS), Distribution Management and Market Management. The paper also proposes the associated operational, licensing, and hardware requirements.</p>	
<p>Phased Flexibility Market Development Plan Proposes a roadmap for introducing local flexibility market arrangements on the Irish distribution system. Including the proposed products, sequencing, market framework and longer term options.</p>	<p>Local Network Visibility Multiyear Plan Defines a proposed roadmap for securing operational visibility of local, low voltage distribution systems across the Irish distribution system.</p>		
<p>National Network, Local Connections Programme Sets out our proposed pace and scale of the programme roll-out.</p>	<p>Network by 2030 Joint submission with our colleagues in EirGrid on a suite of initiatives to deliver on Ireland's Climate Action Targets</p>		

CONNECTING RENEWABLES



ESB Networks is committed to connecting sufficient quantities of renewable projects to the electricity system which is fundamental to the success of meeting our decarbonisation targets. This will involve the delivery of a steady drumbeat of projects from now out to 2030.

To date Ireland's Renewable Energy has largely been delivered by onshore wind farms, hydroelectric power plants and small biomass generators. It is anticipated that 4.72 GW of renewable installed capacity will be energised by the end of 2021.

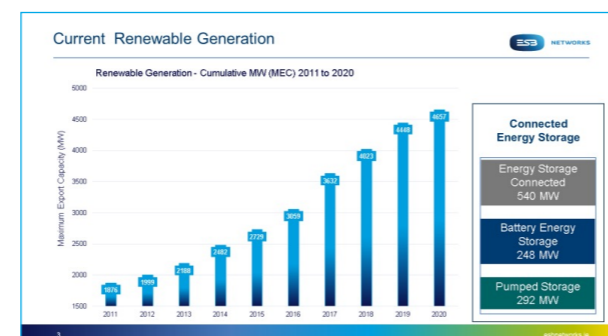
We are committed to the Enduring Connection Policy 2 process and in 2022 will process approximately 90 generator applications circa 750MWs and in particular we welcome the emphasis on facilitating community-led renewable energy projects.

To support higher penetrations of non-synchronous renewable generation ESB Networks has been diligently connecting customer driven Battery Energy Storage Projects. Current predictions are showing ESB Networks will have connected 391 MW of Battery Storage during 2020 and 2021. When the existing 292 MW of pumped storage is included, Ireland will have 643 MW of energy storage available on the system. Energy storage is key enabling technology providing power stability to allow more

renewable customers connected safely to the Network.

Following the Government's Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) RESS-1 support auction, Solar generation has become a technically and economically viable renewable energy source for Ireland. In 2021, ESB Networks expects to energise the first large solar customer connected directly to its Network. Following the RESS-1 Auction Process, there is a pipeline of Solar generation projects for ESB Networks to energise between 2022 and 2023.

ESB Networks recognises that enabling the increased penetration of microgeneration is an important target of the Climate Action Plan. We are committed to facilitating the move towards low carbon technologies and want to support our customers, not only through the process of installing microgeneration but also strive to enable them to participate in the energy market.



Objective: Provide all renewable stakeholders with a voice in the connection and hosting of renewable energy sources on our network. Working supportively and collaboratively together, we can achieve the national targets for decarbonisation of the electricity system.

The communities, in which we live and work in, play a key role in the journey towards a low carbon future. ESB Networks has facilitated community projects through the connection process, the success of which is evidenced by the fact that seven community projects were successful in RESS-1 auction in 2020. We are actively working to ensure customers projects are successfully connected to the Network.

Action: We will work with the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), the Transmission System Operator (TSO), EirGrid and the renewable energy industry to put in place the policies, processes, innovative solutions, and capability to deliver onshore renewable projects. Through collaboration with our stakeholders many improvements have been made to improve our engagement such as; offering early engagement and connection method meetings to applicants to ensure that projects have a higher likelihood of moving forward successfully; projects will also have an opportunity to submit a preferred connection method; applicants have

an option to re-optimize their MW capacity application or withdraw from the process for a partial refund of application fees, ECP2 Projects will have a point of contact within ESB Networks who will manage queries from the applicants throughout the connection offer process including early engagement and the provision of more detailed information (e.g. network capacity heat maps, policies and standards) is being provided.

Action: We will further support and empower communities in their journey to connect their renewable projects by proactively providing information, advice, and guidance in relation to connecting community-led renewable energy projects to the electricity distribution network. ESB Networks have established a Community-led Renewable Energy Liaison Panel to act as the focal point of our engagement with communities around the country in relation to how ESB Networks can support the connection of community-led renewable energy projects to the electricity distribution network. For any further information relating to community led energy projects please contact us on communityenergy@esbnetworks.ie. We have published a guidebook; 'Connecting your Community-Led Renewable Energy Project to the Electricity Network' to help support and explain the steps involved in connecting a community-led renewable energy project to the electricity distribution network.

