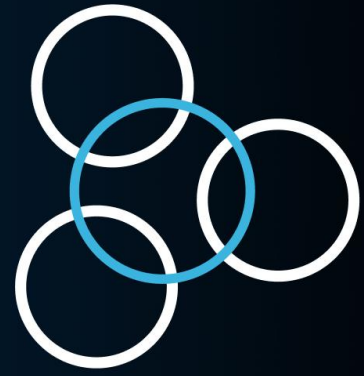


SRG



STAKEHOLDER REFERENCE GROUP
FOR THE TYNDP SCENARIOS

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

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1. INTRODUCTION

As noted in ACER's Framework Guidelines, the development of scenarios for the Ten-Year Network Development Plan ("TYNDP") process "shall follow as much as possible an open process to involve stakeholders, enabling a broad participation." To ensure key stakeholders are involved, the TEN-E Regulation and ACER's Framework Guidelines called for the creation of a Stakeholder Reference Group ("SRG"), which shall act independently of the ENTSOs¹ with the aim of providing timely, expert input to the ENTSOs' development of scenarios in accordance with the ENTSOs' scenario development timeline."²

These Terms of Reference ("ToR") shall provide guidance for the SRG established pursuant to the TEN-E regulation and ACER's Framework Guidelines on the Joint TYNDP Scenarios ("ACER Framework Guidelines"), as explained below. The ToR have been adopted by the initial SRG on December 19, 2023. Fully operational SRG approved version 2 of the ToR on March 5, 2024 and version 3 (the current version) on May 19, 2026.

2. BASIS FOR THE STAKEHOLDER REFERENCE GROUP

Article 12(3) of Regulation 2022/869 (TEN-E Regulation) of 30 May 2022³ specifies that ENTSO-E and ENTSG "shall invite the organisations representing all relevant stakeholders, including the EU DSO entity, associations involved in electricity, gas and hydrogen markets,

¹ ENTSOs refer to European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E) and to European Network of Transmission System Operators for Gas (ENTSG) and were organisations responsible for developing the TYNDP Scenarios at the time when ACER Scenario Guidelines were created (2023). Following the Regulation (EU) 2024/1789 on the internal markets for renewable gas, natural gas and hydrogen, the European Network of Network Operators for Hydrogen (ENNOH) was established and required to participate in development of the TYNDP scenarios from the 2028 TYNDP cycle. For the sake of simplification, whenever this document refers to ENTSOs, it covers all three organisations: ENTSO-E, ENTSG and ENNOH.

² ACER, Framework Guidelines (Jan. 25, 2023) at para. 45, available at: https://www.acer.europa.eu/Official_documents/Acts_of_the_Agency/Framework_Guidelines/Framework%20Guidelines/FG_For_Joint_TYNDP_Scenarios.pdf.

³ REGULATION (EU) 2022/869 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 30 May 2022 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure (May 30, 2022), available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022R0869&qid=1654587354725&from=en>.

heating and cooling, carbon capture and storage and carbon capture and utilisation stakeholders, independent aggregators, demand-response operators, organisations involved in energy efficiency solutions, energy consumer associations, civil society representatives, to participate in the scenarios development process, in particular on key elements such as assumptions and how they are reflected in the scenarios data.”

ACER's Framework Guidelines on the joint TYNDP scenarios to be developed by ENTSO-E for electricity and ENTSOG for gas states that ENTSO-E and ENTSOG should create a Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) within three months after the adoption of the Framework Guidelines. It adds that a call for interest should target stakeholders listed in Article 12(3) of the TEN-E Regulation and other relevant organisations and independent experts.⁴

3. COMPOSITION AND OPERATION OF THE STAKEHOLDER REFERENCE GROUP

3.1 Initial establishment of the Stakeholder Reference Group and selection of its members

Pursuant to the TEN-E Regulation⁵ and ACER's Framework Guidelines, the SRG shall be made up of at least representative stakeholders for the groups described as “relevant stakeholders” in the TEN-E Regulation, and other relevant organisations and independent experts.

Based on these documents, in May 2023, ENTSO-E and ENTSOG issued the first call for interest for relevant experts to apply and become SRG members⁶. The selection of SRG members aimed at ensuring efficient reach out to and representation from the following groups, setting a maximum number of 3 representatives from each group:

- ❖ Associations involved in the electricity market

⁴ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 43.

⁵ TEN-E regulation at Art. 12(3).

