national gas transmission

INVESTMENT JUSTIFICATION PAPER (IJP)

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

Customer and Stakeholder

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RIIO-GT3 NGT_IJP02

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Customer and Stakeholder IT investments

1 Summary table

Name of project	Customer and Stakeholder
Scheme reference	TBD
Primary investment driver	Deliver compliance with IT asset health policy
Project initiation year	2026
Project close out year	2031
Total installed cost estimate (£)	[redacted] = £39.310m
Historic funding interactions	None
Project spend to date	£0
Current project stage gate	Not started
Reporting table ref	6.11, 11.2
Outputs	IT deliverables as detailed in the investment particulars

Spend apportionment	**T1**	**T2**	**GT3**
	£0	£0	£39.310m

2 Executive summary

This Investment Justification Paper (IJP) sets out our planned investments to sustain and extend our Contact and Relationship Management (CRM) and New Information Provision (NIP) systems. Both systems are critical to our services to customers and stakeholders, and through RIIO-GT3 will respond to demands for easier access, better and broader data, and easier ways to interact with us.

These two areas of capability are central to our alignment with Ofgem Data Best Practice and fundamental to how we facilitate the evolving energy industry and whole system management. We are also driven by trends in customer service from other industries, which drive customer expectations upwards and bring fresh ideas to a traditional but rapidly changing energy industry. The CRM investments set out in this document will enable deeper insights into our customers by building a full interaction history, from which we can better understand how best to serve their needs.

This IJP should be read in conjunction with the IT and Telecoms Strategy document[1] which describes the context, approach and overall portfolio of investments for IT and Telecoms in RIIO-GT3. All investments in this paper are within our baseline plan.

The investments in this paper address the following key issues which trigger action:

- Ensure compliance with policy (e.g. IT asset health), regulation and legislation:
    - Compliance – evolving regulation and legislation continue to require updates to customer systems. In particular, Ofgem Data Best Practice (DBP) guidance is driving greater data sharing and interoperability.
    - IT Asset health – we need to keep our systems secure and reliable, and refresh them in line with our IT Asset Health Policy. As with other assets, these systems and services contracts eventually reach end-of-life and investment is required to refresh the systems or procure new services.
    - Security – threats are constantly evolving and our systems need to be kept up to date with security updates.
- Business requirements which enable the delivery of business outcomes:
    - Enhanced capabilities – business requirements continue to be defined by all users (internal and external) for new functionality critical to delivery of business outcomes. This trigger applies only to IT 049 New Information Provision: Smart Apps and the rest are primarily driven by compliance with Data Best Practice.

Investments in this paper primarily support one Ofgem key outcome: High Quality of Service from Regulated Firms (10 investments, Totex of £39.309m). There are two investments not in baseline and put forward under the Uncertainty Mechanism (UM). The reasons for excluding from baseline are explained in detail in the investment section.

The investments are listed below, aligned to the primary outcome and the trigger for action. Triggers are described in detail in the IT and Telecoms Strategy[1] section 3.3.3.

Ref	Investment Line	Trigger	Totex £m	Primary Outcome	Cost sub-category
IT 052	Contact Management: Digital Support Centre (Streamlined Help Location)	Deliver outcomes	[redacted]	High quality of service	Digital platforms
IT 051	Contact Management: Refresh	Deliver compliance	[redacted]	High quality of service	IT & Telecoms
IT 056	Contact Management: Tech Health	Deliver compliance	[redacted]	High quality of service	IT & Telecoms
IT 046	New Information Provision: Open data publications	Deliver compliance	[redacted]	High quality of service	Digital platforms
IT 047	New Information Provision: Continued Development of APIs	Deliver compliance	[redacted]	High quality of service	Digital platforms
IT 049	New Information Provision: Smart Apps	Deliver outcomes	[redacted]	High quality of service	Digital platforms
IT 050	New Information Provision: Tech Health	Deliver compliance	[redacted]	High quality of service	IT & Telecoms
IT 102	New Information Provision: Refresh	Deliver compliance	[redacted]	High quality of service	IT & Telecoms
	Total for baseline		[redacted]		
IT 054	Contact Management: Process Automations & Enhancements - **UM**	Deliver outcomes	[redacted]	High quality of service	Digital processes
IT 055	Contact Management: Omni-channel Support - **UM**	Deliver outcomes	[redacted]	High quality of service	Digital infrastructure
	Grand total		[redacted]		

Scope and volumes for each investment have undergone internal and external assurance. Costs have been developed 'bottom-up' using detailed resource plans and have been assured through benchmarking against industry comparators by Gartner, Inc.[2].

Options analysis has been carried out for each investment. This has considered various factors including cost, functionality, risk, alignment with IT architecture / strategy, business change impact, and the resulting ability to support the business and regulatory outcomes. Comparative analysis of these factors has prioritised achieving outcomes in the most cost effective way.

[1] NGT_A11_IT and Telecoms Strategy_RIIO-GT3

[2] NGT_C01_Gartner Review of IT Costs and Benchmarking of comparable costs

3 Introduction

3.1 Scope of this paper

This Investment Justification Paper (IJP) covers two areas of IT supporting customer and stakeholder services:

Capability area	Focus
Contact and relationship management (CRM)	Facilitating interactions between NGT and our customers in a modern, efficient and effective way to optimise service and our relationships
Data discoverability (New Information Provision)	Expanding existing data provision for our customers and stakeholders, and providing new and easier ways to access data

The background and drivers for these two areas are described below. Investments for each will variously range over the whole of the 5-year period, as detailed in the cost profile and project plan for each investment.

Contact and relationship management (CRM)

Our investments in CRM respond to two key challenges:

- Keeping the systems 'evergreen' by applying regular upgrades to ensure security and reliability of the software, and refreshing the system when it reaches end-of-life in 2027, in line with our IT Asset Health Policy.
- Building new capabilities that respond to customer and stakeholder feedback, such as multi-channel/device support, help function and other process automation, and consolidation of all interactions onto a common Customer Insights Hub with case management, which provides a single repository of interaction history.

The five investments in this area collectively provide a modern CRM capability that meets the demands of customers and stakeholders while ensuring NGT stays aligned with industry best practices. As the energy sector evolves, becoming more integrated and involving a wider range of participants, building a deep understanding of all interactions and leveraging this knowledge to deliver excellent service levels will be crucial.

