NETWORKS

Ruleset for Enduring Connection Policy Stage 2 (ECP-2)

21st August 2020

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Glossary of terms and abbreviations

Abbreviation or Term	Definition or Meaning
Autoproducer	As defined in CER/03/237, a person who has entered into a connection agreement with the TSO or DSO and generates and consumes electricity in a single premises, or on whose behalf another person generates electricity in the single premises, essentially for the first person's own consumption in that single premises.
Batch Qualified	Applicants for the batch that provide the required fees and information by the required deadline ("**Fees and Clarifications Received Deadline")** and are within the total thresholds.
Closing Date	The last day to apply for each ECP-2 batch. The Closing Date has been set at 5pm on Wednesday 30th September 2020 for ECP-2.1.
Community-led Energy Project	Projects with MEC greater than or equal to 0.5 MW and less than or equal to 5 MW utilising one or more of the following renewable energy generation technologies (and not in combination with non-renewable generation technologies); • wind turbines (wind), • solar photovoltaic panels (solar), • hydraulic turbines (hydro) excluding pumped storage, • waste to energy projects, • biomass projects and biogas projects[1], and who meet the following requirements: (a) at all relevant times, be at least 51% owned by a Renewable Energy Community[2] (the "Relevant REC") either by way of (i) a direct ownership of the ECP project's assets, or (ii) a direct ownership of the shares in the generator; and (b) at all relevant times, at least 51% of all expected profits, dividends and surpluses derived from project are returned to the Relevant REC.
COPP	Connection Offer Policy and Process Paper
CRU	Commission for Regulation of Utilities (formerly, Commission for Energy Regulation)
DSO	Distribution System Operator (ESB Networks DAC)
DS3	Delivering a Secure, Sustainable (electricity) System The DS3 programme aims to ensure the secure and safe operation of the electricity system with increasing amounts of variable non-synchronous generation, such as wind and solar.

[1] Annex 1 gives the technical criteria for Waste to Energy, Biomass and Biogas projects.

[2] Annex 2 gives the definition of a Renewable Energy Community.

	To achieve this aim, the TSO needs to obtain specific DS3 system services from generators and market participants.
ECP	Enduring connection policy
ECP-1	First stage of the enduring connection policy; includes the batch and the non-batch process.
ECP-2	Second stage of the enduring connection policy; includes the batch and the non-batch process.
ECP-2.1	The first batch under the ECP-2 batch process.
ECP-2 Category A	Generation, storage and other system services technology projects (MEC>500 kW).
ECP-2 Category B	Non-batch projects not processed in the preceding batch period includes 11kW<MEC ≤500 kW, Autoproducers, DS3 system services trials (up to 500 kW).
ECP-2 Category C	Community-led Energy Projects not processed in the preceding batch period
Existing Applicants	Applicants who have an existing grid application as of the date of ECP-2 decision.
Existing Contracted Projects	Projects for which a connection agreement has been signed by the connecting party and executed by the relevant SO as of the date of the ECP-2 decision.
Fees and Clarifications Received Deadline	see “Batch Qualified”
kW	kilowatt
MEC	maximum export capacity
MIC	maximum import capacity
MW	megawatt
New Applicants	Applicants who have no existing grid connection application as of the date of ECP-2 decision.
Received Complete Date	The SOs assign a “Received Complete Date” to projects which submit application forms with a certain minimum amount of information contained therein. See SOs’ *Received Complete Date for Generators* ruleset, June 2012.
TSO	Transmission System Operator (EirGrid)

1 Applicability and exceptions

The ruleset set out in this document (this ruleset) is annexed to the CRU's decision on the Enduring Connection Policy – Stage 2 (ECP-2 decision) and should be read in conjunction with this decision.

This ruleset applies to existing and New Applicants for connection to either the transmission or distribution systems, with the exceptions listed below:

This ruleset does not apply to:

- Demand connections
- Micro-generation[3]
- New interconnector connections
- Offshore connections

This ruleset applies to Existing Applicants to the extent set out in Section 2.1.

[3] Projects less than or equal to 11kW. Microgen Applicable policy: CER/09/033

2 Treatment of Existing and New Applicants under ECP-2

2.1 Existing Applicants

"Existing Applicants" are applicants who have an existing grid application with either SO as of the date of the opening of the application window (1st Sept 2020 for ECP-2.1). Note previous application fee deposits carry forward for Existing Applicants who reapply under ECP-2.1.

2.1.1 Existing Category A applicants

Category A consists of applicants with an MEC greater than 500 kW, or the ability to generate or absorb more than 500 kVA for non-MW generating system service providers such as synchronous condensers. Applicants who have an existing application which has been received complete with the SOs and who paid an application fee deposit previously and applications which were kept on file may apply for the first round of ECP-2 i.e. ECP-2.1. The ECP-2 Decision and rules take priority over previous grid applications processes.

Where any relevant details pertaining to their project have changed, the Existing Applicants must submit a new application form under ECP-2 for the same site location (grid coordinates) and technology type. The applicants may apply to reduce the MEC on the new application. Please see Section 3.1.1 for further information on what details can be changed in the ECP-2 application of an existing applicant.

