



## INTRODUCTION

Our Distribution System Operations (DSO) functions are delivering proactive investment, flexibility and grid access at the right time, and in the right place, to decarbonise local businesses, heating and transport. Our plans will unlock local economic growth and enable a just transition for the customers and communities we serve.

As we enter the final year of our initial DSO accelerator programme, I am proud to reflect on the remarkable progress we have made together.

The journey so far has seen us embed our DSO "smart, fair, now" principles at the heart of our operations, laying the strong foundations needed to support the government's Clean Power 2030 ambitions and beyond.

Our commitment to transparent, strategic investment and the publication of long-term, local plans has given confidence to our customers, stakeholders, supply chain, and partners. By making granular, local data more accessible, we're empowering the most rapidly decarbonising communities in the UK, whilst building vital trust in our governance through openness and oversight from our DSO Advisory Board.

Through the delivery of our strategic initiatives, we've not only matured our systems and processes, but also accelerated economic growth by enabling faster, smarter connections to our network. Our proactive approach is unlocking greater market participation, opening up new revenue streams, and ensuring that our network investment meets capacity where it is most needed—supporting the 11.4GW of low carbon generation required in our license areas to achieve Clean Power 2030.

At the core of our mission is a just transition: developing innovative products and services that reduce barriers and enable all customers to benefit from a smart, secure, and flexible energy system.

We recognise the importance of adapting to a rapidly evolving market and have worked closely with you, our stakeholders, to ensure our plans remain ambitious, targeted, and responsive. You've engaged with us through our Autumn and Spring Series, through our DSO Satisfaction Survey and at many events and workshops this year, letting us know what's important to you.

Building on the momentum of the past year, we're well-positioned to scale our efforts for the challenges and opportunities ahead in ED3. I am confident that together, we will continue to deliver at pace, helping our customers and communities to decarbonise and thrive in a net zero future.

Thank you for your continued trust, collaboration, and passion for positive change.

Andrew Roper Director of DSO





## JUST A FEW OF THE WAYS WE'RE RESPONDING TO YOUR FEEDBACK...

### You said...

 How important it was to enable consumer and community-level flexibility

 We needed to support industrial and commercial stakeholders to decarbonise

We needed to continue accelerating connections

### We did!

- Part of our plan this year focuses on smart community access in partnership with the Local Energy Market Alliance (LEMA), delivering on Load Managed Area (LMA) interim payments and consulting on and developing a local energy strategy.
- We've introduced to our plan proactive engagement, strategic planning insights, tailored journeys and specific connection products, to facilitate the decarbonisation efforts of our small to medium industrial customers.
- Across our plan you will see a particular focus on enabling a growth in faster connections through increased data quality, the use of proactive strategic investment and the stimulation of flexibility markets.

### OUR UPDATED ED2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

How we're evolving our strategy to continue to deliver for our customers



# Forecasting and planning future needs

1. We will provide stakeholders with 100% visibility of our network through advanced software-based visibility solutions, smart metering data, and real-time network models, investing in network monitoring only when and where required targeting 19% coverage of the network.

- 2. We will provide leading cross-vector support for communities through our Whole Systems team through digital planning support tools and Strategic Development Plans for all planning authorities by 2025.
- 3. We will use our enhanced network visibility to identify further opportunities for flexibility and develop access products where valuable, alongside delivery of strategic investment to release network capacity faster to avoid unnecessary delays and costs. Our approach will be reported and externally assured on an ongoing basis.
- 4. We will accelerate connections for customers through customer-centric engagement, digital services, a range of access products, and close coordination with the National Energy System Operator (NESO) through our Strategic Development Plans and the RESP. Our DSO will provide the capacity needed for all connections applications ensuring optimal use of flexible solutions to deliver the capacity required.



### Developing an inclusive flexibility marketplace

- 5. We will continue to promote accessibility and inclusivity within our flexibility markets making it easy to participate through regularly publishing clear product roadmaps, with a range of product and pricing options down to the grid edge. This will be co-created with stakeholders to ensure inclusivity by design and coordination with wider system operators and the Market Facilitator, ensuring flexibility provides value to the whole electricity system.
- 6. We will enable the market through third-party market platform partnerships to establish operations that support a variety of procurement horizons that are coordinated with NESO and will drive maturity in secondary trading.
- 7. We will evaluate strategies for scaling community driven flexibility services and Access Products, supporting a further uptake of energy efficiency and developing Local Energy Strategies that identify opportunities for flexibility service provision to meet a broader range of network needs.