Data discoverability (New Information Provision)

Currently, we deliver essential information to gas industry participants, enabling the gas market to function effectively. Whole energy system management broadens the scope, scale, and participation in this interoperability, and the five investments in this area are designed to support this expanded role. We will provide fair and timely access to operational and market information with a focus on efficiency, providing new data and new tools to automate and improve usability. We will use modern technologies to better enable system interoperability with our data, and use personalisation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to facilitate search and navigation around a widening pool of information. These developments are central to strengthening our compliance with Ofgem Data Best Practice guidelines.

3.2 How this document is structured

Each investment described in this document has been developed through an iterative process of engagement with users, solution scoping and options analysis, and benefits confirmation. We have followed our SVC standard (scope, volume and cost data confidence standard – Non-AMP (IT)) in this process, descoping any investments that fell short of this standard. For more detail on how the scope, volume and cost of investments were developed, see the IT and Telecoms Strategy, section 3.4.

Each investment has the following sections which provide context, analysis, proposed way forward and spend profile:

- **Background and scope summary –** This section summarises the context of the system, the investments proposed to address issues and the business and regulatory outcomes that will be enabled. The trigger for action is made clear and the IT deliverables described. A problem / opportunity statement is provided, detailing the problems with the current systems and the implications of not investing.
- **Optioneering –** This section contains a description of the options considered to address the problems described above. It should be noted that definition of specific products is not part of the investment scope and options for technology / supplier selection will be carried out as part of the project lifecycle. IT products evolve quickly and this enables the best solution to be selected nearer the time. Option analysis has compared various factors including cost, functionality, risk, alignment with IT architecture / strategy, business change impact, and the resulting ability to support the business and

regulatory outcomes. Comparative analysis of these factors has enabled us to prioritise achievement of outcomes in the most cost-effective way.

- **Preferred option –** The preferred option is identified, with a summary of the reasoning behind its selection and benefits.
- **Cost and deliverability –** The investment spend profile tables show the Capex and Opex (if applicable) profile for each investment over the five-year RIIO-GT3 period. Note that Opex can be either early work that is not capitalisable or a net increase in run the business (RTB) cost e.g. from new software licences. Increased RTB Opex is captured here, rather than in the RTB business plan so that it is clear what is changing.

  Costs have been developed from bottom-up analysis and informed by historic costs, supplier discussions, quotations and tenders and reach the standard set out in our policy: SVC Data Confidence Standard v1 Non-AMP (IT). These tables also give a comparison benchmark range provided by Gartner, Inc. who have carried out a detailed examination of the scope and proposed cost and used global comparators to give an upper and lower range. See the IT and Telecoms Strategy, section 3.4.3 for more detail on the iterative process of alignment with benchmarks. The Gartner IT benchmarking consultant's report is provided separately.

  A high level project plan is provided that shows activity timing by year.

  This section references the IT and Telecoms Strategy document for details of cost drivers and for deliverability as these aspects are common to all investments.

4 Capability 1: Contact and relationship management

Meeting the needs of customers and network users is at the forefront of our core business values and maintaining our contact management systems is an important part of that. As we move our focus towards investing in multiple customer channels, unifying these fragmented conversations for a single brand and voice to our customers will improve ease of use and strengthens our customer relationships. We will focus on creating a convenient experience that quickly becomes familiar. Providing a single face in the presence of multiple communication avenues across our products and services is imperative for the success of our Customer & Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.

In RIIO-T2, we invested in continued improvements of our existing Contact & Relationship Management capabilities. Specifically, we increased the volume of data being collected during contact interactions and enhanced the user experience for both internal and external users.

Our RIIO-GT3 investment builds on this development, to further enhance the user experience for customers, automate and streamline processes, and refresh and maintain the platform. The continuation of these enhancements will increase customer and stakeholder satisfaction, reduce the number of FTEs required to manage customer queries and decrease the time taken to resolve queries. This plan responds to customer research that indicates that customers would value more streamlined engagement from our organisation. The investments in process automation and further digitalisation will help to ensure that customers can engage with us more frequently, easily and effectively.

The key themes highlighted in the research were:

- Multiple forms of Customer Engagement to provide timely information, data and content to ensure our customers and stakeholder are kept up to date.
- Technology enhancements to support greater numbers of interactions and access to data.
- Enhanced opportunity and methods for collaboration to support planning, projects and strategy.

Addressing the key themes identified by this research will enable better collaboration which in turn will support the acceleration of the energy transition.

There are five investments in this area, as follows:

Platform	Capability	Investment	£m
Contact & Relationship Management Platform	Customer Engagement	IT 052 CRMS: Digital Support Centre (Streamlined Help Location)	[redacted]
		IT 051 CRMS: Refresh	[redacted]
		IT 056 CRMS: Tech Health	[redacted]
		IT 054 CRMS: Process Automations & Enhancements - UM	[redacted]
		IT 055 CRMS: Omni-channel Support - UM	[redacted]

4.1 IT 052 CRMS: Digital Support Centre (Streamlined help location)

4.1.1 Background and scope summary

Problem / Trigger	Strategy	Business Outcome	Primary Regulatory Outcome	Cost sub-category
Ease of use and respond to customer feedback	Enhance	Deliver sustainable value for our customers and stakeholders	High quality of service from regulated firms	Digital platforms

This investment is to deliver enhancements to the existing Contact and Relationship Management System (CRMS).

We are committed to delivering exceptional services to our customers and stakeholders. This investment will deliver a digital location, the "Support Hub", for all customers and stakeholders to seek information, data, help, and processes personalised to an individual or group.

Our RIIO-T2 investments laid the groundwork for enabling enhancements in RIIO-GT3, by focusing on the collection of query data in a centralised system to better enable business processes and inform future strategy. This investment will deliver the following enhancements that will form the Support Hub:

- **Foundations for Automated Business Processes**: Putting in place the technology foundations for future development of the ability for users to access automated processes relevant to their profile, resulting in reduced time taken to access relevant functionality for a specific customer or stakeholder type.
- **Help Channels**: The ability for users to access help information and routes for resolution in a single location, reducing the time taken for finding an appropriate contact and/or method.
- **Engagement and Communications**: Customers and stakeholders will be able to access the following engagement activities and information via the Customer Insights Hub:
    - Webinars
    - Online workshops
    - Registration for networking events
    - Key publications
    - Connections/disconnections
    - Personalised data and reports
    - Gas Grantor information
    - Raise a query or report an issue
    - Surveys.
- **Single Location for Help and Processes**: Customers have provided feedback that the current offering of digital information is not always easy to find. To reduce the time taken to access the information, help and processes, we will centralise all relevant automation and content into a single 'Help' location. This will include the coupling of log-in and dashboard functionality into a single view, allowing the customer to visualise all their data and activities in one place, and manage their National Gas profile in one system.