2.1.2 Existing Category B applicants

Category B consists of Autoproducers, applicants with an MEC greater than 11 kW and less than or equal to 500 kW, and DS3 system services trial projects (up to 500 kW). Such applicants who have an existing application which has been received complete with the SOs and who paid an application fee will be processed under ECP-2.1 non-batch category B, unless they are currently being processed. These applicants will be prioritised by when the existing application was received complete. Where any relevant details pertaining to their project have changed, the Existing Applicants must submit a new application form under ECP-2.1 for the same site location (grid coordinates) and technology type. The applicants may apply to reduce their MEC.

2.1.3 Existing Category C applicants

Category C consists of Community-led Energy Project Process with MEC >=500 kW and <= 5 MW. Such applicants who have an existing application which has been received complete with the SOs and who paid an application fee will be processed under ECP-2.1 non-batch category C. Existing Applicants will be prioritised by planning permission grant date and then by when the application was received complete. Where any relevant details pertaining to their project have changed, the Existing Applicants must submit a new application form under ECP-2.1 for the same site location (grid coordinates) and technology type. The applicants may apply to reduce their MEC. Existing Applicants must declare that they meet the definition of a Community-led Energy Project (see Section 3.4).

2.2 New Applicants

New Applicants are applicants who have no existing grid connection application as of the date of the opening of the application window (1st Sept 2020 for ECP-2.1). New Applicants are subject to the entire ruleset set out in this document.

2.2.1 New Category A applicants

Category A includes applicants with an MEC greater than 500 kW, or the ability to generate or absorb more than 500 kVA for non-MW generating system service providers such as synchronous condensers. New Applicants in Category A will be processed under ECP-2 according to the ECP-2 decision published on 10th June 2020. New Applicants must complete a new application form, they are required to have planning permission as outlined in Section 3.2 and will be prioritized for acceptance into the batch as outlined in Section 4.4.

2.2.2 New Category B applicants

Category B consists of Autoproducers, applicants with an MEC greater than 11 kW and less than or equal to 500 kW, and DS3 system services trial projects (up to 500 kW).

2.2.2.1 New Applicants with MEC > 11 kW and <= 500 kW

New Applicants with MEC > 11 kW and <= 500 kW will be processed under ECP-2 according to the ECP-2 decision published on 10th June 2020. New Applicants must complete a new application form, they are required to have planning permission and will be prioritized by application form Received Complete Date.

2.2.2.2 DS3 system services trial projects (<= 500 kW)

New Applicants deemed as DS3 system services trial projects will be processed under ECP-2 according to the ECP-2 decision published on 10th June 2020. New Applicants must complete a new application form, they are required to have planning permission and will be prioritized by application form Received Complete Date.

2.2.2.3 Autoproducers

New Applicants deemed as Autoproducers will be processed under ECP-2 according to the ECP-2 decision published on 10th June 2020. New Applicants must complete a new application form, they are required to have planning permission and will be prioritized by application form Received Complete Date.

2.2.3 New Category C Applicants

Category C consists of Community-led Energy Projects. New Applicants must complete an application form. Applicants are not required to have planning permission but will be prioritised by planning permission grant date and then by application form Received Complete Date. Applicants must declare that they meet the definition of a Community-led Energy Project. See ESBN website for declaration form.

3 Eligibility criteria for all new applications under ECP-2

The following, as applicable, must be submitted to the relevant SO by the Closing Date for applications for each ECP batch (the "Closing Date")[4]:

- Application form (NC5 for DSO applicants)
- Eligibility Declaration (Planning Permission)
- Application fee deposit (if applicable)
- Declaration of Community Energy Project (DSO applicants where applicable)

3.1 Application form

A fully completed full or reduced criteria application form[5] must be submitted to the relevant SO by the Closing Date. New Applicants are required to include information as to whether they apply as a Community-led Energy Project, Primarily Storage project or other system service technology projects as per the ECP-2 Decision.

Applications for MEC less than 40 MW should be submitted to the DSO. Applications greater than or equal to 40 MW should be submitted to the TSO, however final decision as to which SO will provide the connection will be determined via the Nodal Assignment process – see Section 5.2. The system operators will check and confirm if complete or otherwise.

An application form for reduced criteria will include a requirement to specify generator MW size(s) and the number of individual generators that are being connected and whether the project is applying under the category of DS3 provider. Applicants may request a preferred connection method. However, it will be subject to review by the system operators in accordance with chapter 18 of the COPP paper.

Please note that application forms must be emailed to the relevant SO.

3.1.1 Altering existing applications

Where an applicant exists on file, the following details can be changed:

- Applicant name;
- Applicant address/registered address, Company Registration Number;
- Point of contact, contact email/phone/address;
- Facility name;
- Preferred connection date;
- Reduction in MEC;
- MIC;
- Hybrid sites proportions;

[4] See Glossary of Terms. The Closing Date for applications has been set at the end of September for each batch.

[5] Information can be found on EirGrid's website under Generator Connections and on ESB Networks' website under Generator Connections.

- Numbers of circuits (applies to transmission applications only).

3.2 Eligibility Declaration (Planning Permission)

All applicants are required to declare that as of the date of their application submission (or in advance of offer issuance for Community-led Projects), they meet the following requirement and this declaration is witnessed by a solicitor or an accredited planning consultant.

- A valid planning permission, i.e. **final grant** of planning permission issued to the applicant by the relevant planning authority. For the avoidance of doubt, where there is a 'change of use' of a building/site, or a change in the technology type of the application, this will be considered to require planning permission and a grant is necessary from the appropriate authority.
- That no planning permission is required and the reason why.

