

The Voice of  
the Networks

# Gas Network Innovation Strategy

March 2020



# Contents

Foreword.....03

Introduction .....04

Our strategy .....05

How to get involved .....06

Principles and outcomes

    Customer benefit .....08

    Collaboration .....09

    Carbon impact .....10

    Data and outputs .....11

    Scale up and roll out.....12

Shared network innovation themes

    Consumer vulnerability .....14

    Net zero and the energy transition ....16

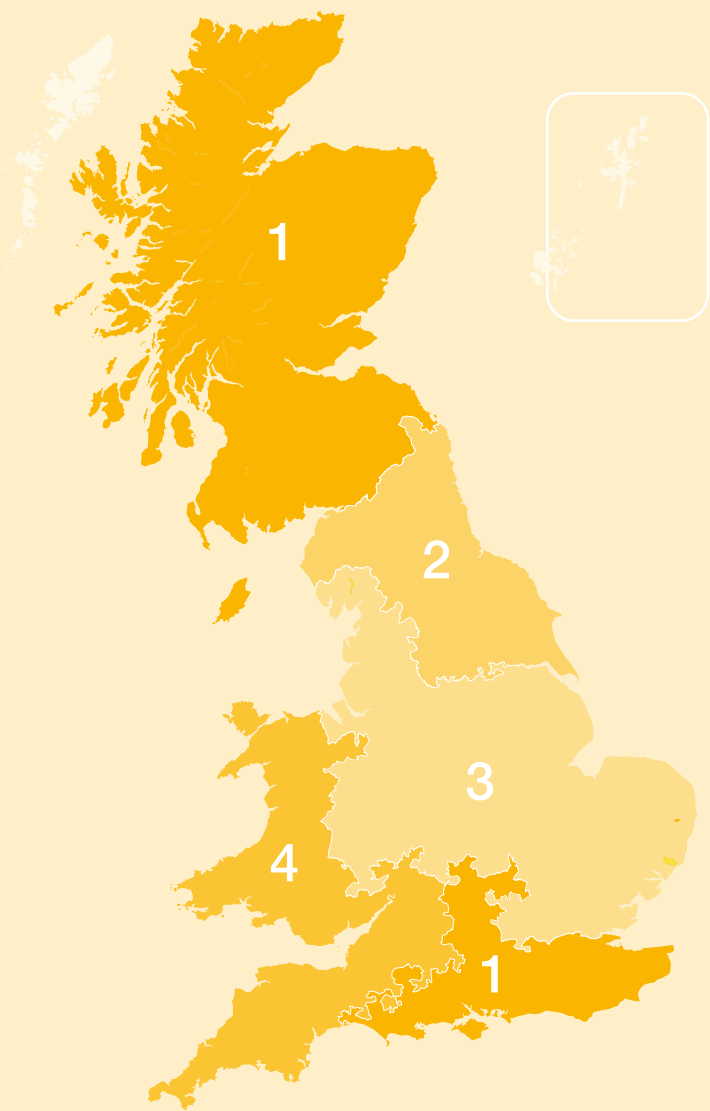
    Optimised assets and practices .....18

    Flexibility and commercial evolution ...20

    Whole energy system .....22

Next steps .....24

## Gas Distribution



1

**SGN**  
Your gas. Our network.

2

**Northern Gas Networks**

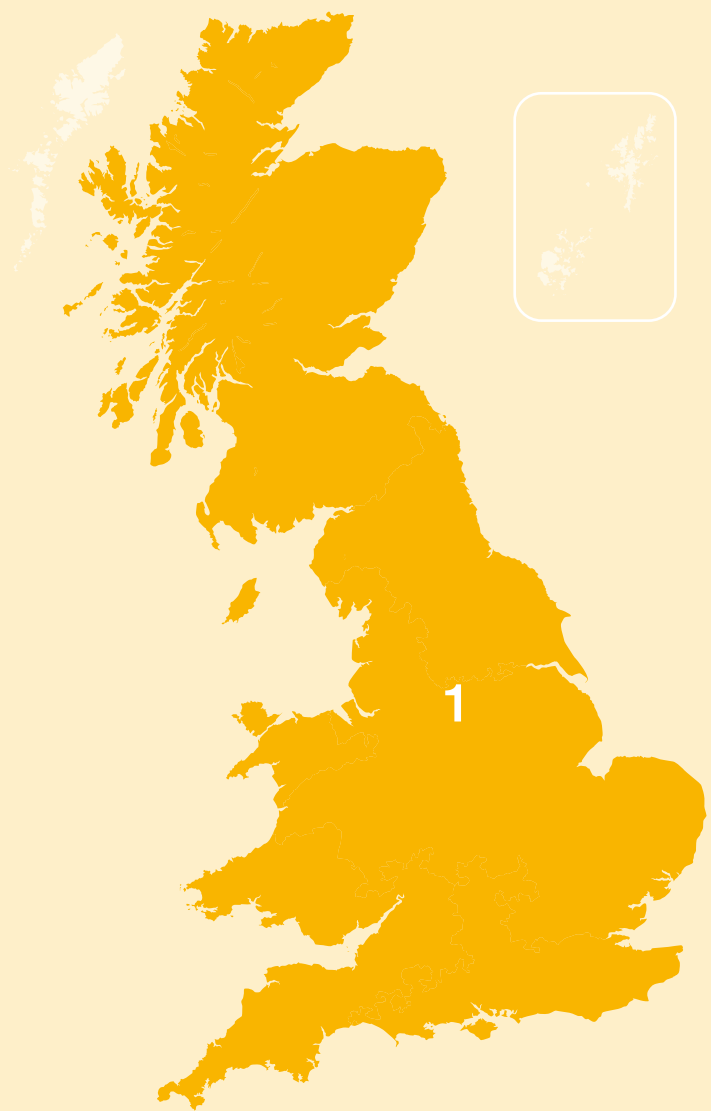
3

**Cadent**  
Your Gas Network

4

**WALES & WEST UTILITIES**

## Gas Transmission



1

**nationalgrid**

This Gas Network Innovation Strategy has been produced by Energy Networks Association (ENA) and the GB Gas Licensed Network Operators (LNOs). ENA is our voice, representing the ‘wires and pipes’ transmission and distribution network operators for gas and electricity in the UK and Ireland.

# Foreword

We are pleased to present this revised and refreshed Gas Network Innovation Strategy. This document sets out for you, our stakeholders, what our high-level ambitions and priorities are for network innovation.

Innovation in our energy networks is playing a key role in the transformation of the energy system for a zero carbon future. Innovation projects allow us to better understand how to integrate and roll out new technologies, practices and markets and help to tackle the wider energy challenges we face.

Funding mechanisms, including the Network Innovation Allowance (NIA) and Network Innovation Competition (NIC) administered by Ofgem, are enabling an extensive portfolio of projects that are changing how our energy system works and delivering significant financial, energy security and environmental benefits to customers.

We are working in partnership with each other, with innovators, businesses and local communities to invest in trialling new technologies and business models. We recognise that we cannot solve the complex challenges in the energy system on our own.

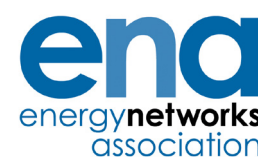
ENA is the voice of the networks and brings together all the innovation managers to consider challenges that require innovative solutions, share learning and develop robust processes for collaboration.

We published our **first strategy** in 2018. It helped us to align our priorities, share thinking and avoid duplicating efforts. But we felt it could go further. We recognise there is still work to be done in joining up with the electricity network companies and facilitating whole energy system approaches. Therefore, this revised strategy has shared principles and themes with the Electricity Network Innovation Strategy. We are moving towards producing one shared strategy in the future.

We also recognise that there are innovators out there that we haven't engaged with yet. We hope this strategy enables them to better understand our key themes and principles and how to get involved.

