

Date of Submission

May 2021

NIA Project Registration and PEA Document

Notes on Completion: Please refer to the appropriate NIA Governance Document to assist in the completion of this form. The full completed submission should not exceed 6 pages in total.

Project Registration

Project Title

Whole-System Growth Scenario Modelling

Project Reference

NIA_SSEN_0030

Project Licensee(s)

Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution and Southern Electric Power Distribution

Project Start Date

October 2017

Project Duration

1 year and 6 months

Nominated Project Contact(s)

SSEN Future Networks Team

Project Budget

£225,000.00

Nominated Contact Email Address(es)

futurenetworks@sse.com

Problem(s)

Traditional network planning considers a relatively small number of factors, including connection applications and underlying load growth trends on a Distribution Network Operator (DNO)'s electrical network.

A key role of a Distribution System Operator (DSO) (as defined in the ENA Open Networks project) is to undertake "Whole system planning". This means taking into account factors broader than the immediate demands on the local electrical network when considering how to meet customers' needs. Whole system planning requires the DSO to:

- Make decisions on investment in network assets, or flexibility
- Consider local energy scenarios to realise optionality value and make least-regret investments
- Take into account all reasonable solutions across Distribution, Transmission, and other energy networks and sources
- Provide local investors, customers and communities with visibility to inform decisions in relation to their own investments

The foregoing has to be done in a manner which balances cost and reliability across all relevant energy networks.

The industry has been moving towards whole system planning, with projects carried out on Orkney, the Western Isles, and SW England, which have consolidated the aspirations of communities and developers, to connect Distributed Generation, and to use smart and conventional solutions to meet these needs. This now needs to progress further, so that the analysis considers the overall energy requirements of a local geographical area, taking into account the community; planning policy; transport policy; and other energy sources or sinks (such as gas networks). This has not yet been undertaken and will become increasingly important as decarbonisation shifts energy demands between fuels, and as additional decentralised generation seeks to connect.

We may need to plan proactively for appropriate TOTEX investment ahead of connection requests, while ensuring that any investment in capacity ahead of need is a low-regret option. The proposed study will gather evidence to assess the need for such anticipatory investments, and identify possible investment triggering factors. This will ensure that the risk of creating stranded assets is kept as low as possible through making the most effective use of flexible resources, demand side response, active network management, and constraints.

This approach will require a new framework for identifying energy needs that encompasses a range of future energy scenarios, taking into account insights into local developments and needs. The project is relevant to both Transmission and Distribution, and will be led by Distribution.

Method(s)

The Scottish Government is formulating its energy policy, and as part of this process have suggested the identification of three representative parts of Scotland in which they can explore the optimal solution for meeting the needs of these communities and associated businesses. This will include consideration of gas networks; electrification of transport; fuel poverty; and local energy aspirations. In response, we propose to:

1. Develop a methodology for undertaking a whole system assessment of the energy needs of a particular area, including:
 - a) Stakeholder Engagement approach
 - b) Local generation and demand scenarios
 - c) Existing asset condition and replacement needs

d) Investment options within and outwith the distribution network

2. Develop a methodology for selecting the optimal solution

3. Provide appropriate visibility to stakeholders

4. Test these methodologies in the following three areas:

a) Fort William

b) Dundee

c) Islay

These diverse areas will require us to examine the impact of multiple factors, such as:

- Extension (or contraction) of the gas network, altering electricity demand through gas substitution for heating; and the implications of this for network constraints
- Associated transmission constraint and adjacent distribution networks
- Resilience requirements, especially in areas with high dependence on electricity
- Local energy policies, aspirations, challenges and investments
- Expansion of small scale renewables, storage, co-generation and heat pumps
- The ability of local energy markets in a specific area (such as peer to peer energy trading) to alter patterns of supply and demand
- Uneven load growth in urban areas, with population shifts and new housing developments impacting specific areas, requiring a holistic view of energy supply and local development
- Our obligations to serve the entire community, including those in fuel poverty, using vulnerability mapping
- Impact of new central government encouragement and support for large and small scale battery storage
- Increasing uptake of EVs, including clustering effects, with a target date of 2040 recently announced for the withdrawal of petrol and diesel vehicles from the UK market and 2032 in Scotland
- Medium to long term national policy options, modelled according to National Grid's Future Energy Scenarios
- Continuing development of large scale, distribution-connected onshore renewable generation and the retirement of transmission-connected thermal generation