Where there is planning permission in place, the declaration must confirm that all aspects of the project including the size, technology, orientation, number and output of the generation units[6] in the application form is consistent with the planning permission issued to the applicant.

The application form will make it clear that if an applicant makes a false, misleading or inaccurate declaration in respect of the above requirements, that this will be deemed to be an "event of default" under the applicable connection agreement, giving rise to a right of termination for the relevant system operator. If it is discovered before a contract is in place that an applicant has made a false, misleading or inaccurate declaration, then the application can be removed from processing by the relevant system operator, and any live offer rescinded. In the event that planning permission expires or is rendered invalid before a project has been constructed, then the application, live offer or contract may correspondingly be removed, withdrawn or terminated by the relevant SO.

Please note that planning permission is not a requirement for Community-led Energy Projects applying to ECP-2. It should be noted that, as with all projects, Community-led Energy Projects will have to submit a specific site location (with associated landowner consents) in their application.

Community-led Energy Projects will, however, need planning permission to receive a connection offer and planning permission for such projects will be subject to rules in this and the following Section. Once planning permission is gained, Community-led Energy Projects applicants must complete Section 22 of the NC5 declaring the project has planning permission and is witnessed by a solicitor or an accredited planning consultant, and that all the necessary checks have been carried out to ensure the planning permission is in place before they will receive a connection offer.

3.3 Application fee deposit

The initial application fee deposit of €2,000 (including VAT) is required from New Applicants greater than 500 kW. The full application fee (including VAT) is required from New Applicants less than or

[6] For instance, turbines or equivalent generation equipment.

equal to 500 kW[7]. No new initial application fee deposit is required from Existing Applicants should they decide to apply under ECP-2. Similarly, applicants to ECP-1 who were not successful are not required to provide an initial application fee deposit for ECP-2. There is no rollover of the €2,000 application fee deposit from ECP 2.1 unsuccessful category A applicants to ECP2.2.

New Applicants and Existing Applicants who decide to apply under ECP-2 and are successful will be required to pay the balance of the application fee appropriate at the time (see Section 5.1). The balance of the application fee must be paid as per the terms of the invoice. The initial application fee deposit and the balance of application fee (should the project be successful) should be paid by electronic fund transfer (cheque will be accepted) to the SO to which the application is being made.

3.4 Declaration of Community-led Energy Project

Applicants under the Community-led Energy Projects category must complete a director's declaration form ("Declaration of Community-led Energy Project") confirming that it meets the community-led renewable energy project definition requirements set out below:

- At all relevant times, the project must be at least 51% owned by a Renewable Energy Community (the "Relevant REC") either by way of (i) a direct ownership of the ECP project's assets, or (ii) a direct ownership of the shares in the generator; and
- At all relevant times, at least 51% of all expected profits, dividends and surpluses derived from project are returned to the Relevant REC.

As per CRU's ECP-2 Decision, Community-led Energy Projects will require planning permission before a connection offer is issued and will be subject to the rules in 3.2 and 3.3 when planning permission is gained.

3.5 Expiry date of planning permission

The planning permission expiry date is necessary to assess whether a project will still have planning permission in place once it receives a connection offer under ECP-2 and for a reasonable period thereafter to construct the project.

Therefore, applicants will have to declare whether an extension to planning permission has been sought; and if an extension was sought whether it was:

- granted;
- refused;
- still pending the planning authority's decision.

Furthermore, in relation to extensions, a project must meet the following requirements:

- Where a project still has the option of requesting an extension of planning permission, then it must have at least **one year** remaining until the expiry of planning permission from the Closing Date for applications for the relevant ECP-2 batch (see Section 0);

[7] This excludes non-MW generating system service providers such as synchronous condensers with the ability to generate or absorb more than 500 kVA

- Where a project has already been granted or refused an extension of planning permission, a project must have at least **two years** remaining until the expiry of planning permission from the Closing Date for applications for the relevant ECP-2 batch (see Section 7;
- If, on the Closing Date for applications for the relevant ECP-2 batch (see Section 7), a project is awaiting a decision on extending a project's planning permission, there is no minimum planning expiration requirement. However, in this case, the applicant must advise the relevant SO as soon as the decision on extension is made by the relevant planning authority, or within two months of the Closing Date. If no extension is granted and there is less than **two years** remaining on the validity of the current planning permission (counting from the Closing Date), then the application will be deemed invalid, and will not be processed further. Similarly, if no confirmation is provided by the applicant within the two month period, the application will be deemed invalid, and will not be processed further. If applicable, the remaining applicants in process at the same node will continue to be processed without the applicant who dropped out, and their per MW share of costs will increase accordingly.

For the avoidance of doubt, the timeframes above give no indication as to the actual time it will take to connect an individual project. Rather, they are used as a reasonable approximation of the earliest possible timeframe for connection of the simplest connection method.

4 Batch Formation & Project Prioritisation

4.1 Batch Target

The SOs will target the issuance of 115 offers for each ECP-2 batch. The breakdown of these is as per Table 1 below.

