

# Pause in connection applications – FAQ

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## 1. Why is NESO introducing a pause in connection applications?

- Grid connections applications have continued to grow over the last year to the point that it is no longer possible to deliver connections reforms in parallel with the existing connections process.
- In 2023/24 alone, NESO received over 1,700 applications to connect to the national electricity transmission system, adding to a queue of over 700GW of projects. That is more than what is required for the energy system in 2030 or even 2050.
- The new arrangements will pause the applications process for new entrants to the connections queue from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to deliver a stable foundation for implementing the new and improved grid connections process, subject to Ofgem approval.
- This transitional arrangement will enable resources to be dedicated to delivery of connections reforms at pace across 2025. It will also provide clarity to consumers as to when to apply to be included in the new process.
- The new transitional arrangement will enable NESO, Transmission Owners (TOs), and Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to keep up the pace in preparing for reforms that will improve the connections process and keep Britain building.

## 2. What changes will be introduced under the pause, and who will be impacted?

- There are three main elements to the pause as approved by Ofgem:
  - Existing transitional offer process now applies only to new directly connected demand projects from 29 January 2025 until the point at which Connections Reform is implemented, or Ofgem states that it is not proceeding with the reforms (whichever happens first).
  - A ‘pause’ in accepting any other connection applications received from 29 January 2025 until the point at which Connections Reform is implemented, or Ofgem states that it is not proceeding with the reforms (whichever happens first).
  - An exceptions process to the ‘pause’ to continue issuing full offers for limited and critical modification applications.
- NESO’s pause in connection applications will be applied to both transmission and distribution applications, including:
  - new applications,

- modification applications,
  - BEGA and BELLA applications, and
  - Project Progressions.
- Note that Distribution Network Owners / Independent Distribution Network Operator (I/DNOs<sup>1</sup>) will continue to receive and process applications, but these will not be passed through to NESO for transmission impact assessments (TIA) and Project Progressions from 29 January.
  - Agreement variations and Notices (e.g. Agreement to Vary<sup>1</sup>) required to be triggered by the TOs, including for the purposes of safety and security of the network, will continue throughout the pause period.

### 3. What are the key timelines for new applications and Modification Applications?

- We have summarised key timelines for customers below, based on application types.

Application type	Applications to NESO (new directly connected, mod apps, BEGA/BELLA etc)	New directly connected demand applications	Mod Apps that qualify under Exceptions process	Embedded connections (i.e. applying to I/DNOs)
Offer type	Transitional offer for new BCA applications; full offer for all others	Transitional offer	Full offer	I/DNO offer
Application deadline	<b>Before 29 January 2025</b>	<b>21 March 2025</b>	Dependent on exception (deadline to be agreed with NESO and TOs and communicated to customers on a case-by-case basis)	I/DNO processes continue, i.e. no pause from I/DNOs. However, I/DNOs will not pass on distribution connections to NESO / TOs for transmission

<sup>1</sup> The legal document signed to affect a change to your contracted position.

<b>Clock start deadline</b>	<b>12 February 2025</b>	<b>4 April 2025</b>	No deadline	impact assessments (TIA) from 29 Jan.
<b>Customer acceptance deadline</b>	Ahead of implementation of CMP435	Ahead of implementation of CMP435	Ahead of implementation of CMP435	

#### 4. I would like to apply for a Modification Application during the pause as I believe it should qualify under the Exceptions criteria. How should I submit my application?

- Customers are advised to reach out to their NESO Connections Contract Manager (CCM) in the first instance if they intend to submit a Modification Application under the exceptions process during the pause period. Please share as much detail about the intended change / Mod App as possible. NESO and TOs will review the intended Mod App and confirm if this qualifies under the pause.

#### 5. What are the timelines for new directly connected demand applications?

- New directly connected demand applications can be submitted up to the 21 March 2025 but must be clock started<sup>2</sup> by 4 April 2025.
- Customers that apply must pay their application fee and promptly provide any additional justification requested and answer any clarification questions from NESO and TOs about their application, by 4 April. **Any new directly connected demand applications that have not clock started 4 April will not be processed.**

#### 6. How are distribution / embedded connections impacted by the pause?

- Customers can continue to submit distribution connection applications to I/DNOs during the pause period, and I/DNOs will continue to process these applications.
- However, I/DNOs will not pass on distribution connections to NESO / TOs for transmission impact assessments (TIA) and Project Progressions from 29 January.

<sup>2</sup> 'Clock start' is the date on which the application & Data Registration Code (DRC) data submission is deemed technically competent, and the fee is paid (the latter of the two dates). Clock start signifies the start of the 3-month offer period as defined in CUSC.

## 7. Will NESO clock start all applications received before the 29 January deadline?

- For all applications submitted before 29 January, NESO and TOs will endeavour to clock start all applications submitted before 12 February. NESO and TOs will work closely during this period to address potential blockers in the clock start period.
- Customers that apply must pay their application fee promptly provide any additional justification requested and answer any clarification questions from NESO and TOs about their application, before 12 February. **Any applications that have not clock started by 12 February will not be processed** (unless they fall into one of the stated exceptions).
- Please note that, to be considered in the Gate 2 to Whole Queue process, customers will need to be in a signed position with their connection offers ahead of the implementation of CMP435. Further timelines on the Gate 2 to Whole Queue process will be communicated to industry as soon as they are confirmed.

## 8. When can I next submit a new application or modification application if I missed the application deadline and do not qualify under the Exceptions process?

- We anticipate opening the first new application window in Q4 2025 for all other new applications and modification applications. We are actively working through the Connections Reform Hub to determine exact dates and to reach a timeline that works for all parties involved. We will provide an update to industry as soon as this is confirmed.
- If you would like to make a reduction to your project's Transmission Entry Capacity or Developer Capacity, you will also be able to make this change as part of the Gate 2 evidence submission window. Please note that this is our proposed approach as submitted to Ofgem under CMP435<sup>3</sup> and is subject to authority approval. Further timelines on the Gate 2 to Whole Queue process will be communicated to industry as soon as they are confirmed.

## 9. When will the pause in connection applications be lifted?

- As per Ofgem's decision letter, the pause in connection applications will be in place until the date of implementation of the TMO4+ code modification proposals following a positive decision, or the date Ofgem states that it is not proceeding with the reforms (whichever happens first).
- Ofgem have also included a backstop date of 31 May.

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<sup>3</sup> Connections Reform code modifications CMP435