

Received by email

For the attention of Ofgem:

With reference to CHAPTER: Four, Question 6: We welcome your views on the proposed level of funding for the licensees' NIA, based on the quality and content of their innovation strategies.

Innovation (p22)

2.16. NGET highlighted an improved coverage of innovation in its updated business plan and addressed a number of the areas we previously highlighted as requiring improvements. It has clearly set out the challenges that it will seek to innovate around and the processes it would use to seek to continually capture and prioritise innovation opportunities. NGET also set out how it will collaborate with third parties in developing innovations. However, there is a lack of specificity in the stakeholder engagement it has used to support the development of its innovation strategy and priorities. Also, it has not delineated between innovations that it will take forward as part of business as usual versus that which will be funded through the specific NIA.

Our response:

At the University of Exeter, we have been researching public engagement with, and acceptance of, high voltage transmission power lines under the ESRC funded 'FlexNet' research project. This project was supported by NGET, both in kind and in terms of co-financing. As part of our research activities, we investigated public preferences for alternative pylon designs. NGET collaborated with external stakeholders (RIBA and DECC) in 2011 to hold an open competition for alternative design solutions. Our research, derived from a representative sample of UK adults, has demonstrated that the pylon design selected by NGET, RIBA and DECC as part of the competition was also the most highly preferred by UK adults (the 'T' design). This study has been accepted for publication in the academic journal 'Land Use Policy'. From these observations, I would say that the design competition is a good example of how NGET has engaged with relevant external stakeholders to support the development of innovative technologies that, in this case, were clearly shown to have public support.

Citation: Devine-Wright, P. and Batel, S. (in press) Explaining public preferences for high voltage pylon designs: An empirical study of perceived fit in a rural landscape. Land Use Policy.

Yours sincerely,

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