Action: ESB Networks are actively engaged in the Microgeneration space being a proactive member of Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Microgeneration Working Group as part of the Climate Action Plan (2019). We will continue to work with the CRU to best determine an interim settlement solution to facilitate remuneration for exported electricity. ESB Networks continue to collaborate with the DECC and the CRU consultations regarding microgeneration support scheme and have published consultations & a technical assessment to assist customer understanding and engagement.

Action: ESB Networks is commencing a pilot grid connection application process for mini-generation (12kW-50kW). This pilot will streamline the connection process for customers by simplifying the application form and connection offer documentation to more align with the small business demand application process.

Action: ESB Networks is committed to continuous improvement in major infrastructure delivery process and successful delivery on the challenging PR5 work programme over the coming years. This is being demonstrated through the Lean Connections Project which is essentially a review and redesign of our end-to-end process for the delivery of major infrastructure projects by adopting lean ways of working. As part of this review, we are consulting with major customers and key stakeholders, internally and externally, to get their views on what we can do to improve the delivery of our major infrastructure projects, and on the changes, we are proposing and implementing.

Despite the restrictions of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and primarily having to work remotely and virtually, the programme has continued to move at a pace and has shown benefits achieved and identified through the improvement events. Significant progress has been made with specialist consultancy support to enable comprehensive End to End process review. This assessment provided the basis for the design of a Future State Map and development of an Improvement Plan which runs through to mid-2022. The plan for 2022 involves a schedule of Rapid Improvement Events (RIE), where process changes are challenged, tested and implemented in a short (9-12 week) cycle.

The Lean Connections team continues to provide regular updates to and engage with key stakeholder groups, including Voice of Customer (virtual) interviews with Renewable customers and representative bodies; Load Customers and Data Centre developers, providing valuable inputs an insight to accompany our independent consultants' own investigations.

Action: Improving the time to connect renewable projects is a key action for 2022. ESB Networks appreciates the importance of continuous innovation and recognises the benefits of modular construction activities in terms of managing construction programmes, cost, and time. Following consultation and feedback with the renewable energy industry, ESB Networks has developed the "MV EGIP Modular Substation". The modular substation aims to provide plug and play network connection capability for small and medium size renewable connections to the Electricity Network to a consistent standard at a predictable cost.

Action: ESB Networks recognise that more improvements are needed and in response to feedback and recommendations throughout 2021, we have commenced an independent review and survey of the renewable energy industry. Independent surveys provide rich and informative feedback from customers and stakeholders and we have used such mechanisms for our Smart Metering roll-out, PR5 engagement and general Customer Experience initiatives. The aim of our survey is:

- > To provide a professional analysis and understanding of what the baseline of satisfaction is among key customer and stakeholder segments for services appropriate to them
- > Identify improvement actions based on the survey feedback
- > To use the learnings of a survey to inform decisions on prioritising improvements in our services, strengthen our engagement process, and improve overall communications with our customers and stakeholders
- > To put in place key KPI engagement measurements/ metrics that can be assessed over the period of PR5

The survey process which has begun in Q4 2021 not only focuses on the overall relationship between ESB Networks and the industry stakeholders but also to specific aspects related to the experience of a renewable project's life cycle (from the initial DSO application process for connection to the distribution network, to project delivery and ongoing engagement on day-to-day operational issues). We plan to carry out further qualitative research through in-depth interviews with the industry in Q1 2022.

Measure: We will continue to provide a broad range of opportunities to engage with our Renewable Stakeholders such as consultations, workshops, forums and bilateral meetings on all of the above initiatives.

We will monitor feedback and customer sentiment in relation to early engagement meetings, connection method meetings, dedicated channels and points of contact in relation to queries and satisfaction with published network information such as the capacity heat maps and our community- led renewable energy brochure and liaison panel.

It is expected that the survey responses will highlight the key insights and actions which ESB Networks will need to address to improve our overall stakeholder engagement performance. A set of key performance indicators will be established such that progress and improvements can be

measured annually. This can be shared internally across our business using our governance and control mechanisms and externally through our annual stakeholder engagement reporting.



Figure 3: EGIP Modular Standard Substation

THE NATIONAL SMART METERING PROGRAMME



The National Smart Metering Programme (NSMP) is a key enabler of Ireland's Climate Action Plan. It is being delivered by ESB Networks in partnership with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), electricity supply companies and other industry stakeholders.

As we approach the end of 2021, approximately 600,000 smart meters have been installed in homes, farms, and businesses across the country. This has been achieved against the backdrop of a global pandemic.