- 8. We will drive transparency in dispatch through regular consultation and publication of our Operational Decision Making (ODM) Framework, reporting on both our dispatch volumes through the System Operability Report and our compliance with the ODM on a quarterly basis.
- 9. We will enable flexibility for a range of long-term, short-term, local, and system needs. We will coordinate with our customers, stakeholders, and NESO. Outage plans, operational forecasts, and schedules will be published up to the day-ahead stage. We will use standard products and offer a range of dispatch interface options. Data will be shared in real time to deliver wider system benefits.



and data

- 10. We will provide enhanced data driven insights through our data provision strategy that enable customers to receive and access valuable data tailored to their specific needs, enabling customers to make informed decisions.
- 11. We will drive transparency in our decision making and build customer trust by publishing the outputs from our DSO Advisory Board that scrutinises our DSO delivery plans and operational decisions, and commissions an annual independent audit presenting the transparency of our operations. We will review the benefits delivered by our DSO activities with our stakeholders to reprioritise activities, reporting on benefits delivered by our DSO to transparently demonstrate our progress.
- 12. We will continuously engage and collaborate with stakeholders to inform the development of our DSO functions, publishing and consulting on our key processes, and prioritising data releases on our data roadmap and collaboration plan as per our stakeholders' needs.

## FORECASTING AND PLANNING FUTURE NEEDS

Planning strategic investment with local needs in mind and being open about our networks



#### Our customers and stakeholders are asking us for

- Clarity and coordination around engagement activities, tailored to customer types
- Greater use of geospatial and other visualization tools where appropriate
- Continued support for Local Authorities (LA's) in undertaking their Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) activities and identifying opportunities to use LENZA in their day-to-day activities.
- Extended support for local planning to large demand users in addition to LA's.
- Integration of Strategic Development Plans (SDP's) with other forecasting activities to provide coordinated insight



#### The outcomes we are targeting

- Customers can easily and quickly connect to our network, enabling the adoption of Low Carbon Technologies and industry decarbonisation
- Enhanced forecasting accuracy that captures our customers plans to deliver efficient and economic long-term investments.
- Reduced whole system costs through coordination across energy vectors within our planning processes
- Enhanced digitisation of our data, ensuring equity of access to planning tools and third-party efficiency and effectiveness
- Local Energy Strategies that provide ffinancial savings, and environmental and social benefits for communities.

### Accelerating to deliver on evolving needs

A critical part of readying networks for greater electrification and societal decarbonisation are our Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) which act as a blueprint of long-term electricity system needs from now through to 2050. We will consult and update these this year, and annually going forwards as energy projections change, helping customers – and central and local government – understand capacity growth and act as a crucial link to NESO's Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESP) to be published in early 2026.

Alongside our SDP's, we are developing our Local Energy Strategy and our DSO Connections plan, reinforcing SSEN's commitment to deliver decarbonisation in an affordable and fair way, and outlining how we're scaling up our own functions to deliver against Clean Power 2030 targets. The most efficient energy transition will be achieved by planning for the long term, unlocking economies of scale and lowering the overall transition costs to consumers in the long run



#### **Enabling Local Power for our** communities

We are consulting on and updating our **SDP methodology** will have published SDP's for all Grid Supply Points across our network, digitising outputs to increase accessibility.

We will develop a Local Energy Strategy, combining our SDP's, flexibility markets, community energy, customer insights and new access products at a Local level.

We will undertake a targeted outreach programme to encourage uptake of our Powering Communities to Net Zero fund.

#### Enhanced forecasting based on local inputs

Incorporate LAEPs and LENZA inputs into our Distribution Future Electricity Scenarios (DFES), alongside Industrial and Commercial customer data. We will continue to support NESO in developing Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESP) ensuring local plans are accounted for and reflected in our forecasts.

Within our Distribution Network Options Assessments (DNOA) we will provide outputs aligned to local regions and continue to improve our quarterly summaries based on feedback.