David Smith  
Chief Executive

Matt Hindle  
Head of Gas

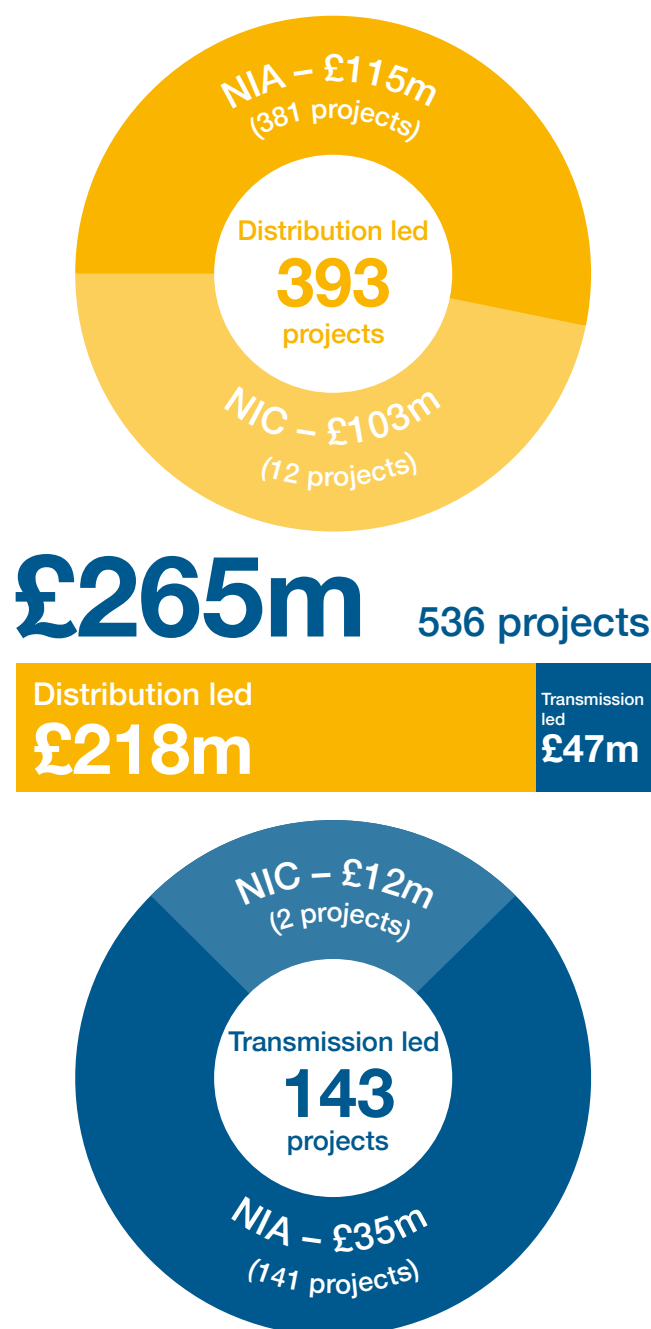


**nationalgrid**



# Introduction

## Gas network innovation spend 2008 to 2019



Innovation projects allow us to understand how to integrate new technologies and practices into our energy networks, benefiting our customers and facilitating our transition to a net zero future.

This revised Gas Network Innovation Strategy was co-created with our stakeholders (see the engagement process on the right). The strategy sets out the key themes and principles that will guide a joined up approach to innovation by both the electricity and gas networks.

We are building on an extensive innovation portfolio. Since 2008, £265 million has been invested in innovation activities delivering significant benefits for customers.\*

The key funding mechanisms we use are the NIA and the NIC. However, this strategy looks more widely at how we can join up with wider UK energy innovation programmes.

This strategy sets out how we want to work with you, the innovators, on new solutions that can help us deliver safe, resilient networks that facilitate the net zero transition and meet the needs of our customers.

\*This does not include other funding, such as the Innovation Funding Incentive or Innovate UK.

## Innovation strategy stakeholder engagement



# Our strategy

This strategy is centred around our three overarching objectives, which are reflected in five key principles and five network innovation themes.

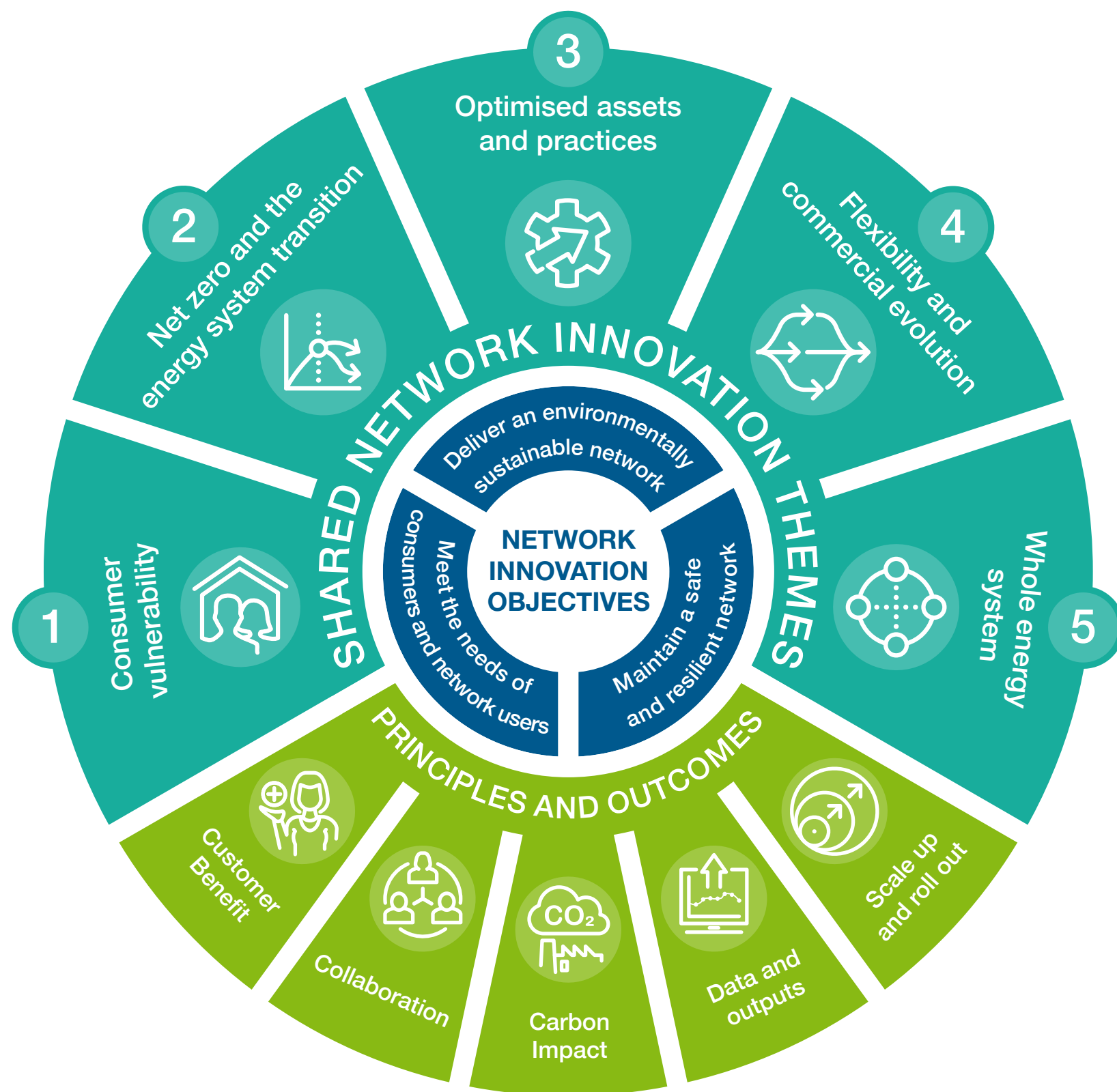
The underlying **principles and outcomes** apply to all innovation activity and will be considered at all stages of innovation projects, from inception through to delivery and dissemination.