The deployment of smart meters is supported by a comprehensive customer awareness and engagement strategy, led by ESB Networks with input from industry stakeholders through the Communications and Engagement Working Group. Customer engagement remains positive with the vast majority of customers happy to accept the meter exchange. This sentiment is reflected in the fact that when surveyed > 95% of customers are satisfied with their meter replacement experience.

Working with our industry stakeholders, ESB Networks supported the testing of industry systems and processes to support the launch of new smart electricity services by electricity supply companies in February 2021. This was followed by a period of hyper care, led by ESB Networks,

which involved daily calls to oversee the operation of systems and processes, and fast track resolution of any teething issues. The hyper care period ran through to the end of June 2021 at which point business as usual processes went live.

To support the launch of smart services in February 2021, ESB Networks, following consultation with the industry Communications and Engagement Working Group, amended its customer awareness engagement collateral to reflect an agreed approach and messaging to support the launch of smart services by electricity supply companies. To date over 30,000 customers have embraced smart services and are using time of use tariffs. We will continue to deliver the industry agreed customer awareness and engagement programme to support the installation of an additional 500,000 smart meters and the benefits of smart meters in 2022.

ESB Networks will continue to use the various industry fora (SSG, ILG, CWEG and TWG) to support delivery of the objectives of the National Smart Metering Programme (NSMP).

Objective: Engagement with customers will continue to be delivered on a co-ordinated approach developed by ESB Networks and supported by industry stakeholders including electricity supply companies. The engagement programme will focus

on maintaining customer support for the safe installation of 500,000 smart meters in 2022, by ensuring that customers are aware of the smart metering programme and the benefits it will bring to customers, the economy, and the environment.

- > In line with the ramp up of the smart meter roll-out in existing and new areas, we will run targeted media campaigns in new installation areas through radio, print and social media outlets reaching new audiences
- > Continue our stakeholder engagement with national and local elected representatives, on an area-by-area basis, in advance of local deployment
- > Maintain high levels of customer engagement and satisfaction (above 80% satisfaction) with the programme
- > Engage with industry stakeholders, including electricity supply companies, through the various industry fora

Ongoing engagement and consultation with regulatory and statutory authorities, electricity suppliers and other stakeholders will continue to focus on delivering the next phase of customer services and benefits, including the enablement of microgeneration in line with Government policy.

- > Work collaboratively with DECC, CRU and other stakeholders to develop the Smart Meter Data Code to ensure that future uses of smart metering data are GDPR compliant
- > Support the definition and delivery of smart pay as you go services
- > Support the implementation of Microgeneration support scheme
- > Agree an overall approach and messaging to support the replacement of the remaining meter categories

Action: Continuation of locally based communications led by ESB Networks to create awareness of the programme and its benefits. We have adopted a multi-channel approach by using a combination of local media relations, public information advertising, digital media, and enhanced information on our website. We will also look to expand the channels to include digital, and sponsored articles.

As part of the NSMP engagement programme, we will provide programme briefings to national and local and other stakeholders. We plan to hold information events for local representatives and stakeholders (Restrictions permitting).

As part of our commitment to customers, we will continue to track customer sentiment and satisfaction with the programme. This involves conducting a regular customer satisfaction survey (CSAT) to measure satisfaction with the meter replacement process – targeted at customers with meters installed in the previous month. Additionally, we will continue to run customer sentiment surveys throughout the year.

Engagement and consultation with our industry partners will continue via key industry forums, which are made up of DECC, CRU, SEAI and electricity suppliers. They include:

- > Senior Steering Group (SSG) - to agree scope and timing and delivery of programme strategic objectives
- > Industry Liaison Group (ILG) - to update on the programme progress and to agree next steps in the delivery of the programme
- > Industry Governance Group (IGG) - to approve market design changes required for Phase 2
- > Communications & Engagement Working Group (CEWG) - to ensure industry alignment on communications to support the smart meter programme

In addition, a number of working groups have been established made up of electricity suppliers to engage and agree on the delivery of key aspects of Phase 2, they include:

- > Smart meter technical working group
- > One-to-one engagement sessions with industry participants
- > Regular engagement with electricity supply companies via the Electricity Association of Ireland retail group
- > Attendance at the Industry Governance Group

Measure: To monitor and amend as necessary the agreed engagement strategy and plan during 2022 to ensure that it is fully informed by our customer, business, and stakeholder needs. Engagement will be measured by stakeholder feedback. Analysis of customer awareness and satisfaction research, as well as monitoring of customer calls and queries will measure how effective our messaging has been. Additionally, ongoing tracking of customer sentiment will continue across all mediums where customers interact.