⁶ <https://www.entsoe.eu/news/2023/05/05/call-for-interest-of-participating-stakeholders-to-join-the-scenarios-external-technical-advisory-group-scenarios-etag-by-5-june-2023/>

- ❖ Associations involved in the gas (methane and hydrogen) market
- ❖ Heating and cooling stakeholders
- ❖ Carbon capture and storage and carbon capture and utilisation stakeholders
- ❖ Independent aggregators
- ❖ Demand-side operators
- ❖ Supply-side operators
- ❖ Organisations involved in energy efficiency solutions
- ❖ Energy consumer organisations
- ❖ Civil society representatives
- ❖ Other organisations
- ❖ Independent experts

In addition to the groups listed above, the EU DSO Entity was included as per the TEN-E Regulation.⁷

In cases where the number of applicants exceeded the maximum number of three representatives per group, ENTSOG and ENTSO-E selected members based on the following criteria:

- ❖ Overall balance of interests represented in the Scenarios SRG;
- ❖ Avoidance of multiple representation of a single entity;
- ❖ Relevance of the sector/industry/technology represented to the energy system and to scenario building;
- ❖ If the applicant is an entity, representativeness of the entity (based on size and diversity of membership);
- ❖ Relevant expertise in the pan-European energy system, and relevant technical knowledge in scenarios building and/or in modelling, evaluated based on the applicants' experience and motivation;
- ❖ Ability of the applicant to contribute to the work of the group (FTE is estimated at 0.10 for members and 0.20 for the Convenor and is subject to variation during scenario project lifetime); and
- ❖ Geographical diversity of the membership, with the objective that the overall geographical coverage of all Scenarios SRG members together includes as many European countries as possible as are included in the scenario building perimeter (for associations, considering the geographic diversity of their membership base).

⁷ TEN-E Regulation at Art. 12(3).

The initial draft membership list based on the above criteria had been shared with ACER and the European Commission DG ENER for final confirmation with a two-week notice period. After ACER's and the EC's review, the final list was approved. Applicants were informed and the membership list was made public in August 2023⁸.

Based on this application and selection process the SRG became operational, deciding about membership rules, including new SRG members, as well as membership duration and review.

3.2 Inclusion of additional, new SRG members

In case the number of representatives does not reach the maximum of three per stakeholder group, new applicants can be suggested and considered for membership application. This could aim at filling an expertise gap or ensure balance in terms of represented perspectives in the SRG. The same process should apply if new stakeholders express their interest in being considered for membership of the SRG.

The new applicants need to provide application documents (CV, letter of interest and filling out an online form requiring information about criteria described in point 3.1) and contact SRG convenors⁹.

In case of new membership applications, SRG convenors and vice-convenors should inform the European Commission and ACER and make a recommendation regarding approval or rejection of such application. The European Commission and ACER have two weeks to express their opinion. The decision to approve or reject the respective applications should be based on the above criteria and submitted application documents.

If SRG convenors, ACER and DG ENER do not approve an application, the actual composition of the SRG will not be affected even if one of the stakeholder groups remains less represented.

⁸ <https://www.entsoe.eu/news/2023/08/16/entso-e-and-entsog-publish-the-list-of-members-of-the-scenarios-external-technical-advisory-group-scenarios-etag/>

⁹ Relevant information is available on a dedicated website: <https://www.entsos-tyndp-scenarios.eu/stakeholder-reference-group/>

If application is approved, the prospective new SRG member explicitly accepts adherence with these Terms of Reference.

3.3 Membership duration

The SRG members do not have a fixed term and will remain part of the group until their organisation officially resigns as a member. If that is the case, the convenors should inform ACER and DG ENER and the entire SRG, respectively.

If the respective resigning organisation wants to suggest a new organisation as their replacement in the SRG, the process should follow as described under point 3.2.

3.4 Stakeholder Reference Group Observer Members

The ENTSOs, ACER, the European Commission, Member State Representatives, and the European Union's Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change (hereafter 'Scientific Advisory Board') can become observers to the SRG. Observer members attend Scenarios SRG meetings. They only participate in discussions when it is foreseen in the agenda of the meeting but have no voting power.