Table 1: Volume of offers targeted for each category

Category	Definition	Offer target	Prioritisation if category oversubscribed
A	Generation, storage and other system services technology projects (MEC>500 kW)	85	First 25 on largest renewable energy generators; remainder on earliest planning permission grant date; no more than 10 primarily storage and other system service technology projects
B	Non-batch projects[8] not processed in the preceding batch period	15	Earliest application Received Complete Date
C	Community-led Energy Projects not processed in the preceding batch period	15	Earliest application Received Complete Date

4.2 Storage and System Service Providers

Under Category A, no more than 10 primarily storage and other system service technology projects will be included. For the purposes of this Ruleset, these are defined as follows:

- Primarily in this instance means that >50% of the MEC is storage or another system service provider[9], as per the relevant CRU decision paper CRU/20/60;
- System service technology projects mean technologies whose primary purpose is to provide DS3 System Services as opposed to generation, and who are on the Proven Technologies List for DS3[10]. At present this consists of synchronous condensers[11].

4.3 Renewable Generation

The first 25 offers in category A will be prioritised for renewable energy generation projects on the basis of project size, with the largest number of GWhrs/yr generated by a project being granted the highest priority. Eligible renewable energy generation projects for prioritisation are projects utilising one or more of the following renewable energy generation technologies[12]: wind turbines (Onshore

[8] 11 kW<MEC ≤500 kW, Autoproducers, DS3 system services trials (up to 500 kW).

[9] For assessing non-MW generating system service providers such as synchronous condensers, their MVA capacity will be treated as equivalent to MW.

[10] Latest version http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/DS3-System-Services-Proven-Technology-Types.pdf

[11] Flywheels are listed here in the ECP-2 decision paper but are already covered under the storage category

[12] Only the GWhrs/yr generated from the renewable energy generation technology counts in any form of hybrid technology project

Wind), solar photovoltaic panels (Solar), hydraulic turbines (Hydro) excluding pumped storage, waste to energy projects, biomass projects and biogas projects[13].

The TSO will calculate the GWhrs/yr for each project based on the MEC applied for and a national standard capacity factor for each technology. Curtailment and constraint are not included as part of this calculation.

The Capacity Factor assumed for each technology type is as follows:

Technology	Capacity Factor
Onshore Wind	35%
Solar	11%
Hydro	site dependant[14]
Biomass/Biogas	85%
Waste-to-Energy	43%

Please note that these conversion factors may be subject to review between batches of ECP-2.

4.4 Category A

Category A allows for the issuance of Connection Offers to generators and storage units with an MEC greater than 500 kW, or non-MW generating system service providers with the ability to generate or absorb more than 500 kVA. Where more than 85 eligible applicants wish to enter this category, they will be selected as per the following rules:

- **25 highest RES-E projects**: The 25 projects with the largest volume of renewable GWhrs/yr are selected (see Section 4.3). Should a tiebreak occur, the tiebreaking project with the earliest planning permission grant date will be selected.
- **Sort by Planning Permission**: The remaining projects are then listed in order of planning permission grant date, and the first 60 of these are identified.
- **≤ 10 Primarily storage and other system service projects**: The number of primarily storage and other system service technology projects are identified from within this list of 60. If there are more than 10 of these, those with the latest planning permission grant date are removed from the list. These are replaced by the next projects in order of planning permission grant date (excluding primarily storage and other system service technology projects)
- **Tiebreak**: Should a tiebreak occur when selecting based on planning permission grant date, the tiebreaking project with the larger volume of renewable GWhrs/yr will be selected. Should the tiebreak still be unresolved, the project with the earlier Received Complete Date will be selected.

[13] Annex 1 gives the technical criteria for Waste to Energy, Biomass and Biogas projects

[14] We will request information from the project developer to assist us in assessing the RES from each hydro site

Applicants that are not selected following the above prioritisation will not be processed any further and their application will not be kept on file. Those applicants will have an opportunity to apply for a connection offer in the next batch (ECP-2.2 opening in September 2021) and will have to submit a new application form including an application fee deposit.

4.5 Category B (non-batch)

Category B consists of non-batch projects who will be processed as part of ECP-2 (folded into the batch see below) or processed independently if their application Received Complete Date is after the batch processing has commenced. Non-batch projects consist of small-scale generation (11 kW<MEC ≤500 kW), Autoproducers, and DS3 system services trials (up to 500 kW).

Up to 15 non-batch projects will be processed during each batch period. These will be ordered by Received Complete Date[15] of the project application by the relevant SO. The decision as to whether a project can be processed on a non-batch basis will be made by the SOs when assessing the application. Any excess applications will be folded into the next batch of ECP-2 as a non-batch application.

The following will be used to determine whether the non-batch application will be folded in to the relevant ECP-2 batch or processed in parallel:

- Where a non-batch applicant is **not interacting with an existing batch project being processed under ECP-2 at the same node,** its non-batch connection offer will be studied and issued in parallel to the batch offers under ECP-2 and the non batch capacity will be taken into account when carrying out the batch studies.

- Where a non-batch applicant **is interacting with an existing batch project being processed under ECP-2 at the same node**, this applicant will be folded into the existing batch if deemed appropriate by the relevant SO, for example, if the timing for studying the non-batch application coincides with the studying of the batch applications. It should be noted that this applicant is deemed interacting if either the non-batch applicant or the batch requires any capacity-based uprate works at that node. In a case where the processing or study phase of the batch has already commenced, or offers are live and it is not possible to fold the non-batch applicant into the batch, the processing of such an interacting non-batch applicant will have to wait until the batch offers have accepted, rejected or lapsed before the non-batch study can commence. If category B is undersubscribed its unused allocation will be reallocated for use by additional projects from category C.