Attendance and participation at the various smart metering and industry fora (incl. SSG, ILG, CWEG, IGG and TWG) to support delivery of the objectives of the National Smart Metering Programme (NSMP).



RETAIL MARKET SERVICES



As meter operator, ESB Networks facilitates the competitive electricity market. Through the DSO Licence, ESB Networks is responsible for implementing the key network operator role in both the retail and wholesale market through the installation, maintenance and reading of the meters for over 2.3 million electricity customers and providing this information to electricity suppliers and the Single Electricity Market Operator (SEMO) to facilitate accurate and timely billing.

The unique role is managed to a very high standard using multiple Performance Service Level Agreements (SLAs) set by the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities (CRU). In addition, ESB Networks attends monthly Industry Group Governance (IGG) forums with Suppliers and the CRU where issues are discussed, and market design improvements are progressed

Retail Market Services (RMS) is a ring-fenced function within ESB Networks which manages relationships with over 50 Market Participants which are active in the ROI Retail Electricity Market and are key stakeholders for RMS.



Objective: Retail Market Services want to continue to improve its service delivery and communication with Market Participants and therefore are conducting stakeholder consultations among Market Participants to understand their experience dealing with RMS and identify areas for improvements.

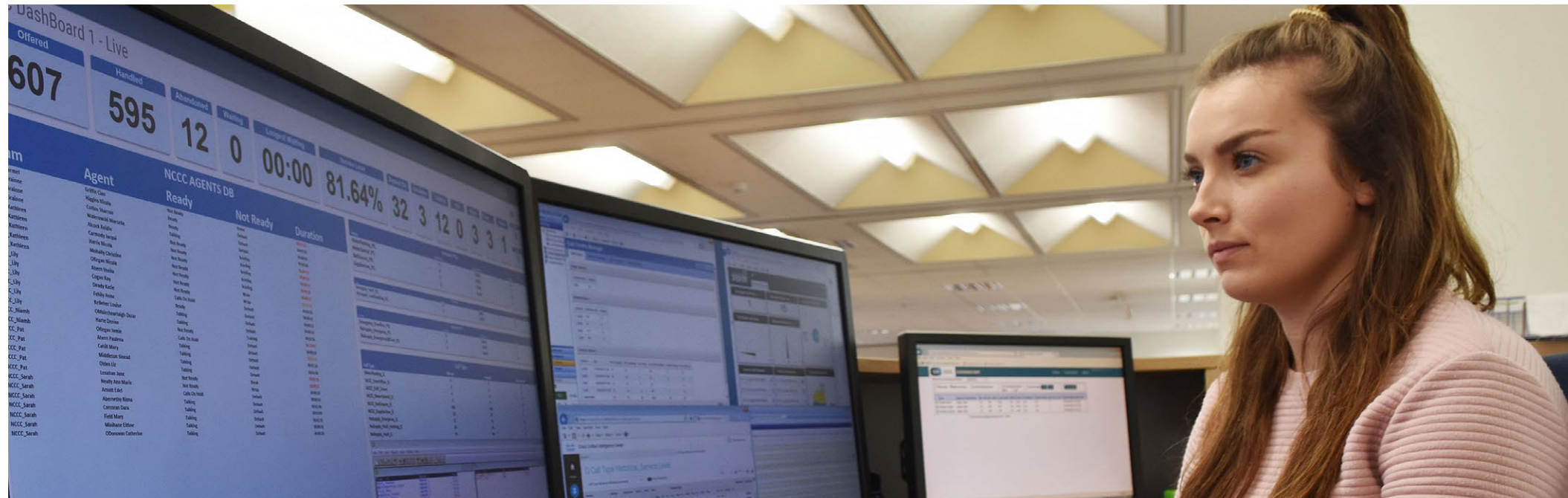
Retail Market Design Service (RMDS) and Smart Metering will not be included within this research as these areas are covered by other ESB Networks research. Although, these areas are excluded, insights into the market design element of changing the system to cater for Smart Metering are required.

Action: ESB Networks Retail Market Services have recently undertaken its first independent survey to obtain insights from as many active participants in the ROI Retail Electricity Market as possible on their current views of how the market is operating, how it performs and caters for suppliers needs and how the market can improve. The results of this survey will feed into an overall improvement strategy for ESB Networks Retail Market Services which will be delivered in the form of various initiatives throughout 2022.

Measure: The learnings of this survey will be used to inform decisions on prioritising improvements to our services, strengthen our engagement process, and improve overall communications with our customers and stakeholders. It is envisaged that the survey will be conducted annually going forward, enabling RMS to track its performance over time.