This investment will achieve the following benefits:

- Reduction in time taken to access information and help support.
- Enables other areas of investment such as the omni-channel support (IT 055) and AI support (IT 054) by providing the foundation upon which to build them.
- Our research shows that customers require more streamlined engagement from us. Investment in process automation in key areas will drive efficiencies to enable us to focus on higher value-add engagement that cannot be achieved through technology automation.
- Increased data sharing between departments, facilitating deeper insights and improving business outcomes.
- Further strengthening compliance with the following Data Best Practice principle:
    - 5. Make Data Assets discoverable for potential Data Users.

By consolidating all our help and support services into a single location, we can provide a more intuitive user experience across our externally facing products and better utilise the data for insights to inform us of customer and stakeholder needs. This continues to ensure the data of our business and customers aligns with Ofgem's Data Best Practice and allows business wide collaboration on customer queries and interactions.

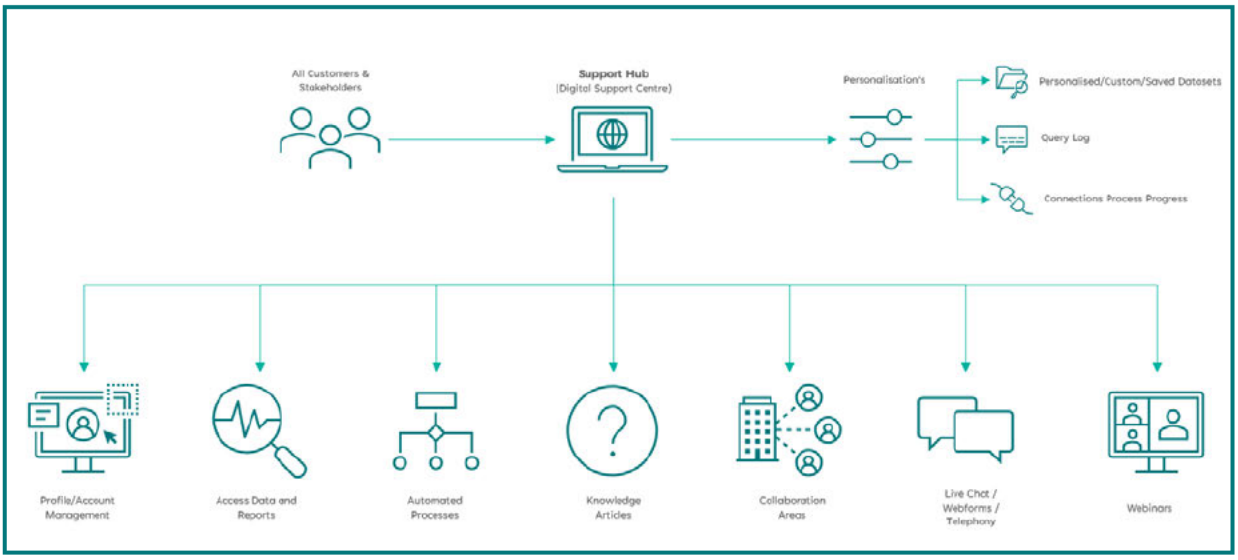

Figure 4.1. Support Hub scope

Problem / opportunity statement

Customers and stakeholders provide feedback to us through our various engagement activities and we need to respond to this feedback. Scope here includes specific concerns or requests and more general expectations for customer service at large. Key themes from research shows that customers would value the following:

- Multiple forms of Customer Engagement to provide timely information, data and content to ensure our customers and stakeholder are kept up to date.
- Technology enhancements to support greater numbers of interactions and access to data.

There is opportunity for enhanced methods for collaboration to support planning, projects and strategy. At present, our CRM system presents a fragmented set of channels to the outside world and this fragmentation also inhibits the development of enhancements such as automation.

4.1.2 Optioneering

The options for this investment were selected to contrast the outcome of not investing with alternative levels of target outputs. Option A addresses the core issue of fragmented channels and data whereas option B invests the minimum to keep the systems up to date under asset health policy.

The table below sets out the options considered for this capability.

Ref.	Option Description	Pros	Cons
DNI	No investment.	• None identified.	• Inability to build on previous RIIO-T2 CRM investment which lay the groundwork for future improvements. • Inability to adapt to evolving technological and industry environment. • Decreased automation which results in less time being spent on the most important tasks.
A	Single digital location to manage all incoming customer & stakeholder communications and access based on user type. **Recommended**	• Reduction in time taken to access information and help support. • Enables other areas of investment such as omni-channel support and AI support by providing the foundation upon which to build them. • Increased data sharing between departments facilitates deeper insights and positively impacts business outcomes. • Foundation technology for future process automation in key areas will drive future efficiencies to enable us to focus on higher	• Staff will need to be trained in new processes and technologies which requires change management. • Investment cost (A & B similar)

		value-add engagement that cannot be achieved through technology automation.	
B	Multiple digital locations for customers and stakeholders to get access.	• Some expansion of previous capabilities • Allows for devolved management of each business area's data as they see fit.	• Investing in the current siloed structure will lead to reduced return on investment in comparison to other options. • Information becomes siloed within business areas. • Cooperation between business areas becomes more difficult as they continue to diverge technologically. • Customers and stakeholders find it harder to get the help because their traffic to flows to the wrong areas, increasing overall workload without improving productivity. • Investment cost (A & B similar)

4.1.3 Preferred option

Our recommended investment approach is Option A. This option provides the most flexibility and innovation. This ensures that customer needs are met, new services and business capabilities are facilitated, and processes operate more efficiently, in line with our RIIO-GT3 Customer Engagement strategy. Options DNI and B were discounted as they do not address the key issue of fragmented data that impedes automation and slows processes.