#### Sharing our improved data and insights across the sector

We are consolidating our capacity datasets and developing visualisation tools to provide network insight on future opportunities,

We are supporting Winchester City Council in the pilot digitisation of LAEP outputs. We will share lessons learned and insights with others at our **Local** Authority seminars to help broaden access and uptake of our digital tools across all Local

#### Transparent decision making and investment planning

As we develop our next Business Plan and investment programme, we will undertake crossvector engagement to strengthen our forecasts, using local insights to support efficient planning, and updating our governance frameworks accordingly.

#### By April 2026 we will:

Consult on and update our SDP methodology, providing 1-page summaries and digitised outputs.

Publish our consolidated Local **Energy Strategy** providing clarity on how we will enable communities and economic arowth

Publish enhanced data outputs including a **geospatial heatmap** and granular network planning data in **model format** 

Authorities .

Consult on and update our **Distribution Network Options** Assessment (DNOA) methodology.



## DEVELOPING THE FLEXIBITY MARKETPLACE

Further expanding our range of services available to stakeholders and encouraging participation in the marketplace



#### Our customers and stakeholders are asking us for

- Improve signposting and insight into multi-year requirements to encourage investment and participation in areas where there are currently limited technologies to deliver flexibility.
- Consider the balance between standardisation and bespoke arrangements to help enable and drive market participation
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that demonstrate the true benefits to the system and consumers of procuring local flexibility
- Standardised interfaces for flexibility providers to engage in with across systems and markets
- Provide clarity on SSEN's vision for flexibility in RIIO-FD3

#### The outcomes we are targeting

- Increased and equitable access to the network, facilitating connections and participation of Low Carbon Technologies and domestic assets into flexibility markets for whole system value.
- Ensuring assets within SSEN's region can provide flexibility through our network for the wider energy system, contributing to the 12GW of flexibility required to enable Clean Power 2030.
- Delivering greater network efficiencies and opportunities for flexibility providers through development of further flexibility products tailored to our unique customer geography and customer base.

#### Accelerating to deliver on evolving needs



Our joint whitepaper with Electralink demonstrated that we have enabled 368MW of flexibility to flow through our network, alongside the CP30 target of 12GW of flexibility required for system needs, we are committed to achieving our own revised target in December 2024 of 2GW within SSEN's network and increasing the volume of flexibility within the wider system. We have never used exclusivity clauses within our flexibility contracts, ensuring that all flexibility enabled on our network is able to participate in, and contribute to wider markets and system requirements, and we are working with the Market Facilitator to ensure our new products continue to support wider market participation and revenue stacking for providers.

Our 'Future of Flexibility' report co-authored with the Market Facilitator in March-25 highlighted the need for DSO's to continue to facilitate the uptake of LCT's and participation of domestic and local consumers in the flexibility marketplace. We continue to engage with our broad range of customers across diverse communities and have developed additional flexibility products that meet the needs of the system, and the customers that we serve. We are developing low-cost access products to enable the early connection of smaller non-domestic connections in congested networks and continue to drive the standards we set through HomeFlex for domestic flexibility customers; promoting fairness and inclusivity in local and national markets.

#### The products and services we are delivering

### Increasing stakeholder engagement and participation

Our third-party platform ElectronConnect will deliver continuous improvements throughout the year such as simpler group asset creation, API uploads and market filtering. We will further signpost our opportunities and implement solutions to improve the ease of participation and coordination between platforms. especially for LV assets.

#### Co-development alongside the Market Facilitator

We are advocating for our communities by developing products that serve our diverse geographies and customer base and improve accessibility for a broader range of flexibility providers. We are developing these in

coordination with the Market Facilitator, ensuring best practice and industry standards are implemented and enabling system wider flexibility through greater revenue stacking opportunities.

#### Action to accelerate domestic and Local Flexibility benefits

We continue working in partnership with Local Energy Market Alliance (LEMA) and identifying Energy **Efficiency** measures to accelerate the early connection of new housing with Low Carbon Technologies in congested networks through Smart Community Access Products. We are continuing to identify further opportunities to drive greater system flexibility, meeting our diverse network needs and increasing opportunities for flexibility providers.

#### Delivering whole system flexibility

We will continue to review and identify improvements to the Local Constraints Market, increasing the operational headroom data shared with the National Energy System Operator (NESO) to maximise participation.

Alongside automating our merit order system, we are improving user performance reporting functionalities within the Flexible Power platform to enable more informed decision making.