4.6 Category C

Category C consists of Community-led Energy Projects not processed in the preceding batch period. Up to 15 connection assessments for Community-led Energy Projects with an MEC >=500 kW and <=5 MW will be processed per batch. These will be prioritised as follows:

[15] http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Received-Complete-Date-Ruleset.pdf

- Planning Permission is not a requirement to apply for ECP-2.1 for Community-led Energy Projects but where a project has secured planning permission, these projects will be prioritized to get a connection assessment by planning permission grant date
- Otherwise projects will be prioritized by application Received Complete Date.

If category C is undersubscribed its unused allocation will be reallocated for use by additional projects from category B.

5 Offer Process

5.1 Processing steps

Step 1: Window for applications

The window for applications for ECP-2 has been set as the calendar month of September for each batch (September 2020 for ECP-2.1). The SOs will assess whether applications received by the Closing Date have met the eligibility criteria listed in Section 3. All the remaining eligibility criteria must be met by the Closing Date,[16] and failure to do so will result in rejection of the application, i.e. the application will not be processed any further.

Step 2: Applications check completed

The application form will be assessed against the criteria set out in SO's Received Complete Date for Generators ruleset[15]. It is anticipated that the applications check step will be completed within approximately 6 weeks – however as this is a relatively short period given the volume of applications expected, we may request additional information to complete application checks after this date should circumstances require. An eligibility declaration for planning permission (see Section 3.2) needs to be provided with the application. Planning permission, where it is required, must be in place as of the date of application submission.

Step 3: Fees and Clarifications Received Deadline

Where there are minor clarifications required on the applications, the SOs will write to applicants to request them along with the balance of the application fee. The applicants will have one month to provide the requested fees and clarifications (Fees and Clarifications Received Deadline). All applicants that provide the required fees and information and are within the total thresholds will be deemed to be 'Batch Qualified'. Applicants who fail to provide what is required by the deadline will not be processed any further. Please note that as per the ECP-2 decision there will be no backfilling i.e. should projects drop out at this stage they will not be replaced.

Application fees for connection to both the transmission and distribution system under ECP-2 are set out in

[16] Note, however, that projects in process of extending the validity period of their planning permission have two months post closing date to notify the System Operator in that matter. See Section 3.5.

Table **2** below. This table will be updated annually for inflation only unless otherwise approved by the CRU, and will be applicable to all ECP-1 applicants.

Table 2 ECP-2 connection application fees (excluding VAT)

MIC & MEC Capacity Ranges	**A** Demand Capacity (MIC)	**B** Generation Capacity (MEC)	**C** Shallow Works
0 ≤ 11kW	€0	€0	€0
> 11kW ≤ 50kW	€0	€780	€0
>50kW ≤ 500kW	€0	€1,591	€0
>500 KW ≤ 1 MW	€0	€9,037	€0
>1 MW ≤ 4 MW	€12,744	€18,512	€0
>4 MW ≤ 10 MW	€22,035	€18,732	€18,732
>10 MW ≤ 20 MW	€22,035	€33,791	€35,260
> 20 MW ≤ 100MW	€36,222	€48,535	€40,402
> 100MW	€49,600	€51,983	€45,966
Demand only: Fee = $A_{MIC} + C_{MIC} – D$			
Generation only: Fee = $B_{MEC} + C_{MEC} – D$			
Demand & Generation: Fee = $A_{MIC} + B_{MEC} + MAX [C_{MEC} , C_{MIC}] – D$			
Where D is the sum of the credits for pre-feasibility and advanced works studies still relevant. Determination of D will be calculated by the relevant SO.			

Step 4: Batch Formation

The SOs will determine the nodes and subgroups (if any) that the Batch Qualified applications will connect into as per Section 5.2 below. Connection offers will then be scheduled for issuance . This process will be completed by the end of the calendar year. The SOs will aim to publish the complete offer list and schedule of offers as soon as possible after completion of the batch formation process.

Step 5: Offer Issuance

The SOs expect to issue first connection offers under ECP-2 at the end of quarter 1 following Batch Formation (i.e. March 2021 for ECP 2.1). This is indicative and will depend on the number, type and scale of the Batch Qualified applications. Connection offers will roll out as per schedule of offer issuance thereafter.

The CRU decision paper has set the end of the year as the deadline for offer issuance for each batch of ECP-2. The SOs will work to manage the overlap of batches as efficiently as possible.

Category C (Community-led Energy) projects who do not have planning permission will receive a connection assessment as opposed to a connection offer. This connection assessment will remain

valid for up to 2 years at which point if the project has not gained planning permission and correctly completed Section 22 of the NC5 application form, the connection assessment will be deemed lapsed, but the application will remain open for processing subject to planning permission grant. Once the Community-led Energy Project receives planning permission and the DSO receives the correctly completes Section 22 of the NC5 application form on planning permission and the balance of the application fee has been paid, the DSO will issue the connection offer (following a re-study if necessary) and the project will have 3 months to accept. Note the DSO must receive the correctly completed Section 22 of the NC5 application form within 2 years of issuing the connection assessment to the applicant.

Step 6: Last offers accepted / lapsed

Each applicant will have to accept their connection offer within their validity period or let it lapse – see Section 10.3 for more details.

5.2 Nodal Assignment Rules

The decision on which node each application will connect to will be based on current policy. The latest version of this policy will be published on both SOs websites before closure of the application window.

