

Update on impact of COVID-19 on ESO projects

Many businesses and organisations around the country – and indeed the world – are in uncharted waters as they tackle the challenges presented by COVID-19. At the ESO we too are adapting to the demands the COVID-19 crisis has imposed on all of us, and for us this has meant moving resources to support key areas that are critical to our core mission of keeping our workforce safe, and keeping the lights on – all in a way that meets our licence conditions and is as economical as possible to keep bills as low as we can.

We published our Forward Plan 2020/2021 in March 2020 with an [accompanying blog](#) which explained that – although we haven't currently changed the contents of the plan – given the challenges posed by COVID-19 we will be constantly reviewing our plans, taking into account changing priorities for our customers and our stakeholders.

One of the immediate decisions we needed to take was to move some of our highly qualified engineers and IT support staff from development projects to critical roles. This offers further support for our Control Centre and increases the resilience of the staffing rotas in the face of potentially high absence rates. This means that some of our Forward Plan deliverables will be delayed. We recognise that any delays have potential impacts beyond the ESO and we are committed to continuing to work with our customers and stakeholders to minimise that impact.

Below we have set out the impacts to our projects or deliverables planned over the course of this year under our Forward Plan (first table) or our other activities (second table). These impacts have been shared with Ofgem [in this letter sent on 25th March](#).

Our current view of impacts to the Forward Plan is:

Forward Plan Deliverable (role number)	COVID-19 impact	Project impact	Consequence
Implement the first new frequency response product (2.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts working on Dynamic Containment project need to be redeployed to a project solving short term operability challenges caused by low demand 	Delaying Dynamic Containment	Delaying the procurement of Dynamic Containment. Delivery will not happen in Q1 financial year 2020/2021 and the project team will share a revised timeline with industry.
Support the development and implementation of Pan-European replacement reserve standard products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> French System Operator (RTE) have already delayed and are essential for GB participation 	Delaying Project TERRE	Project TERRE will not go-live in June 2020. Earliest expected go-live of end of October 2020

(2.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts working on project TERRE need to be redeployed to critical control room roles 		
Power Potential Trial with UKPN / Review learning from Power Potential Trial (2.8 and 2.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visits to third party sites required to advance the project cannot be conducted under lockdown conditions 	Delaying Power Potential	“Optional” and “market” trials will not conclude in Q3 financial year 2020/21. Earliest expected conclusion of trials is Q4 financial year 2020/21
Lead the Loss of Mains programme Protection setting (3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to third party sites to change equipment restricted during lockdown Supplier access to parts restricted during lockdown 	Slowing deployment of Accelerated Loss of Mains	Realisation of benefits of programme will be delayed.

We have also made the decision to delay the following additional projects that don't fall under our Forward Plan activity:

Project	COVID-19 impact	Consequence
Scheduling Remediation (EBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts on the project redeployed to critical operational roles We are unable to conduct training of ENCC teams during lockdown. 	<p>Deferral of project</p> <p>Further developments to enable greater automation and integration of market changes to the scheduling function deferred.</p>
Dynamic Stable Import Limits/Stable Export Limits (SiI/Sel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts on the project redeployed to critical operational roles We are unable to conduct training of ENCC teams during lockdown. 	<p>Deferral of project</p> <p>Dynamic SiI/Sel changes are delivered later to consumers. (P373)</p>
Strategic ESO Data Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some workstreams impacted by redeployment of experts to critical operational roles 	<p>Deferral of project</p> <p>This project is in the launch phase and part of the strategic asset replacement and transformation for the RII02 plan. We expect the</p>

		impact to be mitigated as the programme is in early stages.
Future Balancing Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some workstreams impacted by redeployment of SMEs to critical operational roles 	<p>Deferral of a programme milestone</p> <p>Delivery of the Modernised Despatch Optimisation Algorithm within the BM System will be later than planned.</p>

The full impact of the crisis is not wholly clear at this stage and it is possible that we will see further delays to these and other ESO projects depending on the continued scale and duration of the lockdown. The following projects may also be impacted, and we will be engaging with our customers and stakeholders before any final decisions are made.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power Available integration (second phase)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State of Energy signal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitively tendered Black Start contracts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement approach for efficient reactive power flows between networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building of new Electricity Market Reform Portal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity Operational Forum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENCC visit days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FES publication

We have worked off the assumption that we will be able to begin working normally again by June (within any new guidelines set by the UK Government). We will continue reviewing the situation and make sure that our customers and stakeholders are kept up to date with the latest information on all our projects.

We remain committed to our longer-term plans, whether that is our zero carbon 2025 ambition or our new business plan for the RIIO-2 period which was submitted to Ofgem in December last year. For now, we're adjusting our focus and resources so that we can make sure we're able to operate a secure and reliable electricity system throughout this challenging period.

For further information on any of the projects outlined above please use the following contacts:

- For general questions: box.soincentives.electricity@nationalgrideso.com
- For questions about Dynamic Containment: Please contact your account manager or email us at box.futureofbalancingservices@nationalgrideso.com
- For questions on Project Terre, Scheduling Remediation, Dynamic Sil/Sel, Strategic Data Platform or Future Balancing Capabilities: box.BalancingProgramme@nationalgrid.com