Customer / stakeholder benefits

The benefits gained by external parties are:

- Increased customer and stakeholder satisfaction through improved collaboration and visibility of history contact and account details.
- Increased security of customer and stakeholder data.
- Increased process efficiencies and accessibility of data, information, and processes.
- Increased consistency in communications, resulting in improved satisfaction with the National Gas brand.
- Reduction in time taken to resolve queries and for customers and stakeholders to find resources and support.

4.1.4 Cost and deliverability

The cost drivers for this investment are in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.3. Costs are for the full scope of deliverables as described above. Deliverability of this investment is in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.5.

The spend profile and delivery plan are shown below. Note that the cost profile shows the cost spread across all five years, in line with data tables

IT 052 – CRMS: Digital Support Centre							Gartner Benchmark Range		Gartner Rating
Investment (£m)	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	Totals	Low	High	
CAPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
OPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows two years of activity, assuming the work to start in FY 28/29

IT 052 – Digital Support Centre	FY 26/27	FY 27/28	FY 28/29	FY 29/30	FY30/31
Requirement & Design					
Development & Testing					
Deployment					

4.2 IT 051 CRMS: Refresh

4.2.1 Background and scope summary

Problem / Trigger	Strategy	Business Outcome	Primary Regulatory Outcome	Cost sub-category
Asset health – end-of-life system	Refresh	Operate safely, reliably, and flexibly – refresh CRM system	Secure and resilient supplies	IT & Telecoms

The CRM system requires a full platform refresh by 2027 in line with our Asset Health Policy and current contractual arrangements. This investment is to enable National Gas to initiate a competitive procurement process and deliver a full system refresh. This refresh will involve market testing and either continuing with our current supplier or moving to a new one. Other CRMS investments in this IJP will be either independent of this refresh or planned to minimise regret cost and maximise benefits.

This investment sustains compliance with the following Data Best Practice principles:

- 9. Protect Data Assets and systems in accordance with Security, Privacy and Resilience (SPaR) best practice.

Problem / opportunity statement

Without investment, the current platform capability would degrade and eventually become insecure and unusable through incompatibility with our other systems. Interaction and collaboration across the company and with external groups would be severely impacted by any degradation.

4.2.2 Optioneering

The options for this investment were selected to contrast the outcome of not investing with alternative ways of achieving the target outputs. There is only one alternative to letting the system fall out of asset health policy – investing in a refresh once current contractual arrangements end. This refresh will use the best available offering at the time.

The table below sets out the options considered for this capability.

Ref.	Option Description	Pros	Cons
DNI	No investment	• N/A	• CRM systems support will be lost and the system made unavailable. • National Gas will not be able to meet the Asset Health Policy guidelines. • National Gas will not be able to take advantage of lower costs should a better value contract be on offer.
A	Full Asset Health Refresh	• Enables National Gas to go to market for better value contracts. • Potential for access to better functionality. • Enables the Asset Health Policy guidelines to be met.	• Cost. • Management of the project.

4.2.3 Preferred option

Our recommended investment is Option A. This investment is critical to the continuing provision of a secure and reliable service and so Option DNI was discounted on this basis.

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows the five-yearly replacement of system, in line with our IT Asset Health Policy.

Customer / stakeholder benefits

The benefits gained by external parties are:

- National Gas ensures it operates using contracts at the best value possible, reducing downstream costs on customers.
- New functionality may be enabled through a different vendor and through a fair procurement process we ensure we are always at the forefront of current vendor capabilities.

- Ensuring the contact management systems are procured from the best available options will maximise productivity of relevant staff leading to better / quicker resolutions for customers.

4.2.4 Cost and deliverability

The cost drivers for this investment are in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.3. Costs are for the full scope of deliverables as described above. Deliverability of this investment is in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.5.

The spend profile and delivery plan are shown below. Note that the cost profile shows the cost spread across all five years, in line with data tables

IT 051 CRMS: Refresh							Gartner Benchmark Range		Gartner Rating
Investment (£m)	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	Totals	Low	High	
CAPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
OPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows two years of activity, assuming procurement event on FY 26/27

IT 051 CRMS: Refresh	FY 26/27	FY 27/28	FY 28/29	FY 29/30	FY30/31
Requirement & Design					
Procurement					
Development & Testing					
Deployment					

4.3 IT 056 CRMS: Tech health

4.3.1 Background and scope summary

Problem / Trigger	Strategy	Business Outcome	Primary Regulatory Outcome	Cost sub-category
Technology opportunities	Enhance	Operate safely, reliably, and flexibly – refresh infrastructure	Secure and resilient supplies	IT & Telecoms

We will continue to invest in our CRM platform to keep it supported in line with vendor releases. This is independent of the refresh investment above (IT 051) as both existing and refreshed platform will require periodic upgrades e.g. for security releases. The platform is a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platform and so we will be required to complete necessary regression and user testing on a bi-annual basis when upgrades are released by the vendor. This is to maintain the stability and security of the platform and ensure it remains supportable. Regular system upgrades also support the deployment of new out-of-the-box product features, such as enhanced security features and solution capabilities, to drive further solution enhancements and ensure the solution is adherent to our Asset Health Policy.

This investment sustains compliance with the following Data Best Practice principles:

- 9. Protect Data Assets and systems in accordance with Security, Privacy and Resilience (SPaR) best practice.

Problem / opportunity statement

Regular investment is required to keep systems secure and reliable by applying security updates and new releases. Without these, system performance and security would degrade, and it would become unsupported. Integration with other systems would also degrade and eventually stop working.

4.3.2 Optioneering

The options for this investment were selected to contrast the outcome of not investing with alternative ways of achieving the target outputs. There is only one alternative to letting the system fall out of asset health policy – investing in applying updates as they are released by the software vendor.

The table below sets out the options considered for this capability.

Ref.	Option Description	Pros	Cons

DNI	Do nothing	• N/A	• Inability to maintain systems. • No additional ability to report issues. • Software issues get resolved slowly leading to loss in productivity. • Inability to renew licenses.
A	Continue to investment in incremental upgrades and testing to support tech health. **Recommended**	• Security, supportability and stability. • Allows for implementation of new features. • Minimal training required to use new capabilities.	• N/A

4.3.3 Preferred option

Our recommended investment is Option A. This is to allow National Gas to maintain the products technical health and ensure ongoing supportability, security and stability of the CRMS platform.