6 Stakeholder Engagement

6.1 Phase 1

For DSO Applicants - following the initial prioritization of projects and nodal assignment, the DSO will review the customer connection method along with other applicants at the node. Where customers are assigned complex nodes driving significant uprate works, the DSO will engage with those customers to determine if they would like to proceed with the ECP-2.1 process. It is important to note that this will not be an opportunity for projects to reduce their MEC.

The early engagement between the TSO and developers in the pre-application and application confirmation stages will be the same as currently provided.

6.2 Phase 2

Phase 2 Stakeholder engagement will take place after the ECP-2.1 batch is finalised and prior to the detailed study commencement. This engagement will take the form of an indicative connection meeting between the relevant SO and the applicant or subgroup applicants. The applicant's connection method will be discussed, however due to the preliminary nature of the information available at this stage, any details would be provided to the developer in an approximate and non-binding manner.

The developer would then be given a single opportunity to either continue with their application as submitted, to reduce their MEC to such a level as to potentially reduce the need for the significant works, or to withdraw from the process in return for a 75% refund of their full application fee. The applicant (s) will have 10 business days to confirm any withdrawal or reduction in MEC to the SO.

If customers withdraw their offer within the early engagement process, they will not be replaced by other projects that applied for the batch. The SOs will consider at the time whether it is feasible to replace the exiting application(s) with non-batch applications without negatively impacting the delivery schedule for the ECP-2.1 offers. At this stage, DSO applicants must confirm if they are electing for a contestable offer and/or underground cable build otherwise the connection offer will issue on a non-contestable and overhead lines basis.

6.3 Non-Batch

For Non-Batch project applicants, there will be an opportunity for the applicant to engage with the relevant SO on their proposed connection method and prior to detailed study commencing, given the opportunity to reduce MEC to avoid any potential uprate works. The applicant can also withdraw from the process in return for a 75% refund of their application fee. The applicant will have 10 business days to confirm to the SO any reduction in MEC or if withdrawing from the ECP-2 process. Non-batch projects will be queued by their application form Received Complete Date.

For Community-led Energy Project applicants, there will be an opportunity for the applicant to engage with the DSO on the proposed connection method. The applicant will be given an

opportunity to reduce their MEC to avoid possible uprate works prior to the detailed study commencing.

7 Timelines

A summary of the assumed timelines associated with the steps listed in the previous Section is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 *Assumed processing timelines for ECP-2.1. The timelines for ECP-2.2 and 2.3 will be similar apart from the year increasing for each subsequent batch (i.e. application window for ECP 2.2 opens September 2021, and for ECP-2.3 opens September 2022).*

Step	Timing
Window for applications	1st September 2020 to 30th September 2020
Applications check completed	30th October 2020
Fees and Clarifications Received Deadline	30th November 2020
Batch Formation	23rd December 2020
Offer Issuance	March-December 2021
Last offer accepted / lapsed	March 2022

8 Charging policy

The charging policy for connections under ECP-2 is governed in general by existing regulated policy under 2010 GPA principles[17], with additions as set out in this section.

8.1 Offer dependency

Connection offers for projects sharing connection works will not be executed by the SOs until all projects sharing the works have accepted their contracts and met the relevant conditions precedent in those contracts. In the event that one or more projects do not accept their offers then the offers for the other projects may be withdrawn and reissued to confirm the revised charges. The SOs may seek to re-optimise the connection method to reduce the costs to the remaining projects where possible. However please note that in some cases the connection costs may increase due to the MW share increasing.

When the relevant SO and any one project sharing the assets is ready to progress to the next stage payment, then the SO can invoice all subgroup members with shared assets costs. If any subgroup member does not pay the invoice in line with the normal invoice period (30 business days), then the SO is entitled to terminate the connection agreement with the project that has not paid its share of the stage payment invoice in line with the connection agreement. The SO can then progress with the associated works or seek to re-optimise the works as appropriate. See CRU decision (CER/15/098A) entitled "Implementation of Group Processing – Move to Construction Phase".

Should all projects with shared works not pay their invoice or should all projects with shared works advise that they do not wish to be invoiced when the SO is ready to progress, then those projects automatically go "on hold" and Section 8.2 applies noting that long stop dates in a connection agreement do not change when a project goes "on hold".

8.2 Contracted projects coming off hold status

From time to time, projects request the SO to put them "on hold" or are put "on hold" when they fail to make the necessary stage payment. This has the effect of suspending any progress on the connection unless and until the project notifies the relevant SO that it is ready to come off hold and/or (where applicable) the relevant stage payment is made.

Where a project goes on hold due to circumstances which are outside of the control of the SO, the project will be subject to the connection charges which are applicable at the time when the project comes "off hold" (and not those specified in the relevant quotation letter issued by the SO at the date of the connection agreement).

Consequently, where a project goes "on hold" either

(1) following projects' request to the relevant SO; or
(2) due to failure to make a stage payment (or share of stage payment if applicable) by the relevant due date,

[17] https://www.esbnetworks.ie/docs/default-source/publications/joint-tso_dso-group-processing-approach-charging-and-rebating-principles.pdf

then any remaining capital contribution stage payments due after the project comes off-hold will be calculated on the basis of the relevant SO's Standard Prices for Generator Connections[18] applicable as of the date of the invoice for the next applicable stage payment. In the case of (2) above, the SO will issue a revised invoice for the overdue stage payment, reflecting any revised charges, once the project indicates in writing that it is ready to come off hold.

