

## **NEXT GENERATION NETWORKS**

**NIA Third Party Call 2018**

**SUMMARY REPORT**



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## 1 Summary

Following the success of our previous three Network Innovation Competition (NIC) Third Party Calls this year the scope for direct third party participation was extended to the Network Innovation Allowance (NIA) funding mechanism.

The NIA Call focussed on the three core innovation areas, Assets, Network Operations and Customers, and was further split in to three Articles under each theme as described in our Distribution System Operability Framework (DSOF)<sup>1</sup>. The Call was released using Google Forms and in order to ensure maximum participation it was publicised on UVDB Achilles, ENA's Collaboration Portal and our Innovation Website. To ensure the Call was open to as wide a range of individuals and organisations as possible three clear categories of projects were requested, Feasibility Study, First of a Kind Trial and Systems Approach Solution.

We received a total of 91 submissions with 46 in the Assets area, 16 for Network Operations and 29 submissions relating to Customers. Following an initial round of scoring and face to face meetings with selected respondents nine project ideas are to be taken forward. This will be captured in our updated Innovation Strategy and registered throughout the regulatory period 2018/19.

## 2 Introduction

A number of our current NIA projects within the innovation portfolio are in the build and trials phase, therefore now was the right time to consider the portfolio of projects to be delivered in the second half of the RIIO ED-1<sup>2</sup> period. Running a third party call based on the DSOF themes and challenges provided an opportunity for further direct participation in the network innovation funding mechanisms and ensures that ideas from academia, Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) and multi-national organisations are afforded an opportunity to be developed and deliver customer value and benefit.

The NIA call centred on our three core innovation themes; Assets, Network Operations and Customers. Specific challenges for each of these three themes, in the form of Articles, were documented and discussed in the DSOF as shown in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1: DSOF Articles by Theme**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>Network Operations</b>	<b>Customers</b>
Network Modelling and Analysis	Fault Level Management	Flexibility Services
Network Monitoring and Visibility	Arc Suppression Coil	Changing Demand Profiles
Data and Forecasting	Low Frequency Demand Disconnection	Power Quality

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.westernpower.co.uk/docs/About-us/Our-business/Our-network/Strategic-network-investment/DSOF/WPD-DSOF-September-2017.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Distribution Price Control between 2015 and 2023

Submissions to the Call were asked to select a specific Theme and Article that their proposal looked to address.

As with the NIC third party calls that have been run over the three previous years the NIA Call was made available via UVBD Achilles, ENA's Collaboration Portal and our Innovation Website. The Call was released on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018 through a Google Form and as well as outlining the specific themes and challenges, provided an overview of requirements to be considered eligible for funding, information regarding the timeline for submission and further notification and a breakdown of the scoring criteria to be used against a submission.

### 3 Responses

There were 91 responses to the Call with 46 in the Assets area, 16 for Network Operations and 29 submissions relating to Customers. The largest value of proposal received was £2.5M, the smallest was £70k and the average value £520k.

The submissions came from a variety of organisation ranging from academic institutions, large multi-vector consultancies, multi-national engineering and technology firms, system integrators, telecommunications companies and energy aggregators. There were six submissions from academia, 44 submissions from SMEs and 41 submissions from multi-national companies.

The breakdown of the submissions by Theme and DSOF Article are shown in the following figures.