The **shared network innovation** themes are the priority innovation areas, which we have identified with the help of our stakeholders. These five themes provide us with a shared strategic direction, help innovators understand how they can work with us and provide a means of categorising and tracking innovation investment. However, it is worth noting that often projects will sit under multiple themes.

Under each theme in this strategy we set out what it means for gas network innovation, the top five focus areas identified through the stakeholder engagement process and case studies of previous or live projects.

The strategy is deliberately high level. We want to give you, our stakeholders, information on where we need ideas, at the same time as not being prescriptive and closing the door to problems/solutions that we have not yet considered.

## Objectives, themes and principles

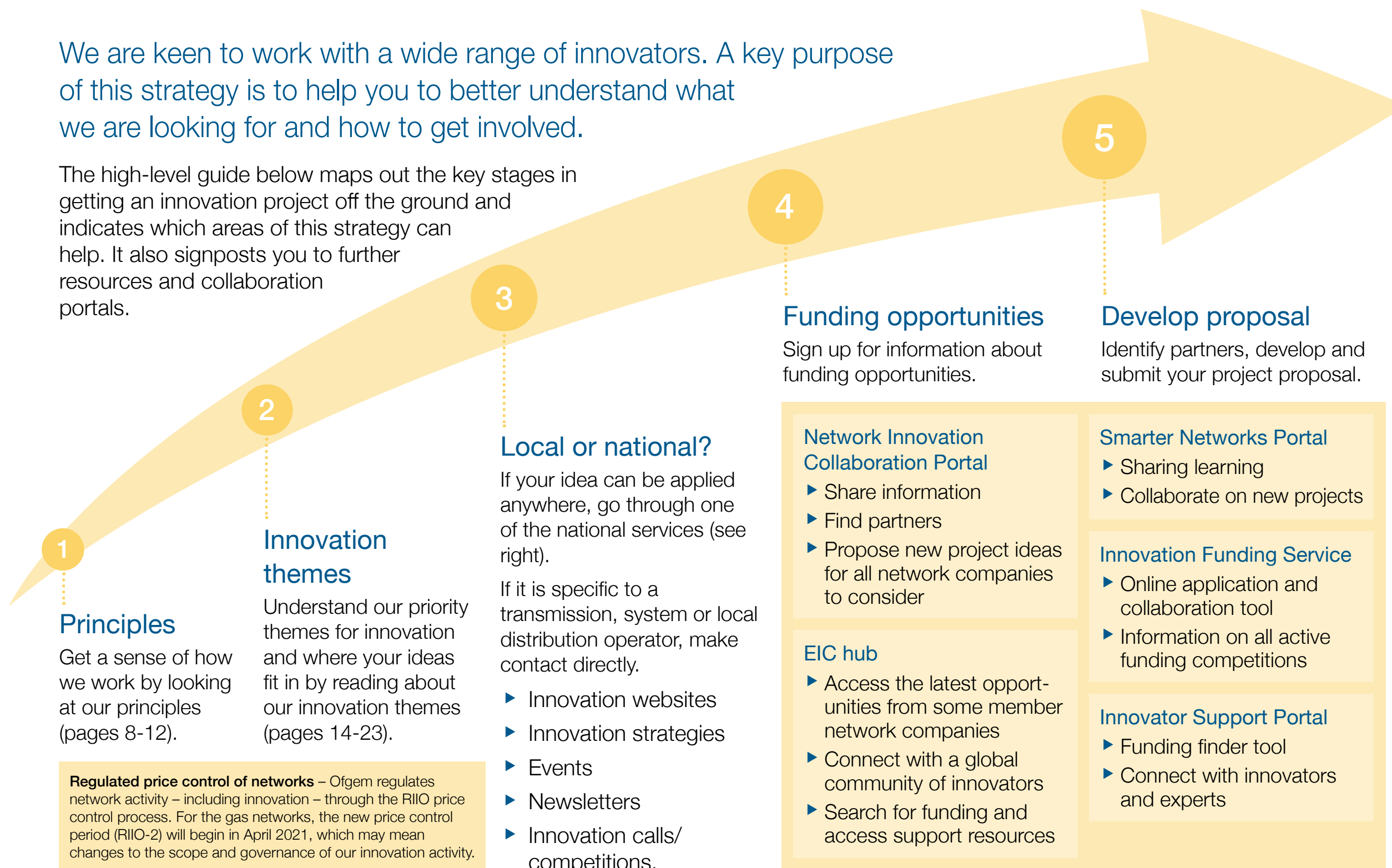




# How to get involved

We are keen to work with a wide range of innovators. A key purpose of this strategy is to help you to better understand what we are looking for and how to get involved.

The high-level guide below maps out the key stages in getting an innovation project off the ground and indicates which areas of this strategy can help. It also signposts you to further resources and collaboration portals.



# Principles and outcomes



Customer benefit



Collaboration



Carbon impact



Data and outputs



Scale up and roll out



## PRINCIPLE

# Customer benefit

Customer benefit should be at the centre of all network innovation activity. Benefits will range from efficiency savings and a better customer experience to societal benefits, such as the accelerated decarbonisation of our energy system.

Our customers are everyone who connects to our network or who pays an energy bill. All innovation activity should aim to deliver clear benefits to these customers, in particular:

- ▶ Accelerated decarbonisation of our energy system
- ▶ Efficiency improvements that reduce network costs, lowering gas bills for customers
- ▶ A safer and more secure energy network
- ▶ A more reliable energy supply
- ▶ A reduced impact on the environment
- ▶ An inclusive approach to participation in the energy transition, with a focus on vulnerable consumers
- ▶ A positive impact on our employees and supply chains
- ▶ Wider socio-economic benefits, such as job creation and improved public health/air quality.

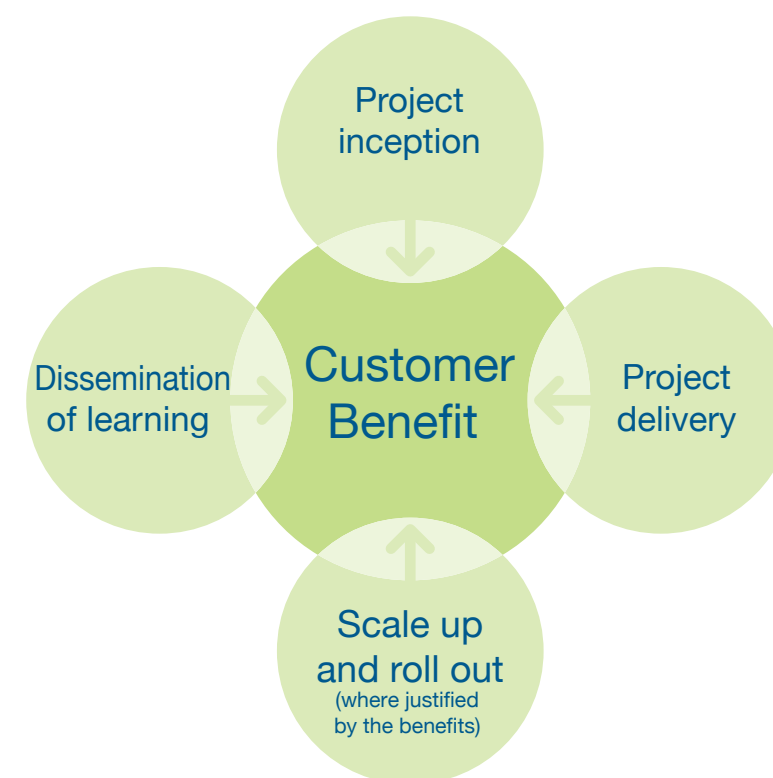
We don't just consider how the outcomes of innovation projects will affect customers, but also how we interact with customers during project delivery.

When customers are directly involved in projects we make sure that we manage their expectations and communicate in a transparent and open way. We are inclusive and consider the harder to reach customers. When customers are indirectly affected by projects, we will minimise disruptions and clearly communicate with them.