8.3 Charging policy for storage and other system service providers

Applications to connect storage technology will be charged an application fee based on separate MEC and MIC components as laid out in Section 5.1,

[18] Available on the relevant SO's website.

Table **2**. The charging policy appropriate to storage technology will be the SO's Standard Prices for Generator Connections.

Synchronous condensers are currently charged in the same manner as demand customers from a charging policy perspective. However their main output is reactive power rather than MW, and their (typically small) MIC may not be reflective of their impact on the system and the work required by the SOs to assess this. As such the application fee for synchronous condensers will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

9 Longstop dates

Contractual longstop dates for consents and operation for applicants processed under ECP-2 are two years after the scheduled dates as will be outlined in the relevant Connection Agreement.

For transmission-connected projects the longstop dates:

- **“Consents Issue Date Longstop Date”** or **“CID Longstop Date”** means the date falling twenty four (24) calendar months after the Scheduled Consents Issue Date.
- **“Scheduled Operational Date Longstop Date”** means the date falling twenty four (24) calendar months after the date of the Scheduled Operational Date.

For distribution-connected projects the current wording states:

- “**Planning Permission Longstop Date**” means twenty four (24) calendar months after the Scheduled Planning Permission Date.
- **“Connection Agreement Effective Longstop Date”** means twenty four (24) calendar months after the Connection Agreement Effective Date.

10 Non-firm access

10.1 Transmission Firm Access

The TSO will design and develop a new methodology to schedule the Firm Access Quantities (FAQs) possible for contracted projects (both TSO and DSO) based on the Transmission network development plans. This methodology will incorporate transmission capacity assumptions based on the high-level principles of ensuring network safety, security of supply and economic transmission development, whilst delivering the Government's 70% renewable target in the forthcoming years.

This methodology will take some time to be develop. Therefore offers under ECP-2.1 will continue to be issued on a non-firm basis for connection to the transmission system.

10.2 Distribution Firm Access

Applicants to the DSO can elect for firm access or non-firm access to the distribution system and the approved Distribution System Security and Planning Standards in place at time of the ECP2.1 batch study commencement will apply. For the avoidance of doubt, a distribution applicant must have all distribution works completed prior to connection but their offer will be on a transmission non-firm basis as per Section 10.1.

10.3 Constraint Reports

Regional constraints reports based on the ECP-2.1 batch are expected to be completed and published by the TSO from Q3 to Q4 of 2021. Validity periods of offers will be set to allow a reasonable time (no less than 1 month) for a customer to review the relevant constraint report before being required to accept or not accepting their offer. As such the validity period for offers will be the later of 3 months post offer issuance or 1 month from publication of the relevant constraints report.

11 Interactions

In certain cases, the connection method for applications made under ECP-2 might impact connection method of Existing Contracted Projects. For instance, the optimal connection method for an application made under ECP-2 may involve the changing of a connection method for a Gate 3 contracted project, non-GPA contracted project or an ECP-1 contracted project. The SOs will consider each interaction on a case-by-case basis. However, where a connection method for an existing contracted project has entered construction, it will not be subject to re-optimisation to accommodate new contracted connections unless agreed to by all the projects connecting to that connection method.

12 Changes to COPP

For the purpose of this section, the term "**all projects**" refers to all projects whether currently contracted or otherwise. For the avoidance of doubt, references to Gate 3 in COPP should also be read as referring to ECP projects.

The following are the chapters of COPP that will no longer apply to any project.		
Chapter 17	Capacity Relocation	This chapter no longer applies to any projects.

The following are the chapters of COPP that apply to all projects with exceptions as stated.		
Chapter 3	Mergers and Splitting	The following changes are made to this chapter: The rules around mergers apply to all projects including applications made under ECP-2.1 however capacity relocation is no longer facilitated subject to chapter 17 changes above. The rules around splitting no longer apply to any project, i.e. project splitting is no longer allowed.
Chapter 7	Changes in MEC	These rules apply to all projects including applications made under ECP-2.1 with the following changes: • Applicants under ECP-2.1 can request a one-off reduction in MEC without penalty after the customer connection method meeting (see Section 6). The applicant must confirm the reduced MEC within 10 business days of the indicative connection meeting.
Chapter 9	Change in Generation Type	The rules for projects pre-energisation continue to apply except for applications made under ECP-2. In addition, for all projects, changes in generation type are allowed post energisation subject to a modified connection agreement, planning permission, and associated technical assessments, provided that closure periods as set out in the TSO's Generator Plant Closure Process[19] are observed. See the Generator Connections page on EirGrid's website for more details.
Chapter 11	Firm Connections to the Transmission System	These rules do not apply to connection offers made under ECP-2.

The following are the chapters of COPP that **continue to apply to all projects including applications made under ECP-2.1**.	
Chapter 1	Introduction

[19] Available at www.eirgrid.com.

Chapter 2	Changes in Installed Capacity
Chapter 4	Temporary Connections
Chapter 5	Combination of Offers
Chapter 6	Hybrid Plant
Chapter 8	Phasing of Connections
Chapter 10	Reprocessing Subgroups Due to Non-Acceptance of Offer or Termination of Connection Agreement
Chapter 12	Term
Chapter 13	Extension of Offer Validity Period
Chapter 14	Non-Least Cost Connection Method (LCCM) Planning Related Charging Issues
Chapter 15	Internal Network
Chapter 16	MEC Capacity Bond
Chapter 18	Alternative Connection Method
Chapter 19	Change in Application Details
Chapter 20	Modification Requests

13 Order of precedence clauses

In the event of an inconsistency or conflict between this ruleset and any previous CRU decisions on connection or charging policy, the inconsistency or conflict will be resolved by giving precedence to this ruleset.

