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Date: 6<sup>th</sup> September 2013

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NIEA Strategy Unit  
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### ***SEA of the Network 25 Strategy***

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write to you on behalf of Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE), the responsible authority for the planning, development, construction and maintenance of the electrical network in Northern Ireland. As part of its remit, NIE has a duty to develop a safe and effective system, while ensuring this is delivered as cost efficiently as possible.

We are notifying the statutory consultees of the scoping of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Network 25 Strategy. This Strategy will lay out the options for reinforcement and development of the Northern Ireland electricity transmission system for the next 12 years, based on the upcoming generation projects and the likely public and commercial demand. Due to the uncertainties surrounding the projects and technologies that will actually develop to commercial scale, the Strategy will have to work with flexible scenarios, rather than fixed options.

NIE, as the Responsible Authority preparing the Strategy, wishes to approach the electricity transmission planning from 2013 to 2025 in a socially responsible, sustainable and transparent manner and as such is undertaking the SEA, under the SEA Directive, which has been incorporated into Northern Ireland Legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (S.R. 280/2004).

Following our initial discussions with the NIEA SEA Team, this correspondence and enclosed Draft Scoping Report represents the first official steps in SEA consultation with the statutory environmental authority, namely the Department of Environment Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

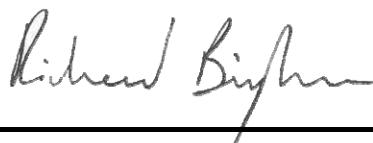
In this stage of the scoping process, through the statutory consultations, we are looking to establish the range of environmental issues, the appropriate methodology and the level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report for the Network 25 Strategy, in accordance with Article 11(4) and (5) of S.R. 280 of 2004 Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004.

Submissions or observations in relation to the enclosed scoping information, or in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Reports, may be made to Richard Bingham, of RPS, by the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

If you have any queries at any time please feel free to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

**for RPS**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Richard Bingham', is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

**Richard Bingham**

(Encs)