We will also explore how innovations can improve customer service whenever possible. This may relate to how we interact with customers, deliver connections or new markets such as local flexibility markets.

We recognise that communities and regions are different and have different needs. Therefore, we each develop our own innovation strategies that reflect the specific needs of customers in our regions.

## Customer benefit at the centre







PRINCIPLE

# Collaboration

Network innovation activity should provide shared learning, avoid duplication and increase collaboration between network companies and the wider energy sector. Network innovation should also be joined up with wider UK energy innovation programmes.

While each of us has our own strategy for innovation, we strongly believe that gas and electricity and wider industry collaboration is key to ensuring we maximise the value to customers. This is why we have a joined-up strategy and shared principles and themes with the electricity networks.

Under ENA, there are a range of initiatives that facilitate collaboration between us as network and system operators. They include:

- ▶ **Smarter Networks Portal** – a repository for Ofgem-funded projects. With automatic notification of new projects and key learning. It also shares project registration documents to enable collaboration before project kick off
- ▶ **Open Networks Project** – sharing learning and working collaboratively to change how the networks operate to facilitate the transition to a smart, flexible energy system

- ▶ **Gas Goes Green Programme** – sharing learning and working collaboratively to deliver net zero gas in a smart, flexible and balanced energy system
- ▶ **Low Carbon Technology Working Group** – representatives from the electricity networks meet regularly with industry, BEIS and Ofgem to agree strategies and processes for low carbon technologies that connect to the electricity network
- ▶ **Gas Innovation Governance Group and Electricity Innovation Managers** – regular meetings to coordinate innovation activities
- ▶ **Annual key showcase and conference events** – such as the Low Carbon Networks & Innovation Conference, Electricity Innovation Forums and the Gas Innovation Showcase.

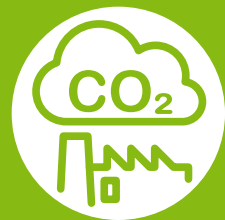
We recognise the need to collaborate with a wide range of innovators to create better ideas and real-world outcomes. Page 6 of this strategy sets out the main routes to get involved. For example, we work with third party organisations, such as EIC and Innovate UK, to collaborate with thousands of small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

We also collaborate with other funding programmes that support innovation work such as Innovate UK and BEIS' innovation funds, however, there is the potential to increase and better coordinate this collaboration to ensure our customers benefit.



Innovate UK





# Carbon impact

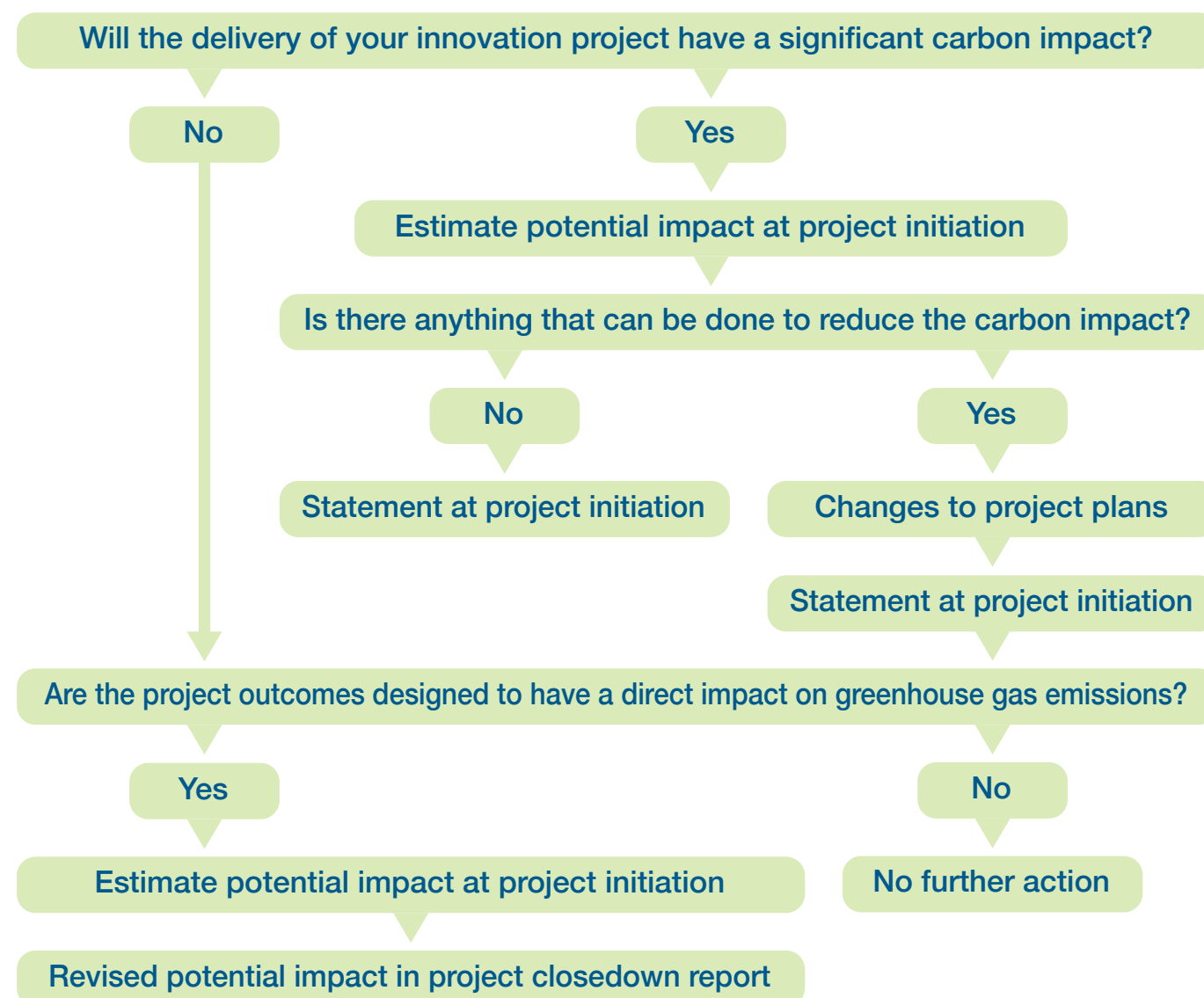
Innovation activities should have a positive impact on achieving the UK's net zero emissions target whenever possible. Therefore, the potential carbon impact of an innovation project should be considered.

Facilitating and accelerating the UK's transition to net zero is a key theme of our innovation strategy, for example, through connecting new sources of green gases or reducing losses (see pages 16 and 17).

Innovation projects developing and implementing solutions to other themes in this strategy will also have an impact on carbon emissions.

Network companies already consider and aim to reduce the environmental impacts of all their activities, including innovation. In many cases the carbon impacts of innovation projects may be low, for example, innovations in cyber security, safety and customer service. Where carbon impacts of innovation projects are potentially significant, network companies will consider whether there are ways of avoiding or reducing emissions, without compromising the objectives of the project.

## High level carbon impact assessment for innovation projects





# Data and outputs

The outputs of network innovation activity should be made available to all interested parties in a consistent and accessible format.

All network innovation projects should, where possible, make the following available and accessible:

- ▶ Key project outcomes and learning from undertaking the project
- ▶ An overview of the key outputs and results from the project
- ▶ Project datasets, data tables and supporting information (such as method statements, registers or process diagrams)
- ▶ Key qualitative and quantitative information that may be of use to future innovation projects.