Customer / stakeholder benefits

The benefits of this investment are:

- Continued secure and reliable service provided through the CRMS.
- New functionality offered by software releases can be made available.

4.3.4 Cost and deliverability

The cost drivers for this investment are in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.3. Costs are for the full scope of deliverables as described above. Deliverability of this investment is in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.5.

The spend profile and delivery plan are shown below.

IT 056 CRMS: Tech Health							Gartner Benchmark Range		Gartner Rating
Investment (£m)	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	Totals	Low	High	
CAPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
OPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows a process of continuous updates across the period.

IT 056 CRMS: Tech Health	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31
Annual Upgrades & Solution Maintenance					

4.4 IT 054 CRMS: Process automations and enhancements - UM

4.4.1 Background and scope summary

Problem / Trigger	Strategy	Business Outcome	Primary Regulatory Outcome	Cost sub-category
Ease of use	Enhance	Deliver sustainable value for our customers and stakeholders	High quality of service from regulated firms	Digital processes

This investment is being put forward under the Uncertainty Mechanism. Whilst the scope reflects an improvement in capabilities, the development of business requirements is ongoing and we will review progress within RIIO-GT3.

Our RIIO-T2 investment saw the transformation of the Gas Connections and the Gas Grantor Yearly Engagement processes through their integration into the Contact & Relationship Management (CRM) system. These processes support new connections to the network and the annual communication with landowners and occupiers (Grantors) of land which our pipelines cross. This has delivered tangible benefits by enabling collaboration on processes and understanding a customer or stakeholder's history of communications throughout their engagement lifecycle.

The research we have conducted with customers and stakeholders has provided us with up-to-date insights on what services they would like to see from National Gas, this included:

- Reduction in time taken to complete processes.
- Increased visibility and communication of progress in processes.

In RIIO-GT3 (subject to UM) we will deliver additional automation and enhancements, responding to demand from customers for more streamlined engagement which would enable greater insight and customer centricity.

The scope of enhancements in this investment are as follows:

- **Optimise customer journeys to drive a better customer experience**: Conduct user research to drive transformation and digitalisation, bringing new processes to enhance the customer experience, increase customer satisfaction and drive efficiencies.
- **Continued enhancements to processes**: Continued enhancement of existing automated processes and digital tools to ensure they are kept up to date with the latest customer needs and market trends.
    - Planning & Advanced Reservation of Capacity Agreement (PARCA): Enhancement of PARCA workflows will ensure the processes remain in line with regulatory and industry requirements, building on work done in RIIO-T2. Integration with our Gemini gas market system will facilitate automation and increase data quality.
    - Gas Grantor: Enhancement of the Gas Grantor lifecycle to transform and digitalise the current process for updating their details, enabling automation for efficiency improvements and increased Gas Grantor satisfaction.
    - Preparing for change: Enabling the market to make informed decisions on the future of natural gas. The Connection process will be made more flexible to support future energy scenarios, including hydrogen and biomethane. Research has estimated that ~ 30 new sites will be connected by 2030 as per the Clean Power 2030 initiative.
    - Streamlined customer journey: Enabling users to access content, support and data in a singular location by using a single and shared automated log-in process.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**: Enabling and leveraging AI capabilities offered by the software product set to allow us to adopt functionality in line with our internal AI strategy. The predictive nature of AI will enhance workflow capabilities and help develop more personalised communications with customers.

This investment will achieve the following benefits:

- Increase in customer satisfaction.
- Actively responding to demand from customers.
- Process automation in key areas will drive efficiencies.
- Facilitates newer connection areas such as hydrogen.
- Further improvement in compliance with the following Data Best Practice principles:
    - 5. Make Data Assets discoverable for potential Data Users.
    - 6. Learn and deliver to the needs of current and prospective Data Users.

Problem / opportunity statement

Customers and stakeholders provide feedback to us through our various engagement activities and we need to respond to this feedback. Scope here includes specific concerns or requests and more general expectations for customer service at large.

At present, our CRM system has little automation which is inefficient for both internal and external users. This investment also addresses continuous improvement as a result of feedback or internally developed requirements.

4.4.2 Optioneering

The options for this investment were selected to contrast the outcome of not investing with alternative levels of target outputs. Option A addresses the issues preventing automation across CRM processes whereas option B invests only in processes related to additional connection requirements, i.e. the minimum to deliver the service.

The table below sets out the options considered for this capability.

Ref.	Option Description	Pros	Cons
DNI	No investment	• No investment required.	• No improvement to current capabilities. • Inability to maintain previous standards of customer care in newer business functions. • Less automation results in less time being spent on the most important tasks.

			• Not listening to customers and acting. • Does not leverage previous work in RIIO-T2.
A	Optimisation of connection processes and automation of processes. **Recommended**	• Standards of customer and stakeholder care are increased across older and newer business areas. • Automation to increase efficiency of processes. • Efficiencies enable focus on higher value-add customer and stakeholder engagement that cannot be achieved through technology automation. • Facilitates newer connection areas such as hydrogen to be better served in the future.	• Process automation commitment required of the business is large. • Change management effort, as the business needs to accept changes to their processes. • Investment cost - higher than B
B	Digitalisation of limited additional connection requirements.	• Facilitates newer connection areas such as hydrogen to be better served in the future.	• Standards of customer care are not increased compared to the previous standard. • Process automations will be limited preventing the potential reduction in workload. • Lower amounts of data collected on hydrogen integrations resulting in less data to inform future processes. • Variations in investment across the business results in new technology for some and not others. This leads to fractured processes and multiple solutions to the same problems driving up costs while decreasing efficiency. • Levels of quality of data vary between platforms leading to blind spots and issues managing and utilising data effectively. • Investment cost – lower than A

4.4.3 Preferred option scope and project plan

Our recommended investment approach is Option A – to unlock and streamline innovation in CRM processes across the business. By implementing additional process automation, customers will be better-informed, processes optimised, and workload for staff reduced. The consolidation of our processes and collection of data will increase efficiency, improve data integrity, and enhance customer goodwill. Whilst Option B has a lower cost due to reduced scope, neither it nor option DNI addresses the key functional issue to provide the automation required for improved productivity.