### By April 2026 we will:

We will have integrated API functionality across the **ElectonConnect** platform

By September we will launch day ahead auctions alongside longer term tenders to meet system needs Issue tenders for stability services and conduct further trials in Load Managed Areas.

Have delivered improvements to our internal data processing capabilities, developing new systems and automating activities where possible.

## DELIVERING FLEXIBITY

Supporting delivery of flexibility with a range of options for dispatch and coordination with electricity system operators



#### Our customers and stakeholders are asking us for

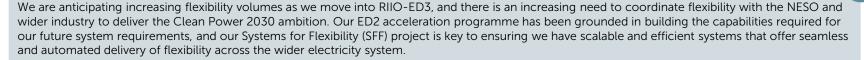
- Further options to accelerate connections onto the network
- Increased communication and coordination between the DSO and NESO for generation customers
- Real time standardised protocol models for data exchange between DSO and NESO.



#### The outcomes we are targeting

- · Develop operating systems that are scalable, efficient and automated to meet our Customers future needs.
- Enabling a safer, more resilient network as we implement solutions to improve monitoring, data quality and accuracy, and sharing this across the industry.
- Accelerating connections through the provision of enhanced network access options.
- Delivering whole system value through coordinated actions across the whole electricity system.
- Increased confidence and participation through transparency of our dispatch decision making

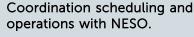
#### Accelerating to deliver on evolving needs



Elexon has been appointed as the Market Facilitator with an initial focus on standardising end-to-end processes and a vision for further market coordination. We are actively engaging with them through this transitional phase as we develop our plans and products to help drive a coordinated, efficient and flexible electricity system. We will evolve our operations as market rules and roles are defined and will continue to engage with all stakeholders to ensure we can effectively communicate the impact of any changes.

#### The products and services we are delivering





We are working in **coordination** with NESO through sharing operational and asset data, enhancing operational coordination and accelerating network connections through Technical Limits. We are also collaborating with

NESO & UKPN on Planning and Outage Data Exchanges (PODE) and developing a platform for the Local Constraints Market to enable increased coordination.

(SFF)

We are developing the next generation of systems needed to operate flexibility services at scale; to manage access products and coordinate with wider network operations to release capacity and accelerate connections. Our SFF system will enable operational load forecasting, simulation and evaluation and automating scheduling, dispatch and settlement processes ensuring a seamless and optimised journey for participants.

### transparency of dispatch logic and reporting

We will further consult on our Operational Decision Making (ODM) and System Operability Reports (SOR) and implement these principles to automatically operate within our flexibility platforms, and proving insight throughout the year providing DER's with frequent, specific and increased insight into their forecast curtailment and confidence in our system operations.

### **Network Management** solutions

We will develop a Proof-of-Concept software tool through project CASCADE that can seamlessly connect the NESO control room with Grid Supply Point data on the distribution side, with a focus on **integrating** Active Network Management (ANM) systems. Alongside this we're updating our ANM offerings enabling

greater communication between assets and systems for connecting customers.

### Our final push - by April 2026 we will:

Have implemented our final ICCP link with NESO, enabling live operational data sharing between our control rooms.

Have implemented the first phase of our **Systems For** Flexibility solution, enabling automated operational scheduling and dispatch.

Expanded our NeRDA data across all flexibly connected schemes and updated our ODM and SOR.

Upgraded our ANM system and Local ANM controllers. lowering costs to connecting customers.

## DATA AND INSIGHTS

Sharing data and information to enable a smarter energy system



### Our customers and stakeholders are asking us for

- More customer centric user interfaces, enhancing the ability to search and filter across datasets and greater use of visualisation tools where appropriate
- Increased engagement to help understand the data published, providing greater insight, tailored to customer needs and use-cases
- Demonstrate greater learning from best practice in other countries with higher penetration of smart meter roll outs



#### The outcomes we are targeting

- Enhanced data quality and insights, that enable customers to receive and access valuable data tailored to their specific needs.
- Continuing to progress towards 100% Network visibility using this data to improve our systems and processes
- Enabling customers to make informed decisions regarding network opportunities and future usage through improved network visibility.
- Ensuring customers are protected from risks through strong data security measures, and enable trusted, interoperable data sharing.