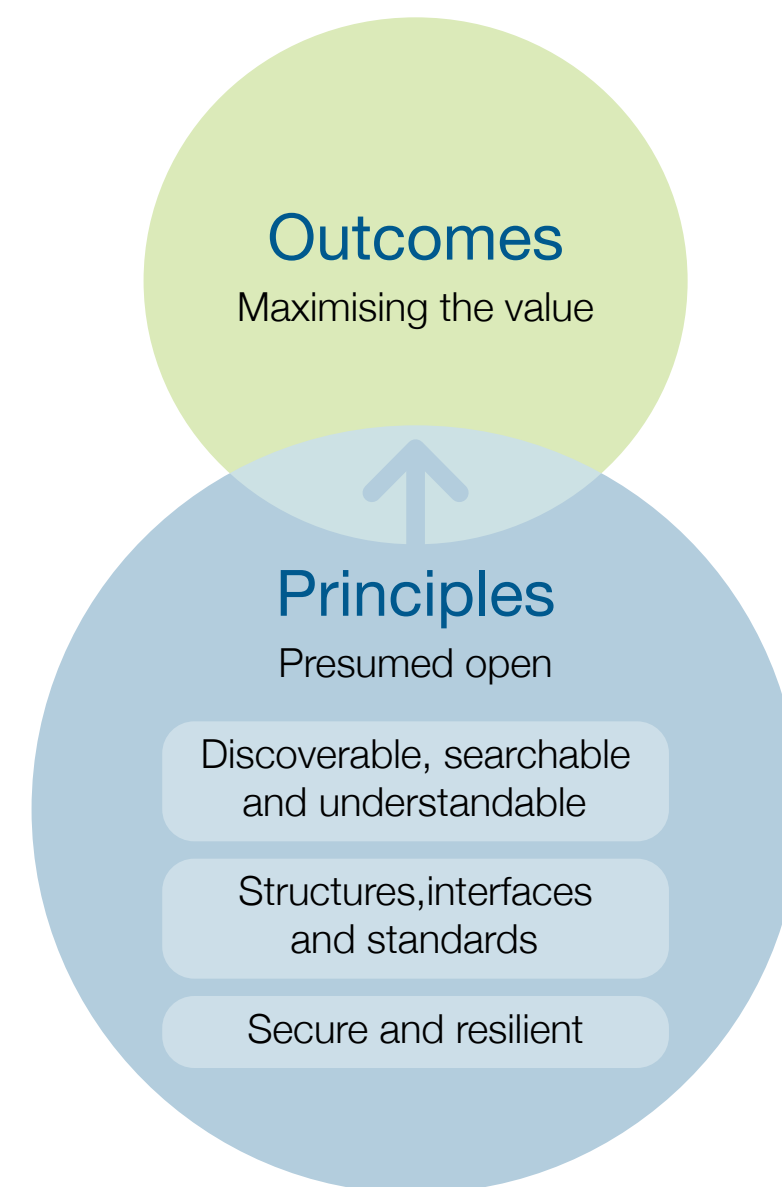
A successful innovation project will provide an opportunity to further develop or implement an idea, technology or process through to business as usual.

The outputs of an innovation project, as well as the data and information generated, can also be valuable for future learning, follow-up projects or new ideas. Making innovation project data and insights available will help attract a wider range of innovators and encourage spin-off ideas.

Therefore, we take the view that data from innovation activities should be 'presumed open', as set out by the Energy Data Taskforce. It should also be 'discoverable, searchable and understandable', with common 'structures, interfaces and standards' and be 'secure and resilient'.

Outputs from innovation projects can all be found on the [Smarter Networks Portal](#) and on individual network company websites. We will be revising the Smarter Networks Portal in 2020 and considering how we can improve the service it provides.

## Energy Data Taskforce: Maximising the value of data





# Scale up and roll out

A key objective of network innovation activity should be to deliver transformational change, taking viable initiatives forward to business as usual deployment and to identify methods to scale up and roll out new practices, processes and technologies.

Innovation is about trialling, testing and verifying ideas. It is also about developing new approaches, practices and processes. Proven innovations and successful or impactful projects should be taken forward to wider implementation across the sector as cost effectively as possible. This is how benefits for customers are maximised.

We are committed to ensuring that new innovations are adopted to business as usual. We do this in several ways:

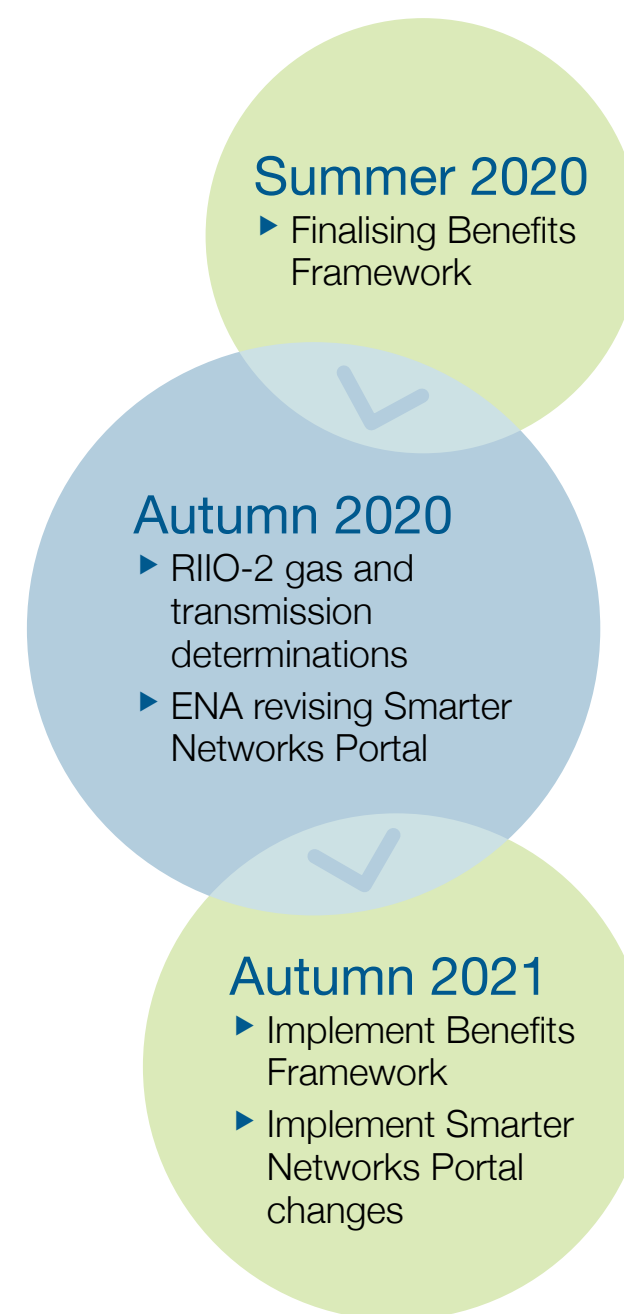
- ▶ We involve key staff in the innovation process before transitioning to business as usual to lead the adoption of new approaches
- ▶ We have created specific roles or teams to prepare for and facilitate future change
- ▶ We ensure that engineering and regulatory standards, industry codes and policies are updated (or created) as a result of innovation projects
- ▶ We collaborate between network companies to facilitate the deployment of solutions at scale.

To ensure that we are delivering value for money to our customers and wider stakeholders, we continuously improve our processes to make sure that we get maximum value from innovation deployment.

In preparation for RIIO-2, we are working with the gas networks to develop a measurement framework that enables consistent reporting for network innovation. This is designed to benefit customers and the wider industry by increasing transparency on the outcomes of network innovation projects, and what they have delivered.

Under the proposed benefits framework, we will assess the outputs of our innovation projects and the potential they have to deliver benefits for customers. This will consider benefits for the organisation proposing the project, other network operators and wider stakeholders. We propose to report innovation benefits using the new framework for RIIO-2, the next price control period starting 1 April 2021 for system operation, gas networks and electricity transmission, and for electricity distribution from 1 April 2023.

## Benefits Framework development



# Shared network innovation themes



Consumer vulnerability



Net zero and the energy transition



Optimised assets and practices



Flexibility and commercial evolution



Whole energy system



# Consumer vulnerability



Exploring how best to support the needs of consumers in vulnerable circumstances today and in the future, ensuring that everyone can experience the benefits of the energy transition and any adverse effects of change is minimised.