Customer / stakeholder benefits

The benefits gained by external parties are:

- Increased process efficiencies reduce amount of time required to complete processes leading to increased customer satisfaction.
- Increased application processing speeds reduce customer waiting periods, which also leads to increased customer confidence in National Gas.
- Increased automation of processes reduces risk of data mishandling, leading to increased data integrity, faster process handling and fewer errors, resulting in a better customer experience.

4.4.4 Cost and deliverability

The cost drivers for this investment are in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.3. Costs are for the full scope of deliverables as described above. Deliverability of this investment is in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.5.

The spend profile and delivery plan are shown below. Note that the cost profile shows the cost spread across all five years, in line with data tables

IT 054 – Process Automations							**Gartner Benchmark Range**		**Gartner Rating**
Investment (£m)	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	Totals	Low	High	
CAPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
OPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows two years of activity, assuming work to start in FY 28/29.

IT 054 – Process Automations	FY 26/27	FY 27/28	FY 28/29	FY 29/30	FY30/31
Requirement & Design					
Development & Testing					
Deployment					

4.5 IT 055 CRMS: Omni-channel support - UM

4.5.1 Background and scope summary

Problem / Trigger	Strategy	Business Outcome	Primary Regulatory Outcome	Cost sub-category
Ease of use	Enhance	Deliver sustainable value for our customers and stakeholders	High quality of service from regulated firms	Digital infrastructure

This investment is being put forward under the Uncertainty Mechanism. Whilst the scope reflects an improvement in capabilities, the development of business requirements is ongoing and we will review progress within RIIO-GT3.

Our RIIO-T2 CRM portfolio saw the implementation of basic channels of support to assist automated process users with their query management capabilities, as part of the automated processes for both Gas Grantor and Connections. Customers and stakeholders demand more streamlined engagement from us and, in line with our Customer Engagement Strategy, we will ensure that they can contact us through multiple channels.

Market research of similar industries has provided us with insights on the trending technologies in the industry for communicating with customers and stakeholder in the digital world. The trends show that the industry is increasingly investing in the development of more digital offerings to provide a diverse portfolio of channels of communications, to reduce the time taken to resolve queries, support self service capabilities and meet the preferences of digital users.

The user research we have conducted with customers and stakeholders have provided us with up-to-date insights on how they would like to engage with National Gas, this included:

- Online events and workshops
- Social media publications
- Reduction in time taken to resolve queries
- Engagement through a variety of different means (e.g. website, social media).

This investment will amalgamate all communication channels into a single solution to enable an increased volume of customer enquiries to be met on demand via self-service capability and automation. Additionally, it will enable our central team to access a breadth of data about our customers and stakeholders and leverage analytics and reporting capabilities. This will support evidence-based decision making about the effectiveness of our interactions and a feedback loop to further drive initiatives to increase customer and stakeholder satisfaction. The scope of this investment is as below:

- **Role Based Access**: Building on the Customer Insights Hub (IT052: Digital Support Centre) to provide role-based self-service access by which we can offer data, information, communications and processes specific to customer and stakeholder types.
- **Case Management**: All communications are captured in a "Case Record", providing comprehensive reporting capability and detailed history of Customer and Stakeholders activities.
- **Email Integration**: The centralised omni-channel solution will replace the inefficient Shared Mailbox service by integration of emails and webforms, enabling the creation of case records per communication (incoming and outgoing).
- **Live Chat**: In-hours service that provides end users with the ability to chat to a specific department depending on their query type. An agent can handle one or more chats at one time.
- **Web Forms**: Out-of-hours service that provides end users with query types, routing automation to the correct department and query specific service levels.
- **Virtual Call Centre**: Engagement shows that customers still value personal voice interaction, and this will allow us to continue to provide this in a more efficient and consistent manner.
- **Social Media Integration**: Integration of social media channels to facilitate content creation, publishing of data, and management of queries via direct messaging.

- **Website Integration**: Our Customer Engagement Strategy is to centralise all communication types into the website. We will integrate our web engagement activities into a centralised system to understand their needs better.
- **SMS**: Enabling SMS communications for ad-hoc and automated communications (including status of queries and survey links) to increase engagement with customers and stakeholders and to adapt to user device trends.
- **Artificial Intelligence**: The help centre knowledge base will power AI chatbots using capabilities native to our solutions, reducing the time taken to resolve a query diverting callers to the appropriate resource.
- **Digitalisation Strategy**: We will leverage digital technologies to simplify and improve effectiveness of processes and efficiency of our workforce. This investment will maximise the value of a single product and centralise activities and data to enable data-driven decisions.

This investment will achieve the following benefits:

- Centralised query data capture using Case Management allows us to use analytics to make data driven decisions based on up-to-date data.
- Delivers the capacity to have additional engagements, without the need to secure additional staff.
- Enables the market by providing customers and stakeholders the ability to access information and processes on demand.
- Improves compliance with the following Data Best Practice principles:
    - 4. Enable potential Data Users to understand Data Assets by providing supporting information.
    - 5. Make Data Assets discoverable for potential Data Users.

Problem / opportunity statement

We currently have disparate channels for external contacts, which limits our ability to gather, process and gain insights from a full history of communication. This fragmentation means that advanced analytics tools, such as PowerBI or AI, cannot be applied to all of the relevant data, limiting the quality and speed of response to queries. This also prevents us from delivering the level of self-service wanted by customers and stakeholders.

Our current solutions are both inefficient and insufficiently effective in providing a quality service to external parties with whom we engage and for whom we provide multiple services and information.

4.5.2 Optioneering

The options for this investment were selected to contrast the outcome of not investing with alternative levels of target outputs. Option A addresses digitalisation across all incoming and outgoing communications whereas option B invests in a limited number of channels.

The table below sets out the options considered for this capability.