3.5 Stakeholder Reference Group Membership Principles

Once selected, members of the SRG commit to reviewing and following these terms of reference, including the following principles for work within the SRG:

- ❖ Each organisation member of the SRG is represented by only one 'regular representative', and each regular representative has one vote.
- ❖ Each member may designate an 'alternate representative' within their organisation.
- ❖ An alternate representative may attend, interact in and contribute to all SRG meetings and exchanges to allow them to keep up with the activities of the group. An alternate representative does not have an additional vote. However, in case the regular representative cannot vote by the decided timeline, the alternate representative can vote on behalf of the respective organisation.
- ❖ Where a representative to the SRG is no longer able to serve in that role, it is possible to nominate a 'substitute representative' for an entity or organisation that already has

membership in the SRG, with the approval of the group per the Framework Guidelines and the voting process laid out in section 3.7. Once approved, the substitute representative will then become the regular representative for the entity or organisation. An 'alternate representative' can become a 'substitute representative' to replace an individual that is no longer able to serve their role as a representative to the SRG.

- ❖ Members shall discontinue their membership in case of conflict of interest.¹⁰ A 'conflict of interest' is defined by the group as a situation wherein the member is acting counter to the interest of the success of the SRG in accomplishing its work as set out in section 4 below.
- ❖ Members are expected to follow these terms of reference and contribute actively to the work of the SRG dedicating 0.1 FTE monthly, including by liaising with their members and stakeholders to represent their views, and by consistently attending and actively participating in meetings and contributing to SRG's work and outputs.
- ❖ Members are expected to provide regular, constructive feedback on internal SRG consultations and on the development of opinions that inform the ENTSOs' work on the TYNDP scenarios. To enable meaningful feedback, the relevant materials should be shared with SRG members reasonably in advance of the applicable internal SRG deadline.
- ❖ In case a member or their alternate has not participated in three consecutive SRG meetings, the convenors have the right to request to the respective organisation a substitute member.
- ❖ If a member fails to attend SRG meetings or does not actively contribute to the work of the SRG, including failing to participate in voting procedures two times in a row, and does not respond to communication attempts by the convenors, the member shall lose their voting rights after one month of such inactivity. Where a member continues to fail to respond to the convenors' communications and specific requests, after additional month (two months of inactivity in total) the member may be removed from the SRG. Any such decision shall be communicated to ACER and DG ENER.
- ❖ SRG shall organise itself to act independently from the ENTSOs, with the aim of providing timely, expert input to the ENTSOs' development of scenarios in accordance with the ENTSOs' scenario development timeline. The SRG sees this goal as best achievable if the ENTSOs make the scenario development timeline available at least one month prior to the launch of the respective scenario storyline process. The SRG will work with the ENTSOs to develop this schedule in a timely manner.
- ❖ Members will take the process timeline and stakeholder engagement plan into consideration, by ensuring that input and/or concerns are highlighted as soon as possible so that the group may take all viewpoints into consideration in an organised fashion, and deliver input to the ENTSOs in a timely manner;

¹⁰ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 44.

- ❖ In case the SRG members represent a membership-based organisations, they can ask for input from their own members or stakeholders as they deem appropriate, while ensuring confidentiality of data provided by the ENTSOs;
- ❖ Members will come to the SRG with respect and an open mind to hearing and considering the diverse perspectives of the other SRG members;
- ❖ Members shall be able to suggest agenda points to the entire group without needing prior approval by the convenors;
- ❖ The SRG may organise itself to work in plenary or in workgroups that will report back to the whole group;
- ❖ Members will strive to come together to provide the most useful input for the development of the joint scenarios;
- ❖ Where consensus cannot be reached, members will work together to consolidate and outline the different viewpoints for the benefit of the ENTSOs, noting the proportion of support for those viewpoints. The different viewpoints should be explicitly stated in the SRG outputs and communications.
- ❖ SRG as a separate entity will not take part in the public consultation of the ENTSOs in the scenario and TYNDP process, however, the SRG members can participate in these consultations on behalf of their organisations and support recommendations that may contradict the SRG ones.

3.6 Stakeholder Reference Group Convenor(s)

SRG members shall elect a convenor (or two co-convenors) and a vice-convenor (or two vice-convenors) serving in these roles during each 2-year TYNDP cycle. At the beginning of each TYNDP cycle, the currently serving their roles convenors and vice-convenors shall organise the voting process for the new convenors and vice-convenors to be elected for the new cycle.

SRG members interested in serving as a convenor(s) or a vice-convenor(s) shall submit to the currently serving convenors and vice-convenors a statement of interest for consideration in the respective election.

After receiving statements of interest, the currently serving their roles convenors and vice-convenors should organise a voting as outlined in the Section 3.7. Candidates receiving the most votes shall be elected respectively as convenors or vice-convenors. In the event of a tie, there shall be an additional vote between the tied candidates.