Vulnerable consumers are those significantly less able to protect their interests in the energy market and/or are more likely to suffer detriment. Vulnerability can take different forms and can change over time. Causes include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Financial
- ▶ Technological
- ▶ Locational
- ▶ Demographical
- ▶ Health and wellbeing.

It is often those consumers in vulnerable circumstances that are most likely to find it difficult to engage with changing technologies and benefits. There is a risk that the energy transition could put them at a greater disadvantage.

Vulnerable consumers could also be impacted by action to decarbonise how we

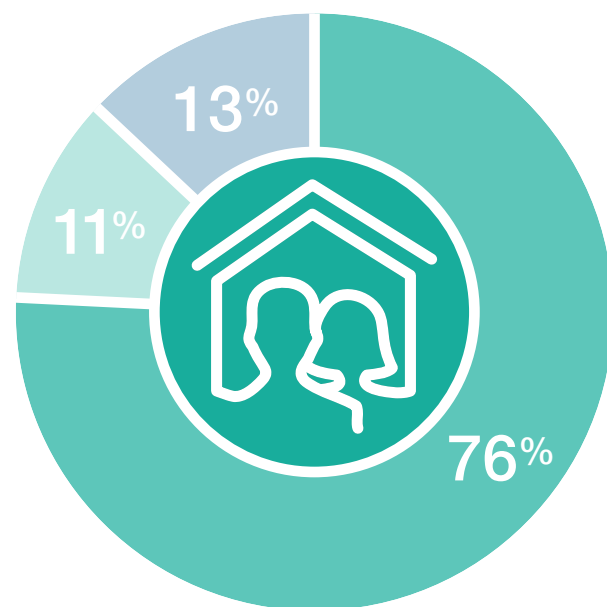
heat our homes and businesses. Heat is directly linked with our comfort and health and so we need to ensure those most reliant on it are not adversely affected by the energy transition.

Similarly those who rely on the availability of low-cost and accessible transport for their health or livelihood, will be impacted by action to reduce transport emissions in urbanised areas, or recent announcements around bringing the ban of sales of new petrol and diesel fueled cars forward to 2035.

Innovation allows us to explore how best to support the needs of consumers in vulnerable circumstances and to take a more inclusive approach. This could take the form of new services, data and management practices, technologies or partnerships.

# Consumer vulnerability

## Stakeholder feedback



Is consumer vulnerability a key theme for network innovation?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



How important would you rate this theme out of 5?

## 5 focus areas

These are the five focus areas that stakeholders have identified as the near-term priorities:

- 1 Understand and remove barriers to adopting new technologies and services for vulnerable consumers
- 2 Facilitate building resilient local communities
- 3 Support the fuel poor and improve affordability for consumers
- 4 Explore how to reduce the financial impact of net zero on vulnerable consumers
- 5 Improve engagement and visibility between vulnerable consumers and the networks.

...ensuring that everyone can experience the benefits of the energy transition.

## Case studies

### Ramp Up

Wales & West Utilities

Some customers can find it hard to navigate around street works. WWU launched an NIA project and are working with five different partners to design and test a better transition ramp, helping people move from the pavement to the road and back more smoothly and safely.

### Connecting homes for health

Northern Gas Networks

Customers living in cold homes, with no gas connection, can suffer both physically and mentally. NGN are working with National Energy Action on a two-part project to explore the impact of free gas connections on households suffering from poor health. The findings could inform a future change in the eligibility criteria for free gas connections.

# Net zero and the energy transition



Facilitating and accelerating the UK's transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions before 2050.

The transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions will require:

- ▶ A transition to low carbon gases
- ▶ The significant decarbonisation of heat
- ▶ Greater levels of low and zero carbon electricity generation
- ▶ The decarbonisation of transport
- ▶ An increase in flexibility in our wider energy system, for example through smart technologies and services
- ▶ An increase in energy efficiency and changes in demand and customer behaviour
- ▶ New ways of understanding and managing system stability
- ▶ A whole energy system approach.

The gas network is currently at the heart of our energy system. It plays a vital role in transporting energy to consumers securely and cost-effectively. The role of the gas network in a net zero future is a key area for innovation.

As the nation's energy mix changes and actions to decarbonise are implemented, what does the future hold for gas, our gas network and the customers connected to it?

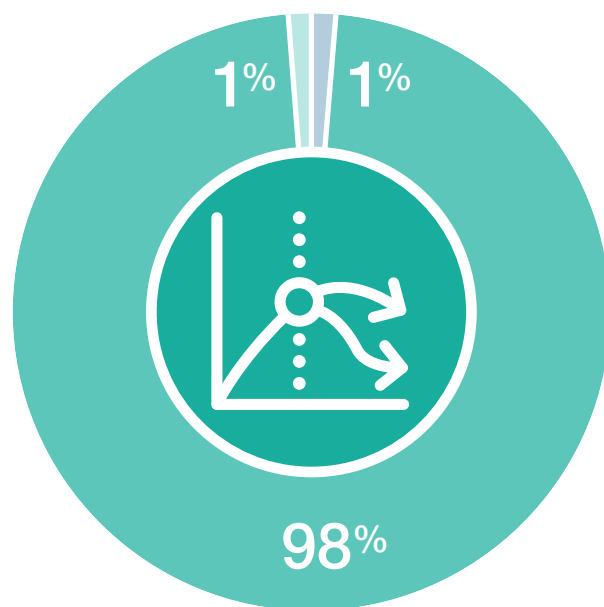
We recognise the need move away from burning unabated fossil fuels to heat our buildings and fire our industrial processes. Innovation is helping us investigate, trial and deploy low carbon, safe and cost-effective alternatives to natural gas and preparing our networks to deliver them.

We also recognise the importance of cross-vector coordination and planning to efficiently manage the interactions between electricity, gas, heat and transport in the energy transition.

Network innovation provides us with an opportunity to answer some of the key questions, tackle some of the big challenges and explore the role that gas networks can play in accelerating our transition to a net zero energy system.

# Net zero and the energy transition

## Stakeholder feedback



Is net zero and the energy system transition a key theme for network innovation?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



How important would you rate this theme out of 5?

## 5 focus areas

These are the five research areas that stakeholders have identified as the near-term priorities:

- 1 Actively develop hydrogen and green gas ready networks
- 2 Enable the transition to low carbon heating and transport
- 3 Develop market solutions to enable the energy transition
- 4 Ensure resilience and reliability through the energy transition
- 5 Develop the best network solutions for supplying a wider range of gases.

Facilitating and accelerating the UK's transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions before 2050.

## Case studies

### Gas Goes Green

National Grid Gas Transmission, Cadent, Northern Gas Networks, SGN and Wales & West Utilities

The gas networks are working collaboratively on a suite of innovation projects to deliver a vision for decarbonised gas. Including, safety testing and analysis (such as **HyNTS** and **H21**), demonstration of hydrogen blending (see **HyDeploy**), the design and demonstration of an end to end 100% hydrogen system (see **H100**) and the development of smart hybrid heating systems (see **Freedom** and **HyHy**).

### Future billing methodology

Cadent

This Project explores options for a fair and equitable billing methodology for the gas industry which will be fit-for-purpose in a lower-carbon future. It aims to integrate diverse gas sources without needing to standardise energy content and will inform the industry on billing options for a sustainable gas future.

# Optimised assets and practices



Developing and implementing industry leading techniques for optimising assets and practices for energy networks.

Optimising network assets and practices includes improving our:

- ▶ Capability
- ▶ Resilience
- ▶ Reliability
- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Security
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Environmental impact
- ▶ Digitalisation strategy.

Many of the activities in this area are considered business as usual, however innovation will accelerate improvements and enable more unconventional approaches to be tested. In the previous strategy we had separate innovation themes for Reliability, Replacement, Maintenance and Repair, Safety and Health and Security. We have now brought these areas together under this theme.

Continuous improvement is required to ensure we are delivering value for money for our customers and can proactively respond to changes in the energy system.

The diversity of the types of customers connecting to our network, evolving demand patterns and increasing volumes of green gas entering our network are just some of the changes we are seeing.