Scope

The complete project will:

- Devise a methodology for local engagement that informs both the investment decisions of the DSO and of local decision-makers and other energy network owners to maximise the likelihood of investments and decisions that support an optimal whole system outcome
- Devise a methodology for whole-system energy scenario modelling which includes electricity, water and gas; distributed energy resources; EV uptake and other transport issues; housing and infrastructure development plans; and the Future Energy Scenarios
- Using the methodology, create a detailed, ground-up model of Generation and Demand growth scenarios from the present day to the year 2040, covering the distribution network served by specific Grid Supply Points in the three nominated areas of Scotland, from the Transmission/Distribution interface down to the 33kV level
- Look beyond the current project pipeline of development for each technology considered, by using the National Grid Future Energy Scenarios as the basis of longer term modelling
- Model the impact of the intentions and aspirations of wider local stakeholders, including the Scottish Government, local authorities and industries, and the wider communities within the areas concerned, especially the development of housing and infrastructure
- Assess the effects of developments such as Gas Distribution Network extension on power flows, power import/export at the T/D interface, system stability and balancing services; similarly, the effects of planned developments by other infrastructure providers such as water and telecoms utilities
- Overlay the results on our existing models of the network, and ask where flexible resources can be used. Use experience gained in previous projects (such as SAVE and NTVV), together with CMZ and Active Network Management deployments, to identify how these can provide option value and reduce total system costs over the range of future scenarios
- Develop a methodology for identifying the optimal holistic development strategy for the area concerned
- Identify the events and conditions which would trigger reinforcement investment and the optimum time to begin those investments in the four Future Energy Scenarios
- Assess the risks posed by increasing reliance on unconventional assets and virtual resources (such as aggregated demand response), to system stability and quality of service. Examine the failure modes and effects of these resources, when used in combination with other assets in the three areas concerned
- Document the methodology used in the modelling so that it can be repeated in other areas and the models updated over time as changes occur

Objectives(s)

- 1 Understand the possible patterns of change over a two-decade horizon in the distribution networks served by three GSPs in the nominated areas
- 2 Create a whole system modelling methodology, and subsequently three specific area models, for anticipating the impact of these changes and the options for responding to them, in various local Future Energy Scenarios
- 3 Demonstrate a methodology that allows the two-way transfer of knowledge and understanding between network operators and those that make investment decisions in the areas served by the network, to facilitate efficient whole system planning
- 4 Apply learning from projects in other regions to assess their value for reducing overall system costs and risks in the three areas, and to identify investment triggers for network improvements

Success Criteria

- A whole-system methodology is developed which enables a ground-up model to be constructed of a distribution area, looking forward for 20 years or more, under various scenarios, which can inform investment planning and decision-making
- The scenario analysis allows the company to examine the scope for applying flexible and distributed energy resources to meet the new DSO responsibilities in the areas modelled
- Improved understanding is gained of whole-system factors including the extension of the gas supply network and other utility

developments

- Acknowledgment from local decision makers of the value of the methodology in allowing them to make the best decisions from a whole system perspective
- Dissemination of the outputs to all stakeholders, with continuing engagement

Technology Readiness Level at Start

TRL 1

Technology Readiness Level at Completion

TRL 3

Project Partners and External Funding

None

Potential for New Learning

The full project adds to existing knowledge by:

- Delivering a new methodology for considering the whole energy system in a distribution area
- Exploring the options for a DSO to fulfill its responsibilities in the areas considered
- Developing strategies and planning tools useful to the DSO and other organisations for planning efficient network operations over the medium to long term
- Quantifying the value of flexible resources in particular regions and identifying the relevant investment triggers
- Providing a scenario-based planning tool which can be revised and updated going forward

Scale of Project

Initially, three areas have been selected for study, offering different characteristics and challenges. Once the methodology has been developed, it can be used in any other area. The project will cover three areas, as this is considered to be the minimum necessary to properly evaluate the methodology.