1. Operational Service Delivery	2. Engagement	3. Change Management	4. ESB Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of the role of RMS Performance measures (SLA) Quality & Reliability of Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMS Knowledge Communications & Support Problem Solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market Design & Market Change Control Implementations Troubleshooting/Emergency Solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link between RMS & ESB Values – Trust, Caring, Driven & Courageous

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



Our customers are the individuals, communities, councils, businesses, farms, industries and supply companies that are seeking a connection to our network (demand or generation);

- > That supply or are supplied electricity through our network
- > That generate electricity or connect storage into our network
- > That use our network for the provision of systems services
- > That access our network for telecommunications

ESB Networks places customers at the centre of our operation, listening, empowering and delivering services to customers and the economy - making it simple and convenient for customers to interact with us.

Objective: Customers have advised that they need greater visibility in their interactions with ESB Networks and we are listening. Our engagement objectives include;

- > Manage public safety through our media channels
- > Monitor and improve social media interface
- > Streamlining and improving our customer's journeys for connection, planned outage and fault, general queries, meter or service changes and enquires.
- > Improving customer service, value, communications, satisfaction and experience;
- > Providing exceptional customer service through our contact centre, adding new interactive platforms that offer a range of new communication channels like web chat, to all our customers.
- > Providing customers with greater visibility and transparency in their interactions with us and offer real time, relevant and accurate information.
- > Hyper care of the Vulnerable customers through proactive contact during Outages

Action: We are enhancing, integrating and upgrading systems that link to customer interfaces and easy to use applications so that customers can access accurate and real-time information whether it is a new connection, a planned outage or a general customer query.

We are reviewing our internal processes, so they are streamlined and transparent, integrated and digital. ESB Networks is a complex organisation and to make it easier to do business with us, we are defining single points of contact for multi-site and large customers. Training and educating staff across the organisation from our technicians to our office staff supports a customer focused organisation.

We will continue to provide the information and means to facilitate customers participation in new services such as energy communities, microgeneration, demand management, aggregation and peer-to-peer trading.

Measure: Our customer satisfaction research, social media and complaint analysis helps us to continually monitor our performance and identify pain points and root causes. These insights feed into our plans and inform our customer transformation programme.

SAFETY



Electricity is an essential product for modern society, but it can also be very dangerous unless proper precautions are taken, especially when carrying out works near to the electricity network. Safety is central to everything we do in ESB Networks and we are fully committed to protecting the safety, health and well-being of our employees, contractors, customers, members of the public and others who may be impacted by our work activities.

Objective: Public Safety; The safety of the public is a key objective and is part of our regulatory licence requirement. We aim to ensure that we do all we reasonably can to protect the public and their property from injury and damage associated with the electricity network.

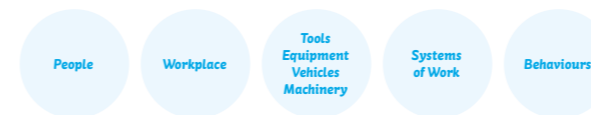
Action: The ESB Networks Public Safety Strategy (2021 – 2025) is anchored in the core purpose of the Networks business. Our Public Safety activities continue to be a core strategic priority and area of focus. Network resilience and integrity are essential to ensure the safety of those who work on or may come in close contact with the electricity network. Delivery of our Public Safety Work Programmes will ensure the safety and integrity of our assets over their life cycle.

Increasing customer and public awareness of electrical safety risk is essential and education and awareness programmes in this regard continue to be a strategic objective of our Public Safety Strategy. We continue to collaborate with all our stakeholders and educate them on public safety risks and their responsibilities in the management and mitigation of these risks. We will raise public awareness and increase education of the public on the safety risks associated with our electrical assets. We will conduct public safety media and digital campaigns across all available channels, in addition to targeted campaigns and events for specific industries including construction, farming and schools. We provide a 24/7 emergency service and various resources including our 'Dial before you dig' service for obtaining electricity network records.

Objective: Staff and Contractor safety. Within ESB Networks, safety, health and well-being is at the centre of everything we do. The organisational values of we're caring, trusted, driven and courageous relate in a real and tangible way to safety, health and well-being standards. These values are supported by the five ESB-wide commitments which apply to every business unit in ESB.

Actions: These commitments call out our individual and collective attitudes and beliefs as they relate to safety, health and well-being. They create a line-of-sight for every employee in terms of how their individual role impacts our safety, health and well-being performance. ESB Networks will continue to engage with its wide range of stakeholders to reinforce the importance of safety in relation to our electricity network.

Our Safety Strategy is based on 5 Commitments



As these commitments relate to



External Validation of Safety Management System

ESB Networks' Safety Management System (SMS) has been certified to the international safety standard ISO 45001 by independent externally accredited auditors.

