

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?	Renewanle Energy Projects Ltd
What is the nature of your company's business?	Energy Consultancy
Why do you need to make new connections to the electricity distribution network?	For PV grid connections to provide export capacity in excess of import capacity.

What past experience does your business have in getting new connections to the electricity distribution network?	We have made a large amount of new connection applications as well as having undertook numerous meeting with local DNO's.
What areas of the country does your business have facilities in that have required new connections to the electricity distribution network?	All over the UK, but initially Mid Wales & Scotland.
What type of connections do you make to the distribution network?	Small (less than 50kVA - usually connected at Low voltage); Medium (50 - 1000kVA - usually connected at High Voltage, 6.6/11kV); Large (1MVA - 50MVA - usually connected at Extra High Voltage 33/132kV).

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?	We generally manage the process in-house, but on more complicated and technical applications, we have a consultant on hand to help.
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>1 The cost of connection</div> <div>6 Customer service</div> <div>6 The time it takes to issue a connection quote</div>

	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 The time in which a connection can be made <input type="checkbox"/> 2 The certainty around the cost of connection and the timetable for delivery <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Ability to offer innovative connection solutions <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Other <u>Escalation process</u> (please specify)
In the past have you had quotes for connection(s) from a range of companies, or solely from the local DNO? Please tick one box.	<input type="checkbox"/> A range of quotes – <u>please go to part 4</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X 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?	Note: Although we initially seek a quotation from only the DNO in the first instance we subsequently investigate other service providers for the contestable works.
Please rank these factors that you described in the previous question in order of importance to you, with 1	1. 2. 3.

being the most important.	4. 5. 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 type="checkbox"/> Mainly the DNO</p> <p><input checked="" 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?	There are no particular risks/problems in using alternative providers - but it is always necessary to approach the DNO in the first instance to determine the level of non-contestable works and potential system constraints.
How has your view on who to award work to changed with experience?	No
When would you only seek a quote from the local DNO?	Invariably with Medium and Large connections where system studies and identifiable system constraints are involved it is necessary to contact the DNO to determine these and therefore the contestable and non-contestable works.

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?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What do you think are the benefits in using a company other than the local DNO to provide a connection?	Prices, service and innovation can be more competitive.
What do you think are the risks/problems with using an independent connections provider?	The DNO generally has greater access to their own networks and potential constraints on that network.
What would need to change in order for you to use a different connections provider?	<p>(i) The current demarcation between contestable and non-contestable works. There is no reason why an accredited ICP cannot undertake more of the currently defined non-contestable works including innovative design and construction. Very often the same ICP is contracted to the DNO for these works in any event and this just adds another layer of cost and bureaucracy.</p> <p>(ii) The variation between the quality of budget proposals - they range from transparent and precise to obscure and opaque. One of the reasons for requesting a budget proposal is to reduce the time and effort of both ourselves and the DNO on what may turn out to unviable (see Part 6 below)</p>

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?	At present, we feel there is large opportunity albeit, this may change in light of the recent DECC announcements.
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How big a factor is the cost of connection in your decision on where to locate your business?	Many of our projects require an early indication of the cost of connection (budget prices). Sometimes the cost of connection can be given as approaching 50% of the total project costs. Some DNOs provide a view on if the project were to be scaled back (by say 25%) with a much lower cost of connection - others do not. Very few DNOs offer anything approaching a 'smart grid' solution.
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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.

We feel that all DNO's should be complying and adhering to the same process. Some offer a lot more details and are much more helpful than others i.e. WPD and ENWL, which then leads to bad feeling when we look at and use DNO's in other areas, mainly SSE and on the odd occasion UKPN, who do not adhere to the same standard.