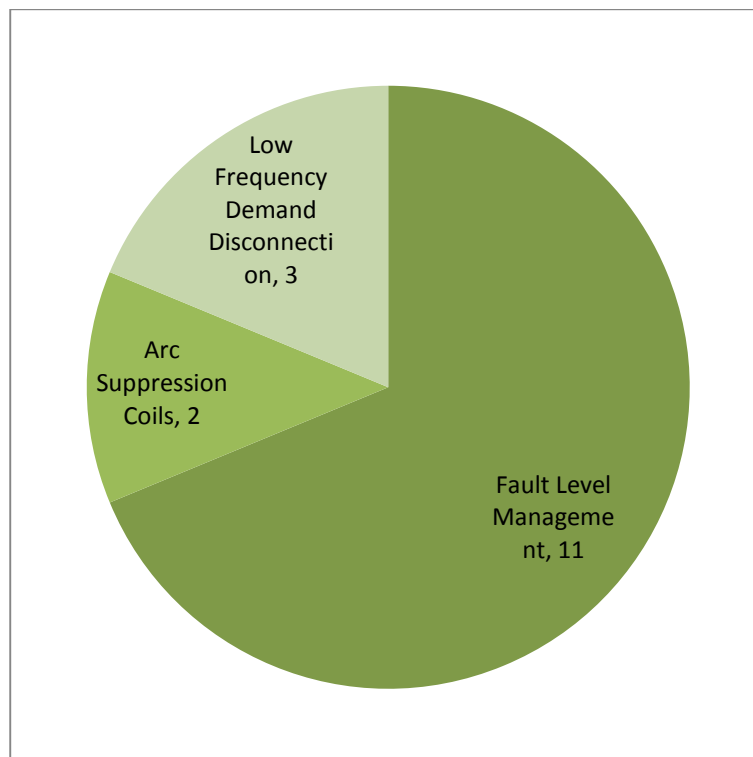


Figure 3-1: Network Operations Articles

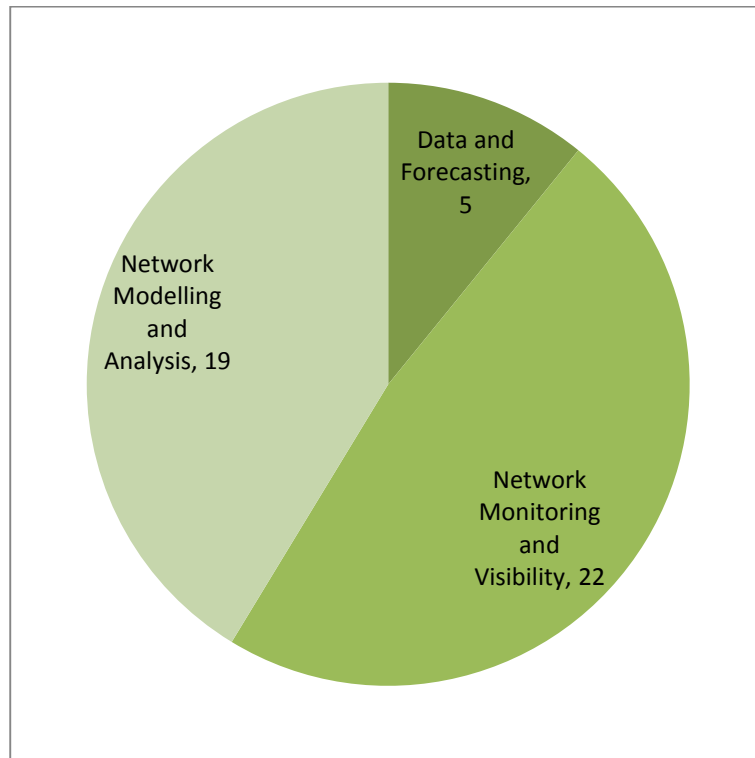


Figure 3-2: Assets Articles

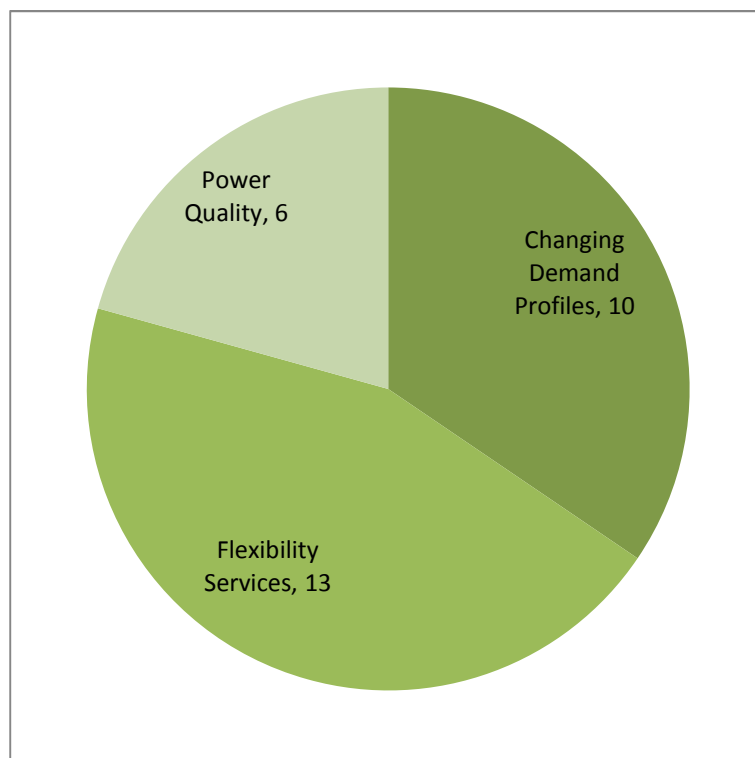


Figure 3-3: Customers Articles

## 4 Selection

On receipt of the 91 submissions they were reviewed by internal subject matter experts against defined criteria. Following review, 11 projects were selected to either be taken forward as a project or to meet for further discussions and clarifications. As well as those 11 another four were highlighted for future projects, in the 2019/20 regulatory period. These 15 projects were split across the three themes as follows:

- Assets – 10;
- Network Operations – 3; and
- Customers – 2.

Following meetings and further discussions nine proposals have been taken forwards across eight projects<sup>3</sup>.

## 5 Conclusion

The NIA Third Party Call, through the 91 submissions, has shown a significant engagement in the process and the quality as well as the quantity of submissions enabled nine (10% of submissions) project proposals to be taken forwards and a further four to be highlighted for future development. The nine selected proposals have a combined value of £5.25M. These projects will be included in our revised Innovation Strategy document, to be published in July 2018.

Structuring the Call around the DSOF provided useful guidance and reference to inform submissions. The Google Form submission process also enabled easy access to interested parties, reducing the usual amount of time and commitment needed to respond to a Call of this nature.

Following the success of this Call we intend to run similar Calls in the future based on the innovation portfolio requirements aligned to the DSOF document, when updated as a whole or new articles are identified.

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<sup>3</sup> Two proposals have been combined in to a single project

## Glossary

Abbreviation	Term
DSOF	Distribution System Operability Framework
ENA	Energy Networks Association
NIA	Network Innovation Allowance
NIC	Network Innovation Competition
RIIO ED-1	Electricity Distribution Price Control (2015-2023)
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
WPD	Western Power Distribution



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