Ref.	Option Description	Pros	Cons
DNI	No investment	• N/A	• Lack of improvement to current capabilities. • Inability to maintain previous standards of customer satisfaction. • Incapability to keep up with evolving expectations of customers. • Impedance of process to reduce siloing of information within National Gas. • Does not synergise with other investment value streams.
A	Digitalisation of all incoming and outgoing communications with customers and stakeholders, with the integration of other National Gas systems. **Recommended**	• Few or no queries occur outside of the CRM system ensuring all previous communications can be learned from and used to inform new interactions. • Queries can always be filtered through to the most appropriate resource with or without human intervention, increasing efficiency. • Customers will feel lower barriers to communicate with National Gas due to having a wider range of communication methods. • Ease of switching between communication channels gives confidence to customers that the	• Staff will need to be trained in new processes. • Effective change management will need to be implemented to ensure adoption and proper utilisation of these capabilities. • Investment cost – higher than B.

		agents within National Gas are well informed about their situation. • Streamlining of processes reduces the need for customers and stakeholders to reach a human thus reducing the number of FTEs required by the organisation.	
B	Digitalisation of some incoming and outgoing communications with customers and stakeholders.	• Allows for some streamlining of processes possibly reducing the number of required staff. • Centralises more communications with the CRM system than before, but doesn't cover them all. • Less costly than option A.	• The CRM systems efficacy will remain limited due to incomplete implementation of the different communication channels. • Process automation will be limited, preventing potential efficiency gains. • The reduced channel support will prevent keeping up with evolving customer expectations and confidence and satisfaction. • Inability to keep up with wider data strategy of the organisation. • A lower amount of data to inform future decisions will lead to lesser outcomes. • Investment cost – lower than A.

4.5.3 Preferred option

Our recommended investment approach is Option A – to enable full integration of communications into a single location to achieve data best practice, enable streamlined reporting capabilities, reduction in time taken to complete queries, and increased satisfaction. This will enhance the customer and stakeholder experience of communicating with National Gas, reduce the resource and time taken to resolve a query and improve quality of data relating to customers and stakeholders. Whilst Option B has a lower cost due to reduced scope, neither it nor option DNI addresses the key functional issue of partial digitalisation of communication channels.

Customer / stakeholder benefits

The benefits gained by external parties are:

- Increased flexibility in communication options resulting from the omni-channel model allows customers to switch contact method as they want, leading to increased customer satisfaction.
- Increased customer self-service capabilities resulting in faster resolution for customers and reduced workload on staff for queries that require human intervention.
- Increased data records from customer interactions ensures following engagement is better informed leading to increased customer confidence and satisfaction.
- Improved signposting and automated query filtering, making it easier to escalate issues to the right person, reducing the need for staff, lowering costs and increasing capacity.

4.5.4 Cost and deliverability

The cost drivers for this investment are in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT and Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.3. Costs are for the full scope of deliverables as described above. Deliverability of this investment is in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT and Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.5.
The spend profile and delivery plan are shown below. Note that the cost profile shows the cost spread across all five years, in line with data tables

IT 055 CRMS – Omnichannel Support							**Gartner Benchmark Range**		**Gartner Rating**
Investment (£m)	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	Totals	Low	High	
CAPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
OPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows two years of activity, assuming work to start in FY 28/29.

IT 055 CRMS – Omnichannel Support	FY 26/27	FY 27/28	FY 28/29	FY 29/30	FY30/31
Requirement & Design					
Development & Testing					
Deployment					

5 Capability 2: Data discoverability

Delivering value for our customers and stakeholders is critical. We continuously strive to improve their experience of interactions with us and the accessibility of the information and wide range of data that we provide, much of it critical to the functioning of the gas industry and of our customers' businesses. Our goal is to reduce market uncertainty, ensure equal access to information, and increase transparency. We are dedicated to providing fair and timely access to operational and market information with a focus on efficiency. We acknowledge the importance of ensuring the relevance, availability, and integrity of our data, and we are committed to ongoing development and enhancement of the discoverability of our data.

The New Information Provision platform (NIP) provides our customers and stakeholders with real-time data and insights on Gas Transmission operations. With NIP, we can offer various data points and dashboard views for within-day, operational, and after-the-day information, providing our customers with the information they need to make informed decisions. As the demand for operational data continues to grow, especially in a fast-evolving industry, we are committed to investing in NIP to ensure we can continue to provide the best possible service.

Our RIIO-GT3 plans build on our current capabilities, allowing us to adapt to regulatory and emerging market requirements and meet the ever-growing demand for reliable and accessible operational data. By investing in NIP, we can better support our customers and stakeholders and stay ahead of the curve in an ever-changing market.

There are five investments in this area, as follows:

Platform	Capability	Investment	£m
New Information Provision	Customer Engagement	IT 046 New Information Provision: Open Data Publications	[redacted]
		IT 047 New Information Provision: Continued Development of New Information Provisions APIs	[redacted]
		IT 049 New Information Provision: Smart Apps	[redacted]
		IT 050 New Information Provision: Tech Health	[redacted]
		IT 102 New Information Provision: Refresh	[redacted]

5.1 IT 046 New Information Provision: Open data publications

5.1.1 Background and scope summary

Problem / Trigger	Strategy	Business Outcome	Primary Regulatory Outcome	Cost sub-category
Technology opportunities. Data best practice compliance.	Enhance	Deliver sustainable value for our customers and stakeholders	High quality of service from regulated firms	Digital platforms

Our customers and stakeholders have emphasised the importance of the data we publish. They are requesting more data to aid them in making informed business decisions as the market evolves. Our RIIO-T2 investments have continually improved the user experience based on Customer & Stakeholder needs and more demand for data.

In RIIO-GT3, we will continue to invest in improving how we provide information to our customers and stakeholders on the New Information Provision platform. This investment will identify the needs and concerns of our users and make positive changes through updated features that will provide meaningful value to our customers and stakeholders.

This investment will provide a fixed annual budget to continue to publish new data to the industry and ongoing user interface / user experience (UI/UX) enhancements to the platform. These will also include improvements to the data our customers and stakeholders use and how they access it. We aim to continue to develop our platform with the philosophy of 'Open Data' in line with Ofgem's Data Best Practice guidelines, ensuring interoperability with our data assets and digital services while making sure that our data remains high quality and is both accurate and highly accessible. We will leverage our industry engagement platform to understand what users want and ensure we have open conversations about prioritising their needs based on driving the most value.