Actions: The philosophy of our safety management system is based on the principal of continuous improvement. This can be described as follows:

- > **Plan:** Assess the current state and look for improvements. If a problem exists, examine it in detail. Develop possible solutions and means of execution. In this phase, gather as much information as possible to make informed decisions about how to proceed
- > **Do:** Try out the plans, making sure everyone involved understands the changes. This implementation phase is key to getting accurate results
- > **Check:** Follow up to see how effective the changes are. Spend some time comparing the new state to how things were previously
- > **Act:** If the changes work, continue using them and make them the new standard. This will be the new point of reference for future, Plan Do Check Act efforts



THE ENVIRONMENT



ESB Networks recognises that our activities have environmental impacts and that we have a responsibility to manage these impacts in a manner that prevents pollution and provides a high level of protection for the natural environment, while also contributing to the sustainable development of our economy.

This involves continuous improvement in our environmental performance across all our operations, reducing our carbon footprint, increasing our energy efficiency and delivering on our commitments under the European DSO Sustainable Grid Charter, while ensuring that our actions and reporting are open, transparent and consistent with our values.

ESB Networks utilises an Environmental Management System which is externally certified to the ISO 14001 Standard. Furthermore, ESB Networks has an established Environmental Policy, along with internal Company Standards and Procedures. These systems, working in tandem with our committed staff, ensure we comply with the highest standard of environmental management and are continually striving to embed sustainable practices in all of our activities

Objective: Transparent Environmental Reporting. We are committed to ensuring that ESB Networks is open and transparent in communicating its environmental performance. In line with this commitment, ESB Networks reviewed and updated the "Climate Action, Sustainability and the Environment" section of its external website during 2021. The new content included our Environmental Performance Report, which we submit to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) on an annual basis.

Action: During 2022, we will continue to enhance the environmental information publicly available on our external website.

Measure: Our success will be measured by having an external website which provides our stakeholders with the environmental information they require. Metrics will include usage data of the new website and feedback from our stakeholders who use the website.

Objective: Engaging with Local Authorities. We engage regularly with Local Authorities as part of our day-to-day operations.

Action: We will be engaging regularly with relevant Local Authorities in respect of the replacement of fluid-filled cables.

Measure: Our success will be measured in terms of the progress on replacement of fluid-filled cables.



06. CONCLUSION

The continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic means that more than ever we need to maintain strong pathways for stakeholder engagement. We look forward to a time when conditions allow us to reintroduce face to face engagements, but in the meantime, we will continue to adopt new channels to enable us to work effectively and to continue to collaborate and share ideas, while also supporting each other through this unprecedented period.

In order to ensure continuous stakeholder engagement improvement into the future we will work with our stakeholders to address key themes such as the importance of early engagement, addressing feedback, providing pathways for engagement and measuring the impact of our engagement activities.

ESB Networks has recently commenced surveys of the ROI Retail Electricity Market active electricity market participants and the renewable energy industry stakeholders to better gauge the impact of our stakeholder engagement. The learnings of these surveys will be used in 2022 to inform decisions on prioritising improvements to our services, to strengthen our engagement process, and to improve our overall communications with our customers and stakeholders.

We are also currently undertaking an independent review and analysis of our stakeholder engagement strategy and approach, to identify possible improvements or revisions required for 2022 and beyond. We are benchmarking our overall engagement framework, governance and control mechanisms against international best practice. Some specific targets for improving our engagement which we plan to roll out in 2022 include developing a metrics framework for measuring the impact of our stakeholder engagement; a process for closing the feedback loop with our stakeholders, ensuring transparency of how stakeholder feedback is considered and a mechanism for capturing and driving actions resulting from our stakeholder engagement activities.

In this document we have described ESB Networks key areas of engagement focus for 2022, which has been framed by our business strategy and the needs of our stakeholders. The appendix includes in tabular format, lists and timings of our known proposed engagement activities (consultations, publications, meetings, forums, working

groups, events and webinars) proposed for the year ahead. These tables will also be published on our website which will allow us to provide regular updates on this plan to our stakeholders throughout the year.

We are publishing this document for consultation to allow our customers and stakeholders further opportunity to shape our engagement strategy and plans for 2022 and beyond and to ensure we deliver a clean electric future together.