#### Accelerating to deliver on evolving needs



Becoming more digital is essential as the future energy system will involve flexible electricity use, increased collaboration, real-time data exchange, and improved services through digital techniques like Artificial Intelligence (AI). We achieve this by prioritising customers, collaborating with partners, updating IT systems and processes, enabling our employees and reorganising our business to handle a complex network and diverse customer needs.

We are committed to providing data-driven insights, exceptional customer experiences, and supporting customers who are not digitally enabled to ensure that everyone have access to information to help them make informed decisions and enabling equitable participation in market opportunities.

Key to accelerating this digitisation is our Network Visibility and Model Management (NVMM) project, ensuring that our data and systems are futureready, and improving the quality and accuracy of our DSO operations that utilize this information. Throughout the year we will deliver a complete asbuilt network model of SSEN's distribution system. We are centralizing common data sets required for planning and accelerating connections delivery processes, rationalizing our tools and methodologies making information easier to access, and supporting decision making.

#### The products and services we are delivering



#### Publishing more Open Data tailored to customers personas

Increase the volume and quality of datasets on our Open Data portal across planning, markets and operational activities, detailing these on our Data Roadmap and tailoring information to customer personals through specific insights

#### Our Data Strategy to improve accessibility

Publishing our longer-term Data Strategy alongside the addition of a newsfeed, increased showcases and insights, functionality to enable stakeholders to create their own data sets and **publishing our Document Library** to provide a simple point of access for all information needs.

#### Delivering technical improvements

Our Network Visibility Model Manager (NVMM) project will deliver capabilities which connect and manage large amounts of raw data from different sources in a single, easily accessible place, driving further consistencies and confidence in the data we use to inform our DSO functions and share with our customers.

#### Collaborating with others and responding to customers needs

Continue to collaborate with **Icebreaker 1** and others across the energy sector to enable trusted, interoperable data sharing. We will continue to hold our quarterly 'Network Insights' workshops alongside bi-annual 121's and portal feedback to gather feedback and showcase new initiatives.

### Our final push - by April 2026 we will:

Published methodologies for all available datasets, and updated insights and showcases to share **learning** across the sector.

Provide all machine-readable data sets via API, this summer increasing their accessibility.

#### Publish the LTDS in CIM format, alongside other network models to increase transparency of network asset & capacity information.

Develop a consolidated geospatial Heatmap to allow users to configure and tailor all capacity related asset data to their needs.

## TRANSPARENCY AND COORDINATION

Sharing data and information to enable a smarter energy system



### Our customers and stakeholders are asking us for

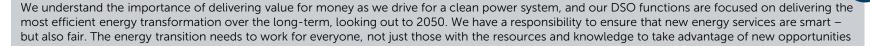
- Continue to provide 'you said, we did' summaries within publications and following engagements
- · Ensuring coordination between teams and functions across SSEN to improve the overall stakeholder journey
- Continue to report on quarterly performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets
- KPI's that are aligned to benefits delivered
- · Clear and coordinated points of contact for escalations



### The outcomes we are targeting

- Provide a fair and trusted service to our customers, meeting their diverse and specific needs including through the use of digital tools
- Confidence and trust in delivery of our DSO functions.
- 100% of DSO Advisory Board Feedback actioned.
- Transparency and confidence regarding the DSO Advisory Board in subjecting our plans to external scrutiny, and our DSO governance activities
- · Conflicts of interest are mitigated and managed effectively and in line with our governance framework

#### Accelerating to deliver on evolving needs



We recognise the need to make our decision-making processes transparent to stakeholders, so throughout the year we will consult on and update our methodologies for avoiding conflict of interest and providing transparency in our decision making both in network planning (Distribution Network Options Assessment), flexibility (Common Evaluation Methodology and Strategic Cost benefit Analysis) and operations (Operational Decision-Making Framework). We will continue to utilize our independent DSO Advisory Board to scrutinise these frameworks and processes, providing assurance to our stakeholders on our DSO functions.

#### The products and services we are delivering

#### Developing our future system and DSO functions

Throughout the year we will be developing our plans for RIIO-ED3, using our updated Distribution Networks Options Assessment (DNOA) and Strategic Development Plan methodologies and clarifying our future vision for flexibility to provide long term confidence in our network investments and DSO strategy.