If a (vice-) convenor steps down in the course of the two-year term, the remaining convenors and vice-convenors shall organise an open call for members to submit a statement of interest for consideration by the other members of the group. Newly elected (vice-) convenors then serve for the remainder of the two-year term.

The convenor(s) shall:

- ❖ Organise regular Stakeholder Reference Group meetings on at least a bi-weekly basis
- ❖ Propose and share the agenda of the SRG meetings. Any changes to the agenda will not prevent a meeting from moving forward;
- ❖ Organise and chair the meetings, with the goal of ensuring balanced expression of represented interests and a non-discriminatory dialogue;
- ❖ Draft the Terms of Reference and any amendments thereto
- ❖ Document data asked and delivered from the ENTSOs to the SRG.

Convenors and vice-convenors shall:

- ❖ Draft the minutes of the meetings based on the attached standardised template and circulate those minutes within 10 days of a meeting; in case this deadline cannot be respected, the responsible convenor or vice-convenor should inform after 10 days the other convenors and vice-convenors
- ❖ Share responsibilities and replace themselves in completing the tasks listed above when the convenor / vice-convenor is not available to fulfil them.

3.7 Stakeholder Reference Group Decision Making

The members of the SRG shall take formal votes as needed within the SRG. Those votes shall include at least:

- ❖ Election of convenor(s), and vice-convenors;
- ❖ Adoption of Terms of Reference and any amendments thereto;
- ❖ Adoption of the input and/or recommendations to be submitted to the ENTSOs, including inputs as outlined in ACER Scenario Guidelines;
- ❖ Any decision to propose activation of the quick-update process (see 4.1).

A quorum is required for a vote to be taken. A quorum shall consist of at least two-thirds of the members of the SRG, eligible to vote (as per Section 3.5). A simple majority is required for a decision to be adopted. SRG members should vote in favour of the decisions/recommendations, against them or abstain from voting.

A member who is unable to participate in a voting procedure may vote by proxy (give either to another SRG member or to an alternate member), if the documentation of that request is made available to the convenors and vice-convenors at the time of the vote. The group shall vote via an electronic voting application, or by raising of hands in a meeting.

The following decisions are made with a lighter approval process:

- ❖ Adoption of the agenda: remarks or suggested additions can be sent ahead of the meeting in reaction to the notification of the draft agenda by the convenor(s), or at the start of the meeting.
- ❖ Minutes of meetings: remarks or suggested additions can be sent in reaction to the notification of the draft minutes (either sent to SRG members or uploaded in joint working space), within one week, after which the minutes are considered approved.

Substitution of an SRG member within the same entity or organisation when requested by that entity or organisation: the SRG members will be notified by the convenor(s), including a letter of interest and CV by the applicant. Any SRG member can raise objections within one week. If there are objections, a formal voting process as above will be organised, otherwise, the application will be considered approved.

3.8 Transparency and Documentation

The convenor(s) of the SRG shall provide the following information to the ENTSOs to post on the TYNDP Scenarios website hosted by the ENTSOs:

- ❖ List of SRG members, observer members and convenor(s), including names and affiliations
- ❖ SRG Terms of Reference

- ❖ Agendas and minutes of SRG meetings, taking into consideration that the SRG may operate under Chatham House rules.
- ❖ Input and recommendations delivered by the SRG to the ENTSOs.

4. WORK OF THE STAKEHOLDER REFERENCE GROUP

4.1 Stakeholder Reference Group Inputs

ACER's Framework Guidelines require that the "development of scenarios shall follow as much as possible an open process to involve stakeholders, ensuring a broad participation." "The SRG shall offer scrutiny, by performing a balanced internal discussion, independently from the ENTSOs, on the **inputs, assumptions and methodologies** proposed by the ENTSOs."¹¹

To accomplish these goals, the SRG shall provide information and feedback throughout the scenario building process. The SRG's feedback will be guided by the ENTSOs' comprehensive process timeline and stakeholder engagement plan. The SRG will contribute to co-creating the process timeline, which shall include the steps, deadlines and the specific stakeholder engagement plan for the process as outlined in ACER's Framework Guidelines.¹²

Generally, the SRG's input will include:

- ❖ Initially, the SRG shall provide the ENTSOs input, which may be based on previous TYNDP storylines and scenarios, including ideas and recommendations regarding inputs, assumptions and methodologies to inform the next scenario-building process. The SRG will include input regarding how best to ensure consistency with EU energy and climate objectives, 2050 climate neutrality objective, the energy-efficiency first principle, the latest Commission scenarios, and the national energy and climate plans (NECPs).¹³
- ❖ During the scenario-building process, the SRG will provide additional perspectives about the inputs, assumptions and methodologies being used to build scenarios. The SRG will also provide input regarding any additional scenarios proposed by the ENTSOs for the mid-term

¹¹ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 41, 54, *see also* para. 31, 32, 35, 38.

