

The Questionnaire – For customers

Hello. Thank you for taking the time to complete our questionnaire.

We hope all the questions are clear, but if you have any difficulties please email connections@ofgem.gov.uk.

Once you have completed the questionnaire please send it back to us to the email address above. You need to return the completed questionnaire to us by 31 July 2014.

After we have read your answers we might want to have a chat with you to understand a bit more. We'll try and do this in August.

Part 1 - About you

Question	Your response
What is your name?	
What is your position?	
What are your contact details?	

Part 2 - About your business

Question	Your response
What is your company's name?	Banks Group
What is the nature of your company's business?	Renewables, Property and Mining
Why do you need to make new connections to the electricity distribution network?	Mostly for the connection of onshore wind generation.

What past experience does your business have in getting new connections to the electricity distribution network?	We have constructed 5 onshore wind farms, all connected to the distribution network. We presently have a pipeline of projects in development that includes 15 further projects.
What areas of the country does your business have facilities in that have required new connections to the electricity distribution network?	To date we have connected 2 wind farms in the North West (ENW) and three in the North East and Yorkshire (Northern Powergrid). We presently have two in construction, one in the North West (ENW) and one in Yorkshire (Northern Powergrid). We are presently developing 3 distribution connected wind farm projects in Southern Scotland.
What type of connections do you make to the distribution network?	Generally EHV generation connections at 33kV

Part 3 - About how you get a new electricity connections to the local grid.

Question	Your response
Does your business manage the process of getting a connection using your own staff, or do you use a consultant to guide you through the process?	Since April this year we have recruited a specialist Grid Manager to the business. He manages the Grid Connections with support from the Technical Team and consultants.
What issues are important for you when getting a connection? Please rank in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 7 the least important.	<div>2 The cost of connection</div> <div>5 Customer service</div> <div>4 The time it takes to issue a connection quote</div>

	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	The time in which a connection can be made
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	The certainty around the cost of connection and the timetable for delivery
	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Ability to offer innovative connection solutions
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____(please specify)
<p>In the past have you had quotes for connection(s) from a range of companies, or solely from the local DNO?</p> <p>Please tick one box.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X	A range of quotes – <u>please go to part 4</u>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Just a quote from the local DNO – <u>please go to part 5</u>

Part 4 – About how you choose between a range of quotes.

Question	Your response
You've indicated that you normally receive a range of quotes for connection, both from your local DNO and other independent connection providers. When deciding which quote to accept, what factors do you consider?	We have recently started considering using ICPs to deliver the contestable works on our connections. It is early days and we have had some pricing on recent projects. We are considering the following factors; experience, capability, accreditation, company size, experience in working with the relevant DNO, timescale for delivery, expected use of subcontractors, price, acceptance of T&C's.
Please rank these factors that you described in the previous question in order of importance to you, with 1 being the most important.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. experience and capability, including experience with the relevant DNO 2. acceptance of T&C's 3. price 4. timescale for delivery

	5. company size Etc.
Please give an indication of who you have tended to award work to.	<p>Please tick one box only.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always the DNO</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mainly the DNO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> About half and half between the DNO and others</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mainly an ICP or IDNO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always an ICP or IDNO</p>
What do you think are the risks/problems with using an independent connections provider?	Possible risks with adoption of assets. Additional contractual interfaces including with the DNO ICP's are not in themselves statutory undertakers
How has your view on who to award work to changed with experience?	Too early for us.
When would you only seek a quote from the local DNO?	Presently for works including significant new overhead lines.

Part 5 – About why you chose to use the local DNO

Before engaging with this process, were you aware that you could use a company other than the local DNO to complete your connection?

☐

Yes

☐

No

What do you think are the benefits in using a company other than the local DNO to provide a connection?

What do you think are the risks/problems with using an independent connections provider?

What would need to change in order for you to use a different connections provider?

Part 6 - About how the cost of connections informs the location of new business development

How much opportunity is there for you to freely choose the location of new business developments?

There can be an initial grid assessment early on associated with wind farm locations.

How big a factor is the cost of connection in your decision on where to locate your business?

Grid connection costs are a significant factor in the viability of wind farm projects.

Part 7- Other comments

The questions we've asked are designed for you to give us important information for our review. We'd also welcome any other comments about the market for new electricity connections, or problems you've experienced.

Northern Powergrid have recently been helpful in varying a full offer to a non-contestable only offer which is appreciated. This seems to be a recent development though as they presently do not offer combined quotations.

Scottish Power Distribution's combined offers are very clear on the costs of non-contestable and contestable works.

Standard pricing from DNO's, e.g. cable costs /m which includes significant contingency or is based on worst case scenario continues to surprise and concern us. Possibly this approach is designed to encourage competition.

We have not been able to locate a document which clearly shows how the statutory undertaker status of DNOs applies to the work of ICPs in relation to work in the roads or planning permissions.