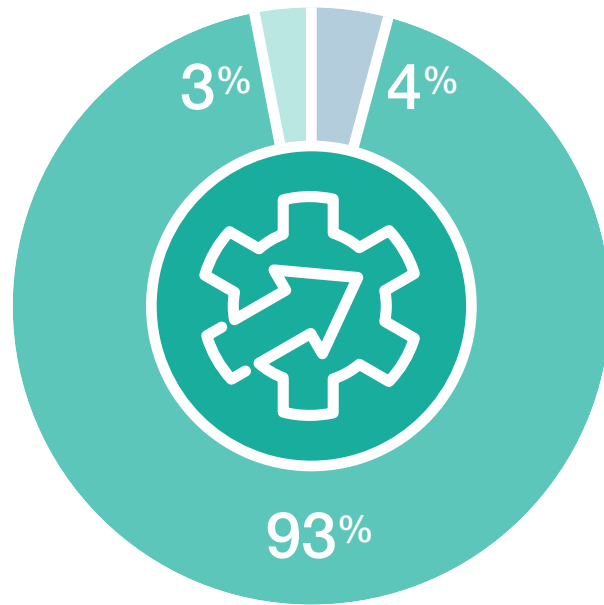
Alongside this our networks are adapting to digitalisation, a changing climate, an aging workforce and managing new security threats to the energy industry.

Investing in our infrastructure, preparing our networks for change and adapting our practices and processes to meet these changes is vital if we are to continue to deliver an effective gas network and service.

Network innovation enables us to test and improve new technologies, optimise our operational and management practices and focus on the people that keep our networks safe, secure and reliable every day.



## Stakeholder feedback



Is optimised assets and practices a key theme for network innovation?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



How important would you rate this theme out of 5?

## 5 focus areas

These are the five focus areas that stakeholders have identified as the near-term priorities:

- 1 Improve the visibility of customers and their behaviour
- 2 Enable digitalisation for network and system optimisation
- 3 Reduce and mitigate unplanned outages, supply interruptions and wider disruptions
- 4 Minimise the impact of networks on the environment
- 5 Ensure future skill requirements and workforce resilience.

...industry leading techniques for optimising assets and practices for energy networks.

## Case studies

## Robotic Roadworks and Excavation System (RRES)

SGN

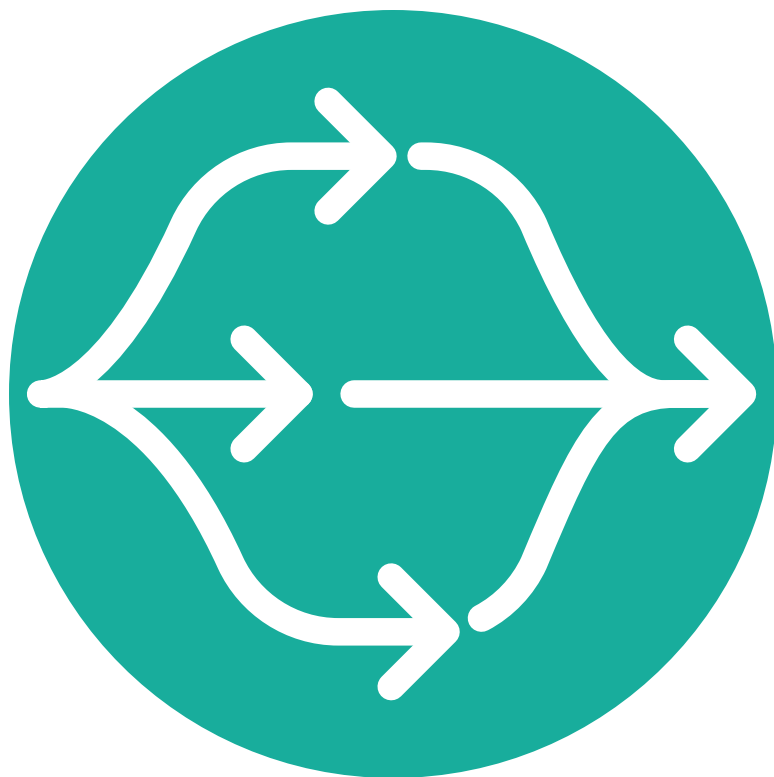
The RRES project, following on from flagship robotics projects CISBOT and CIRRIIS, is revolutionising utility excavation methods. It will fuse advanced robotic arm technology with a mobile platform and will be controlled by AI using a suite of sensors and feedback controls to enable autonomous, safe and efficient mains excavation. RRES will reduce disruption, provide safe and efficient access to the asset, reduce emissions, and enable other keyhole innovations.

## Total Stub End Abandonment

Northern Gas Networks

As part of gas pipe replacement, all small diameter gas pipes close to buildings need to be decommissioned by 2032. Previous techniques for capping off these pipes left a short 'stub' of live pipe needing to be dug up. This innovative project enabled remote abandonment of assets, removing the need for large excavations in major carriageways and significant disruption.

# Flexibility and commercial evolution



Developing and testing innovative solutions to increasing the flexibility, transparency and efficiency of the energy system, enabling information to be more open and networks to be more responsive to change.

Our energy system is evolving as we continue to decentralise our electricity generation and decarbonise the way we supply and use energy. This is driving the need for increasing levels of flexibility and adaptability in our networks to cope with peaks in demand or generation.

The gas network is seeing a significant number of smaller, decentralised gas fired power generation sites seeking to connect, to provide some of this flexibility. Adapting operational forecasting to align with an increasing number of flexible generators will be key to meeting both the peak and annual demand for gas.

Gas networks are also seeing an increasing number of green gas projects being developed, directly injecting biomethane into the gas distribution network.

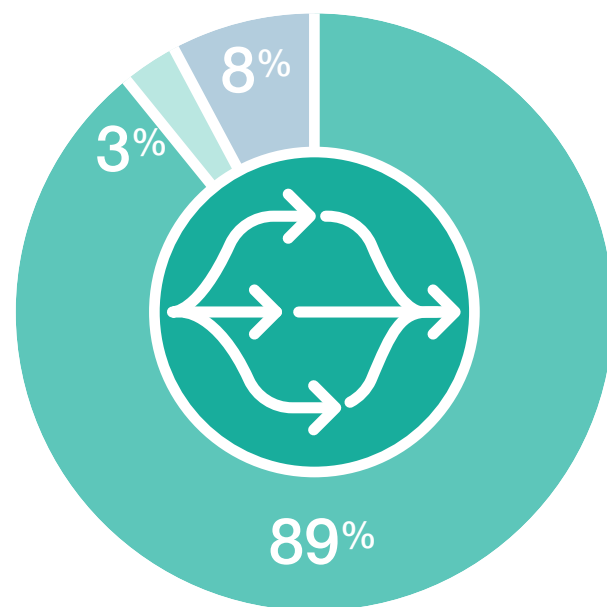
The various scenarios being explored around the production, supply and use of hydrogen, will also require networks to adapt and meet the challenges of new markets and the commercial arrangements that will sit behind them.

The way our networks physically adapt to and prepare for peaks in demand on the network is key, but the commercial arrangements, markets and incentives that drive flexibility and ensure reliable networks will be just as critical moving forward.

Network innovation can therefore enable us to improve and future-proof existing commercial arrangements, trial the impact of emerging markets and commercial products on our network and develop new marketplaces.

# Flexibility and commercial evolution

## Stakeholder feedback



Is flexibility and commercial evolution a key theme for network innovation?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



How important would you rate this theme out of 5?

## 5 focus areas

These are the five focus areas that stakeholders have identified as the near-term priorities:

- 1 Develop commercial arrangements for connecting and supplying hydrogen
- 2 Maximise the commercial opportunities for connecting green gas and carbon capture and storage (CCS)
- 3 Develop understanding of potential impacts of flexibility on gas networks
- 4 Trial and implement innovative arrangements to support network management and flexibility
- 5 Support the modernisation of gas metering and billing methodologies.