We very much look forward to further collaboration and hearing your feedback which can be submitted directly to stakeholder@esbnetworks.ie



APPENDICES

TABLE 1 CONSULTATIONS

Planned ESB Networks public consultations for 2022

Consultation	Objective	Mechanism	Timing	Audience
ESB Networks Engagement Strategy and Plan 2022	Seek feedback on ESB Networks' proposed engagement strategy and plan for 2022 such that it is fully informed and shaped by both our business and stakeholders needs	ESB Networks Consultation	Dec '21 to Q1 2022	All
Innovation in ESB Networks Consultation - Innovation for a Clean Electric Future	Consultation to share information and garner feedback on ESB Networks' innovation strategy, projects and activities	ESB Networks Consultation	Q1 2022	All
ESB Networks Report on Stakeholder Engagement in 2021	Describe and capture our stakeholder engagement approach and activities during 2020 and seek stakeholder views and feedback on our engagement performance for 2021	ESB Networks Consultation	Q1 2022	All
ESB Networks Strategic Engagement Framework	Seek feedback on our updated Strategic Framework which will include metrics for measuring the impact of our stakeholder engagement; a process for closing the feedback loop with our stakeholders; a process for improving the output focus of our engagement activities	ESB Networks Consultation	Q1 2022	All
Distribution Annual Performance Report 2021	Seek stakeholder feedback on Distribution Annual Performance Report 2020	ESB Networks Consultation	Q3 2022	All
Joint TSO and TAO Investment Planning and Delivery Report 2021	Seek stakeholder feedback on TSO and TAO Electricity Transmission Performance Report 2020	ESB Networks/EirGrid Consultation	Q3 2022	All
Joint TSO and TAO Electricity Transmission Performance Report 2021	Seek Stakeholder feedback on TSO and TAO Investment Planning and Delivery Report 2020	ESB Networks/EirGrid Consultation	Q3 2022	All



TABLE 2 PUBLICATIONS

Reports/information booklets/data sharing on website

Consultation	Objective	Mechanism	Timing	Audience
The CRU Network Tariff Review	CRU is undertaking a programme of work to review the structure of network tariffs and ensure they are fit for purpose and best serve customer interests now and into the future.	Input to CRU led Consultations	Q1-Q4 2022	All
National Network, Local Connections Programme	Ensure that effective and accessible proposals are developed, based on a strong customer and stakeholder voice in setting the direction of the National Network, Local Connections Programme	ESB Networks Consultations	Q1-Q4 2022	All
Smart Metering Programme	Customer sentiment and satisfaction surveys for the programme	Customer sentiment surveys throughout the year Track customer satisfaction with the meter installation process	Quarterly	Members of the public Customers who have had a smart meter installed.
ESB Networks Engagement Strategy and Plan 2023	Seek feedback on ESB Networks' proposed engagement strategy and plan for 2023 such that it is fully informed and shaped by both our business and stakeholders needs	ESB Networks Consultation	Q4 2022	All

Publication	Objective	Mechanism	Timing	Audience
ESB Networks Strategy to 2030	ESB Networks' strategy to 2030, which sets a broad framework for how we intend to navigate the next ten years, delivering on the government Climate Action Plan	ESB Networks Publication	Q2 2022	All
Stakeholder Newsletter	To provide regular updates and overview of engagement activities/opportunities between ESB Networks and stakeholders	Quarterly newsletter emailed to relevant stakeholders and link on ESB Networks website to subscribe	Quarterly	All
Innovation Consultation Response Paper	To provide ESB Networks response to feedback received on the Innovation Consultation	Publication on ESB Networks' website	Q1 2022	All
18 Month Innovation Programme	To share our rolling 18 Month Innovation Programme that aligns with ESB Networks strategic objectives and our commitment to the Climate Action Plan targets	Bi-Annual Publication on ESB Networks' Website	Q1 2022 & Q3 2022	All
Innovation Project Reports	Share learnings and benefits from our Innovation projects through the publication project progress and Close-Out reports	Publication on ESB Networks' Website	Ongoing	All
Dingle Project Report	Share insights, observations and learnings from technical trials and engagement initiatives with trial participants and local community groups	Publication on ESB Networks' Website Topic-specific webinars	Q2 2022 & Q3 2022	All
Dingle Project Data	Anonymised data from the technical trials will be made available to interested parties for research purposes.	Solution will be provided to enable data access	Q3 2022	Research Performing Organisations
Joint TSO and TAO Investment Planning and Delivery Final Report 2021	Final CRU Approval on TSO and TAO Investment Planning and Delivery 2020	Publication on ESB Networks' website	Q3 2022	All
Joint TSO and TAO Electricity Transmission Performance Final Report 2021	Final CRU Approval on TSO and TAO Electricity Transmission Performance Report 2020	Publication on ESB Networks' website	Q3 2022	All