In the event of an inconsistency or conflict between this ruleset and the text of the ECP-2 decision, the inconsistency or conflict will be resolved by giving precedence to the ECP-2 decision.

Annex 1

Technical requirements for certain renewable energy generation technologies.

For the purposes of the prioritisation of renewable energy generation projects in batch Category A as set out in Section 4.4 of this ruleset, and the definition of renewable energy projects for Community-led Energy Projects as set out in the Glossary, only projects that meet the following criteria within certain renewable energy generation technologies will be included.

Waste to Energy

"Waste to energy" refers to the process of generating energy in the form of electricity from the primary treatment of Waste, or the processing of Waste into a fuel source.

Only electricity generated from the combustion of the renewable portion of Waste, will count towards the calculation of renewable electricity generated (in GWhrs/yr) for prioritisation in ECP-2.

The calculation of the renewable portion of Waste to energy shall be based on the European Standard I.S. EN 15440 "Solid Recovered Fuels – Methods for the Determination of Biomass Content". Projects are permitted to use reference data that is derived in accordance with I.S. EN 15440, as opposed to the standard being applied to samples taken directly at the project's site. Additionally, projects can combine data from I.S. EN 15440 with Waste characterisation survey data that is demonstrated to be representative of the Waste composition at the Site.

Biomass

Biomass fuels produced from agricultural Biomass shall not be made from raw material obtained from land:

(a) with high biodiversity value, i.e. primary forests, specially protected areas, special areas of conservation and highly biodiverse grasslands;

(b) with high carbon stock, i.e. wetlands, continuously forested areas; or

(c) that was undrained peatland in January 2008.

For Biomass produced in Ireland, there are clear monitoring and enforcement systems in place under existing legislation, monitored by the Forestry Service, the relevant local authorities and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Verification rests with Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine ("DAFM") and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Biomass fuels produced from forest Biomass shall meet the following requirements in accordance with

Article 29 of the Renewable Energy Directive:

(a) the country of origin of the Biomass has harvesting laws, and monitoring and enforcement systems (or where not available in the country of origin, that management systems are in place at forest sourcing area level) to ensure:

(i) it is carried out in accordance with a harvesting permit;

(ii) forest regeneration is in place;

(iii) nature protection areas, including peatlands and wetlands, are protected;

(iv) impacts on soil quality and biodiversity are minimised; and

(v) it does not exceed the long-term production capacity of the forest.

(b) the country (or regional economic integration organisation) meets the following requirements in accordance with Article 29 of the Renewable Energy Directive:

(i) is party to or has ratified the Paris Agreement;

(ii) has submitted a Nationally Determined Contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ("UNFCCC") or there are laws in place (in accordance with the Paris Agreement) to conserve and enhance carbon stocks and sinks; and

(iii) has a national system for reporting GHG emissions and removals from land use including forestry and agriculture.

Biomass projects must meet the requirement of at least 70% greenhouse gas emission savings in line with Article 29 of the Renewable Energy Directive.

Biogas

Biogas projects must meet the requirement of at least 70% greenhouse gas emission savings in line with Article 29 of the Renewable Energy Directive.

If the feedstock is classified as animal by-product ("ABP"), the eligible anaerobic digestion ("AD") technology must be in receipt of an ABP license from DAFM. A full list of ABP feedstock and the waste risk categories is available on the DAFM website.

In the absence of approved certification, AD feedstock shall consist of a maximum of 20% grass silage or other harvested energy crop in order to meet sustainability requirements. All Biogas proposals must clearly demonstrate robust traceability and verification of fuel source.

Biogas from landfill sites will not be eligible for ECP-2 renewable generation prioritisation or Community-led Energy Projects.

Annex 2

Definition of Renewable Energy Community

"Renewable Energy Community" (REC) means a legal entity:

(a) which, in accordance with applicable law, is based on open and voluntary participation, is autonomous, and is effectively controlled by shareholders or members that are located (in the case of SMEs or local authorities) or resident (in the case of natural persons) in the proximity of the ECP project that is owned and developed (or proposed to be owned and developed) by that legal entity;

(b) the shareholders or members of which are natural persons, SMEs, local authorities (including municipalities), not-for-profit organisations or local community organisations;

(c) for any shareholder or member (with the exception of "Sustainable Energy Communities" as registered with SEAI), that shareholder or member's participation does not constitute their primary commercial or professional activity;

(d) the primary purpose of which is to provide environmental, economic, societal or social community benefits for its shareholders or members or for the local areas where it operates, rather than financial profits;

(e) in respect of which, each shareholder or member is entitled to one vote, regardless of shareholding or membership interest; and

(f) which is, or which has at least one shareholder or member that is, registered as a "Sustainable Energy Community" with SEAI,

"Sustainable Energy Community" means a "Sustainable Energy Community" which is registered as such with the SEAI.

The project must meet the requirements for Community-led Energy Projects and each Applicant will be required to provide a director's declaration ("Declaration of Community-led Energy Project") to the effect that it will meet the requirements of a Community-led Energy Project and submit this declaration form along with its ECP-2 application.