#### Clarifying internal governance frameworks and processes

We will update our Distribution Governance and Investment Framework (DGIF), clarifying roles for new activities undertaken by SSEN and providing transparency and assurance on how we are developing our RIIO-ED3 Business Plan, seeking input from stakeholders through our Autumn Series of engagements. We will publish our **DSO Advisory Board** agenda in advance for input ensuring stakeholders concerns are challenged effectively by the board

#### Mitigating potential and perceived conflict-of-interests

We will increased transparency regarding conflict-of-Interest management, to include published registers, mitigations, and case studies. We will test the applicability of the ENA Conflicts of Interest & Unintended Consequences register against SSEN operations and ensure our methodology for addressing conflicts is still fit-forpurpose.

#### Enhancing our evaluation methodologies

We are seeking to enhance benefits to consumers and the wider system, by reviewing our evaluation methodologies, enhancing their scope and use cases to ensure efficient and economic decision making across all of our DSO functions, and automating where possible to provide further assurance.

We will to publish our progress towards targets and KPI's, regularly reviewing to remain agile to the changing environment.

#### Our final push - by April 2026 we will:

**Enhance our DNOA** methodology to include HV & LV outcomes and incorporating Energy Efficiency and updated flexibility valuations.

Increase publications of DSO Advisory Board activities.

Publish all actual and perceived conflicts of interest and ensure compliance with our DGIF framework.

Ppublish our updated **DSO** Benefits Methodology and Theory of Change framework, alongside quarterly progress updates.



## • • • • OUR YEAR 3 DELIVERY TIMELINE

Key		١
	Stakeholder Engagement	
	Publications	

	Q1 (Apr-Jun)		Q2 (Jul-Sep)			Q3 (Oct-Dec)			Q4 (Jan-Mar)		
ure		SDP phase 1 release		SDP 'on a page'	SDP phase 1 for all GSP's	SDP methodology consultation launched	LA Seminars	SDP methodology update	Digitised SDP outputs		SDP phase 1 release
g futi eds	DNOA update Q1 & LV outcome:			DNOA update Q2			DNOA update Q3			DNOA update Q4	DNOA methodol update
planning future needs					'LAEP Lite' pilot			Digitised LAEP outputs - Winchester			Local Energy Stra
5. G	Updated HV/LV L model	oad DFES pathway consultation	Feed requirem	ents into tRESP	LENZA & I&C data incorporated into DFES				tRESP output published		
e cility	ElectronConnect: improved UI and group asset creation		ElectronConnect: FSP API release		ElectronConnect: improved UI					Refresh Flex Acti Assessment pap	
inclusive flexibility marketplace	Stability tender launched	s			Day ahead Procui alongside existin		LMA trials conclude	Voltage Index Metric developed	Trial near-term flex for Outage management		
ma	Long term tender launch		Tic		ned connections go-live			Ramped connection go-live		S	
					Long term tender launch					Long term tender launch	
÷ e		SOR publication			Refreshed SOR			SOR publication			SOR publication
g netwo			SOR & ODM engagement		ODM merit order in Flex Power		SOR & ODM	engagement			Refreshed OD
Delivering network flexibility at scale	Systems for Flexibility Procurement Launched		Improved reporting in Flexible Power					Systems for Flexibility Phase 1 release			
	Tech Limits Test	ed		Capture learnings & review LCM service			ICCP links live with NESO & Op data sharing		Risk of Conflict reports for Primacy implemented	Tech Limits operational across SEPD & SHEPD	
tion and			Data Portal –Data Classified as Shared	Open Data Roadmap & Data Portal Strategy	Detailed methodologies published		Data Dictionary published				
through coordination and data	eholder Survey	Bi-monthly engagement		Bi-monthly engagement		Bi-monthly engagement		Bi-monthly engagement		Bi-monthly engagement	
rough o	VES DSI pilot implemented			All Datasets enabled via API	VES DSI development		LTDS published in CIM format		Capacity Heatn	naps published	
Unifi	Unified Network Model Baseline Output  Model Refinement										
Fransparency and Coordination		Col assessment		Enhance Flex evaluation methodology	ED3 strategy development						Updated DGII framework
anspare Coordir	DSOAB		Publish DSOAB agenda & request form	DSOAB			DSOAB			DSOAB	
		Publish updated DSC benefits methodology		KPI 's updated -Q1		Autumn Series Engagement	KPI 's updated -Q2			KPI 's updated -Q3	