TABLE 3 PATHWAYS TO ENGAGEMENT

Planned meetings, forums, working groups, events and webinars 2022

Publication	Objective	Mechanism	Timing	Audience
National Network, Local Connections Programme	We are currently in consultation on 11 publications, one of which is our consultation framework which outlines our engagement for 2022. Once this has been reviewed and informed by our stakeholders we will be in a position to outline further publications for 2022	Publications on ESB Networks' website	Ongoing	Industry, customer and community representative groups
Smart Metering Programme	Video to 'How to Read Your New Meter' to help customers read their new meter and support the provision of new smart services from electricity suppliers Video to provide customers with a guide about the smart meter installation process	Video uploaded on ESB Networks' website	Ongoing	Customers, supplier's stakeholders
Public Safety Strategy	Inform and educate the public about safe behaviours in relation to the electricity distribution network	Publication on ESB Networks' website	Ongoing	All
Heat Map of available Capacity	Provide an indication of available network capacity for new demand and generation customers	Interactive map on ESB Networks' website	Ongoing	All
Community-led renewable energy projects guidebook	Increase customer knowledge of the connection process, CRU policies and to highlight the lower barrier to entry for community-led projects	Ongoing Publication on ESB Networks' website	Ongoing	All

Consultation	Objective	Mechanism	Timing	Audience
Customer and Society Panel	Provide an opportunity for a critical external perspective (and sounding board) on our business planning and engagement activities and enable us to consider feedback and suggestions	Bi-annual meeting	Q2 & Q4 2022	Domestic, Vulnerable, Business, large industry, Suppliers and Generators, Major Renewables, Sustainability, Community and Climate, Safety, Emergency response, Infrastructure development, Housing, Farming, Academia (Skills, Youth)
Innovation Panel	Provide a platform to enable open discussion and feedback with stakeholders from across all industry sectors on our innovation strategy, projects and activities	Bi-annual meeting	Q2 & Q4 2022	Energy Flexibility and Storage Bodies, Academic/Research, Industry Consultants Renewable Electricity Sector, Energy Agencies/Authorities, Equipment/Systems Manufacturers, Electricity Suppliers, Renewable Electricity Sector, Utility/TSO
ESB Networks Distribution Outage Programme (DOP)	Provide customised outage programme information for 2022 to each HV connected customer	Bilateral meetings and email notification	Q1 2022	All HV connected customers

Consultation	Objective	Mechanism	Timing	Audience
National Network, Local Connections Programme	We are currently in consultation with 11 publications, one of which is our consultation framework which will outline our engagement for 2022. Once this has been reviewed and informed by our stakeholders, we will be in a position to outline the pathways to engagement we will be delivering. We do envisage that our stakeholder engagement will be insight lead and tailored to stakeholder need	A range of stakeholder driven engagement opportunities	Ongoing	All
ESB Networks Annual Conference	Provide high level engagement opportunity on ESB Networks' business strategy and plans	Physical/hybrid conference dependent on public health restrictions	Q3 2022	All
Innovation Spring and Autumn Series of Webinars	Sharing of information on our innovation activities and the dissemination of project learnings and outcomes	Series of targeted interactive webinars as informed by stakeholders	Q2 and Q4 2022	All
Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP)	The Distribution Code is the set of rules that specifies the technical aspects and relationships between the DSO and all other users. The Distribution Code is kept under review and updated as required through the Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP). The DCRP meets quarterly and is chaired and coordinated by ESB Networks as the DSO	Quarterly meetings	Q1 – Q4 2022	Members of the DCRP - representative of various types of Users of the Distribution System, plus the DSO, TSO and the CRU

Consultation	Objective	Mechanism	Timing	Audience
Smart Metering Programme	Industry engagement:	Conference calls	Monthly meetings	CRU, DECC, SEAI & electricity suppliers
	> Industry Liaison Group (ILG)			
	> Communications & Engagement Working Group (CEWG)			
	Working groups:	Ongoing meetings	Q1 – Q4 2022	Industry participants
Smart Metering Programme	> Smart meter technical working group			
	> One-to-one engagement sessions with industry participants to define and support Phase 2 of the programme			
	Customer engagement:	Letters/information booklet /Written responses	Area by area in advance of local deployment	Customers whose meters are scheduled to be upgraded. Individual customers
Smart Metering Programme	> Direct communication – customers whose meter are scheduled for an exchange receive two letters in advance. Responding to individual customer enquiries			
	Public awareness & stakeholder engagement:	Multi-channel approach Programme briefings	Q1 – Q4 2022	All
Smart Metering Programme	> Awareness campaign via targeted media campaigns supported by updates on our website			
	> Briefings to national and local elected representatives and other stakeholders			
Construction Safety Partnership Advisory Committee	Promote best practice of electricity safety in construction	Quarterly meetings	January, April, July	CIF, HSA, LGMA, Engineers Ireland, SOLAS, Government Departments
Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee	Promote best practice of farm electricity safety in farming	Quarterly meetings	January, March, May, June, July	Teagasc, FBD, HSA, Department of Agriculture

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