¹² ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 46-47, *passim*.

¹³ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 23.

and long-term time horizons, including on “key uncertainties concerning network development and the choice of corresponding storylines,” and re-opening or addition of storylines.¹⁴

- ❖ The SRG may provide input and feedback related to process timeline and stakeholder engagement plan prepared by ENTSOs before starting the scenarios-building cycle.
- ❖ At the end of each TYNDP cycle, the SRG will provide feedback and advice to ENTSOs, ACER and the Commission, based on the main outcomes of their discussions related to the scenario building process and including recommendations for the next cycle(s) as per articles (55) and (67) of ACER’s Framework Guidelines.
- ❖ The SRG may propose activation of the quick-update process as the result of a ‘sufficiently significant event’ as outlined in ACER’s Framework Guidelines.¹⁵ If the SRG decides to propose activation of the quick-update process, it must inform the European Commission, ACER, the ENTSOs and the Scientific Advisory Board.¹⁶ If the quick-update process is activated, the SRG shall provide input as set out in the Framework Guidelines.¹⁷

The SRG shall work towards consensus in its advice and recommendations to the ENTSOs. Where there are diverging points of view or recommendations, the SRG shall propose a vote to determine whether is significant support in one direction or another, and to what extent different viewpoints are supported. The SRG will then draft its main outcomes and recommendations to the ENTSOs taking into account these divergent opinions, including explanation of the points which triggered differences of opinion.¹⁸

4.2 Information to accomplish the tasks of the Stakeholder Reference Group

“An open and streamlined process relies on clear communication about the assumptions and proper documentation of the inputs, assumptions, models and scenarios.”¹⁹ The ENTSOs shall publish information for the SRG and other stakeholders per ACER’s Framework Guidelines. This information includes broadly “all data sets, qualitative assumptions and formal hypotheses, as

¹⁴ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 38.

¹⁵ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 59-65.

¹⁶ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 60.

¹⁷ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 62.

¹⁸ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 55.

¹⁹ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 50.

granular and disaggregated as possible, in an appropriate and predefined format.” The ENTSOs shall also provide “all technical documentation of the tools and models for those wishing to replicate and reproduce the scenario building,” and explanations of “how the tools and models are used in the process for constructing scenarios.”²⁰ In addition to the specific information requirements set forth in the Framework Guidelines, the ENTSOs shall also make available all information and documents requested by the SRG to carry out its tasks, taking into account the “duty to protect justified confidential information in line with legal requirements.”²¹ All information shall be made available in line with the FAIR principle: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable.²² ENTSOs, while asking SRG for feedback to their work throughout the scenarios cycle, should guarantee that reasonable time is ensured for the SRG (minimum two weeks, depending on the depth and scope of the input expected) to organise themselves in order to deliver most valuable feedback.

In addition to the information provided by the ENTSOs, the SRG may inform their input to the ENTSOs through additional information, including:

- ❖ information and/or presentations requested from the ENTSOs by the SRG;
- ❖ analysis and information from members within the SRG;
- ❖ outreach by the SRG to external experts; and
- ❖ input to the SRG from other stakeholders.

Additional experts may be suggested by the SRG or observers and invited by the SRG co-conveners to SRG meetings and/or other activities when relevant to the foreseen agenda for specific topics. Their participation will be announced in advance and at the start of SRG meetings. They may contribute to the discussion but have no voting power. Any material presented by such external experts should be made available to all SRG members.

²⁰ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 52.

²¹ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 57.

²² ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 52.

Where the ENTSOs assert claims of confidentiality, the SRG may request information about those claims, including “a sufficient explanation that allows stakeholders to understand what the data is about, why it is confidential and how the ENTSOs have considered those data in the development of the scenarios.”²³ The SRG may request the ENTSOs to consider whether the information can be anonymised or redacted so that as much information as possible can be made available, and how the ENTSOs avoided “agreements that could lead to confidentiality claims and consequent data restrictions.”²⁴

²³ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 50.

²⁴ ACER Framework Guidelines at para. 50.