Geographical Area

The study covers selected rural and urban areas in Scotland. Once the methodology is established, it can be applied anywhere.

Revenue Allowed for in the RIIO Settlement

None

Indicative Total NIA Project Expenditure

£200k of which 90% (£180) is allowable NIA expenditure

Project Eligibility Assessment

Specific Requirements 1

1a. A NIA Project must have the potential to have a Direct Impact on a Network Licensee's network or the operations of the System Operator and involve the Research, Development, or Demonstration of at least one of the following (please tick which applies):

A specific piece of new (i.e. unproven in GB, or where a Method has been trialled outside the GB the Network Licensee must justify repeating it as part of a Project) equipment (including control and communications systems and software)

A specific novel arrangement or application of existing licensee equipment (including control and/or communications systems and/or software)

A specific novel operational practice directly related to the operation of the Network Licensee's System

A specific novel commercial arrangement

Specific Requirements 2

2a. Has the Potential to Develop Learning That Can be Applied by all Relevant Network Licensees

Please explain how the learning that will be generated could be used by relevant Network Licenses.

The study covers selected rural and urban areas in Scotland. Once the methodology is established, it can be applied by networks anywhere within GB.

Please describe what specific challenge identified in the Network Licensee's innovation strategy that is being addressed by the Project.

N/A

2b. Is the default IPR position being applied?

Yes

2c. Has the Potential to Deliver Net Financial Benefits to Customers?

Yes

Please provide an estimate of the saving if the Problem is solved.

This is a knowledge development project. The learning developed will identify optimal strategies and possible options for adapting to change, and can inform and underpin all other distribution network planning and investment activities in the areas defined.

Please provide a calculation of the expected financial benefits of a Development or Demonstration Project (not required for Research Projects). (Base Cost - Method Cost, Against Agreed Baseline).

This is a research project

Please provide an estimate of how replicable the Method is across GB in terms of the number of sites, the sort of site the method could be applied to, or the percentage of the Network Licensees system where it could be rolled-out.

The learning from the project will be transferable to all other network licensees, however the methodology will not be rolled out elsewhere until it has matured and been validated.

Please provide an outline of the costs of rolling out the Method across GB.

N/A

2d. Does not Lead to Unnecessary Duplication

Yes

Please demonstrate below that no unnecessary duplication will occur as a result of the Project.

We have checked the Smarter Network Portal and are not aware of any similar projects in the UK. The project will not duplicate any system study carried out in any part of Scotland by either the electricity or gas DNO; and will not be identical to any models previously developed in other regions. We are not aware of any other long term, whole-system future energy scenario models (or of any future energy scenario models of lesser scope), which could usefully be applied in the northern Scotland licence area, given the high penetration of distribution-

connected renewables (especially wind) and low population density in some areas. While other studies based on future energy scenarios are in hand, including an internal transmission level study within SSEN which aims to refine the annual Electricity Ten Year Statement down to GSP level, as part of the transmission planning cycle, these other studies do not involve such extensive external stakeholder engagement, nor are they so local in their analysis; nor are they focused on the distribution network.

If applicable, justify why you are undertaking a Project similar to those being carried out by any other Network Licensees.

N/A

Additional Governance Requirements

Please identify

X

i) Please identify why the project is innovative and has not been tried before

ii) Please identify why the Network Licensee will not fund such a Project as part of its business as usual activities

iii) Please identify why the Project can only be undertaken with the support of the NIA, including reference to the specific risks (eg commercial, technical, operational or regulatory) associated with the Project

This project has been approved by a senior member of staff