...increasing the flexibility, transparency and efficiency of the energy system.

## Case studies

### Project CLoCC

#### National Grid Gas Transmission

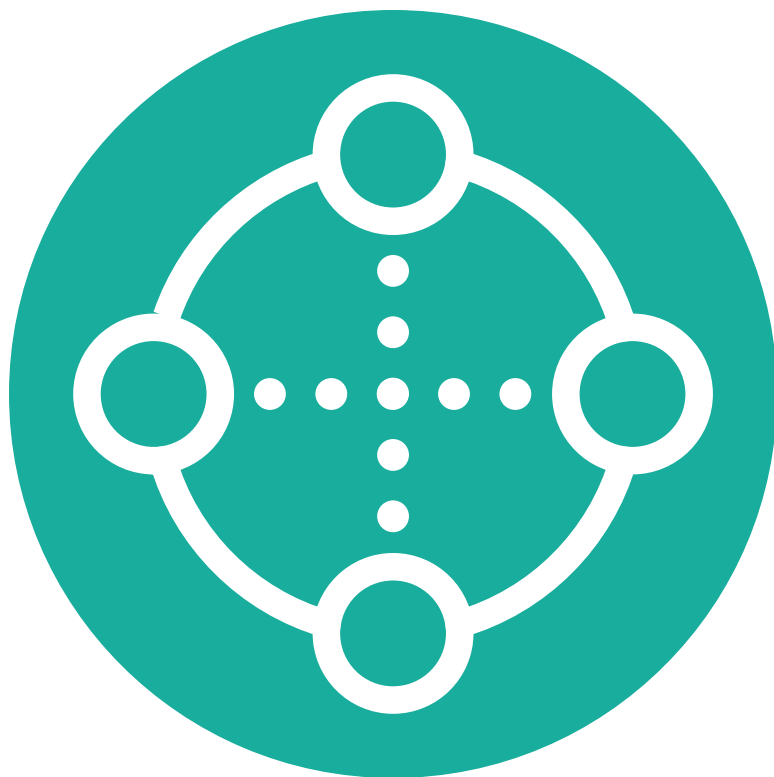
National Grid GT worked with Premtech Ltd, Murphy Land and Marine and Aqua Consultants to develop a new web-based customer connections platform which aims to improve a customer's application experience. The project also aims to produce 'off-the-shelf' standardised designs for connections that can be used regardless of the customer, size of connection, or type of gas.

### Real Time Networks

#### SGN

SGN is developing the world's first real-time gas demand network model, a critical step in the ambition to decarbonise. The aim is to demonstrate a flexible gas network that can meet current and future energy needs, for a more efficient, low carbon and affordable gas future.

# Whole energy system



Enabling joined up and efficient approaches across multiple aspects of the energy system around planning, forecasting, design, construction, operation, maintenance and data.

A whole energy system approach requires us to look beyond our own networks and develop our understanding of how we interact with and impact on the wider energy system.

There are multiple aspects to the energy system and different ways of applying whole energy system thinking. These can include thinking across:

- ▶ Electricity and gas networks
- ▶ Transmission and distribution networks
- ▶ Transport, buildings, power and industry sectors
- ▶ Water, waste and telecommunications utilities
- ▶ Networks, generators and consumers
- ▶ Local energy systems, cities and regions.

Decisions and actions taken in one part of the system increasingly have impacts for the wider system. Therefore we need to coordinate around planning, forecasting, design, construction, operation, maintenance and data to identify potential problems and the best and most cost-effective solutions.

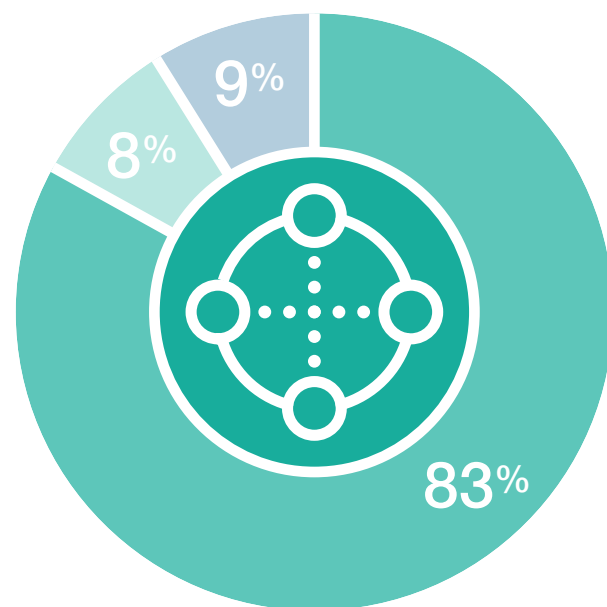
Rapid decarbonisation of our energy system will change the demand and generation patterns on both the gas and electricity networks.

We need to better understand the interaction between gas and electricity networks through joint forecasting and planning. It is also important that we work with cities and regional bodies to reflect local needs and differences in approach.

The increase in use of flexibility resources must also be optimised on a system-wide basis, which means greater coordination between distribution and transmission networks.

A big part of a whole energy system approach is transparency and openness. We understand that by sharing more operational information, data, investment plans and innovation ideas, we can enable greater coordination as well as new innovations to come forward.

## Stakeholder feedback



Is whole energy system a key theme for network innovation?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



How important would you rate this theme out of 5?

## 5 focus areas

These are the five research areas that stakeholder have identified as the near-term priorities:

- 1 Collaborate on enabling the growth and operation of emerging low carbon solutions
- 2 Develop whole system coordinated cost benefit analysis
- 3 Join up approaches to regional network planning and forecasting
- 4 Improve access to and visibility of energy network data
- 5 Coordinate the operation of a whole energy system.

...joined up and efficient approaches across multiple aspects of the energy system.

## Case studies

## Pathfinder Plus

Wales & West Utilities

Pathfinder is a unique whole energy system model that models energy flows on an hourly basis to meet heat, light, power and transport demands for a given scenario, using a mix of energy supplies specific to the scenario.

## Zero 2050 South Wales

National Grid Gas Transmission, National Grid Electricity Transmission, Wales & West Utilities and Western Power Distribution

Zero 2050 aims to develop plausible, optimised decarbonisation pathways for the whole energy system in South Wales. This collaborative project includes all representatives from electricity and gas transmission and distribution networks. The project covers bottom-up demand scenario modelling for the South Wales region using multi-vector analysis. It will develop the net-zero pathways, while considering the regional socio-economic aspects.



# Next steps

In the next two years we are committed to open up network innovation to a wider range of innovators who can bring new skills and thinking to transforming the energy system.

We asked stakeholders what we could do to engage companies and people in network innovation and received a list of ideas, including:

- ▶ Sharing information at events
- ▶ Producing a guide to network innovation
- ▶ Liaising directly with potential innovators
- ▶ Using trade associations and other umbrella organisations to share information
- ▶ Running workshops, deep dives and hackathons
- ▶ Reporting on deployment of successful ideas
- ▶ Improving consistency in application processes between network companies
- ▶ Producing webinars to share learning
- ▶ Better use of social media for latest updates.

We have taken on board the feedback and will be reviewing our engagement channels, both through ENA and within our individual companies.

## Our commitments

Between 2020 and 2022, we are committed to providing guidance and information around how to engage with network innovation, by:

- 1 Reviewing our engagement methods and channels
- 2 Hosting the annual dissemination conference
- 3 Updating the Smarter Networks Portal and the Network Innovation Collaboration Portal
- 4 Issuing a joint call for proposals for the Network Innovation Competition (NIC)
- 5 Reporting on network innovation benefits.

We will review and update this strategy again in 2022. At that stage we will check with you, our stakeholders, that the principles and innovation themes are the right ones. We will also work towards combining the gas and electricity innovation strategies to reflect a more holistic, whole energy system approach to innovation.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the innovation strategy in more detail, please get in touch:

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