The enhancements in this investment include the following:

- **Natural language generation**: This technology will simplify complex data and analysis by converting it into plain, easily understandable language. The resulting output will help generate executive summaries, analyse trends, and provide valuable insights from numerical data. This will enhance the quality and accessibility of the data we publish on our dashboard and improve the overall customer journey.
- **AI search suggestion**: As part of our ongoing efforts to improve our search functionality, we will introduce AI-powered search suggestions. With this new feature, users will receive real-time suggestions as they type, making it easier and quicker to find relevant content. Additionally, we can track user interactions and gain valuable insights into their behaviour and preferences, assisting in providing a one-stop-shop tailoring their experience to their usage.
- **Virtual assistants**: By incorporating this functionality, we can provide 24/7 assistance while decreasing the administrative workload and saving costs. This will enable employees to concentrate on high-value and strategic tasks. In addition, it will facilitate a one-stop-shop, enhancing the available dashboards and enhancing the user experience.
- **Role-based access and a subscription to extensive capabilities:** This will enhance the security of users' data, as only authorised or subscribed users will have access to specific data. It will also benefit data segmentation, enabling different departments to focus on information that matters most to them. The experience can also be tailored and enhanced based on the user account preferences and interactions.
- **RSS feed and personalised push notifications:** This will provide our customers with timely content, ensuring they are aware of and can access up-to-date data. It will streamline content distribution, increase audience engagement and enhance our visibility while providing a convenient way for our users to access updates. This will assist us in developing the customer and user experience, improve the data-sharing offering, and encourage further engagement.

We recognise that in today's rapidly evolving world of technology and innovation, progress is more critical than ever. This continued investment will allow us to not only enhance the user interface but also improve the experience of our customers and stakeholders as they access the necessary data and information they need.

This investment strengthens compliance with the following Data Best Practice principles:

- 5. Make Data Assets discoverable for potential Data Users.
- 6. Learn and deliver to the needs of current and prospective Data Users.
- 7. Ensure data quality maintenance and improvement is prioritised by Data User needs.
- 9. Protect Data Assets and systems in accordance with Security, Privacy and Resilience (SPaR) best practice.
- 11. Treat all Data Assets, their associated Metadata and Software Scripts used to process Data Assets as Presumed Open.

Problem / opportunity statement

Without investment, our data provision and accessibility would fall behind the evolving expectations of our customers and stakeholders and could adversely impact the functioning of the industry and its progress to net zero. Demand for data grows continuously, as do requirements for interoperability and we are committed to responding to these.

The new process of whole system management will evolve, leading to new and more demanding requirements and we need to be able to respond to these.

5.1.2 Optioneering

The options for this investment were selected to contrast the outcome of not investing with alternative approaches to continuous improvement. Option A builds a prioritised requirements pipeline which has an uncertain budget forecast whereas option B continues the current successful practice of defining a budget and prioritising scope within that budget.

The table below sets out the options considered for this capability.

Ref.	Option Description	Pros	Cons
DNI	Do not invest	• None.	• Failure to enhance the information customers want will impact the efficiency of the gas market in making informed decisions.
A	Agree incremental pipeline of changes through RIIO-GT3 with Gas Operational Data Community	• Funding is agreed based on baselined plan. • New requirements are added to the scope.	• Current uncertainty of required change and therefore lack of ability to agree a plan with the Gas Operational Data Community and Solution Architects.

			• May constrain ability to meet new/emerging industry needs. • Lack of clarity in funding requirements.
B	Agree an annual budget, scope changes regularly with the Gas Operational Data Community and prioritise within the agreed fixed budget. **Recommended**	• Continues existing approach that has been used successfully in RIIO-T2 to deliver change. • Provides a mechanism to address emerging requirements. • Flexibility to deliver value in an agile way, in line with customer and stakeholder data needs.	• Fixed annual budget may constrain scope of changes that can be delivered.

5.1.3 Preferred option scope and project plan

Our recommended investment approach is Option B - Agree an annual budget, scope changes regularly with the Gas Operational Data Community and prioritise within the agreed fixed budget. This option allows us to adapt to industry and regulatory changes and provide an enhanced platform to engage with customers and provide information that they value and is up to date. This is the approach that has worked successfully through RIIO-T2 and is preferred to Option A as it creates flexibility to respond to new and changing customer requirements and priorities.

The annual budget set out below is based on the historic annual scope of work to respond to requirements and costs checked through benchmarking for this scope.

Agile methods will be used to prioritise features to be added, ensuring optimisation of value delivered for the fixed annual investment. Such prioritisation constantly reviews the backlog and reprioritises as appropriate to best value.

Customer / stakeholder benefits

The following benefits will be gained by external parties:

- Enhanced data-sharing to our customers and stakeholders, which supports Ofgem's requirements for adhering to Data Best Practice Guidelines and improving customer satisfaction.

5.1.4 Cost and deliverability

The cost drivers for this investment are in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT and Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.3. Costs are for the full scope of deliverables as described above. Deliverability of this investment is in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.5.

The spend profile and delivery plan are shown below.

IT046 – NIP: Open Data Publications							Gartner Benchmark Range		Gartner Rating
Investment (£m)	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	Totals	Low	High	
CAPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
OPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows a process of continuous updates across the period.

IT046 – NIP: Open Data Publications	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31
Continuous Agile Delivery					

5.2 IT 047 New Information Provision: Continued development of New Information Provision APIs

5.2.1 Background and scope summary

Problem / Trigger	Strategy	Business Outcome	Primary Regulatory Outcome	Cost sub-category
Technology opportunities. Data best practice compliance.	Enhance	Deliver sustainable value for our customers and stakeholders	High quality of service from regulated firms	Digital platforms

We continue to review operational data and provide this as datasets, reports and catalogues to our customers and stakeholders through our public-facing interface mechanisms (Application Programming Interfaces, or APIs). To support this, we need to further our capability to surface data from internal systems with ease. During the RIIO-T2 period, we have significantly invested in developing new RESTful APIs[3] and enhancing our capability to support the transition from our previous SOAP APIs[4], as per guidelines set out by Ofgem in the previous regulatory period. The change of API technology improves data transfer speed and uses less bandwidth, and is better suited to web technologies. Enhancements to our APIs that will have been delivered in RIIO-T2 are:

- Modern API (RESTful)
- API Developer Portal
- API Data Catalogue
- Enhanced MS Excel Power Query
- SOAP API Decommission
- Metadata API Standards

This investment will provide a fixed annual budget not only to maintain what has been delivered as foundational work in RIIO-T2, but also to deliver enhancements to our APIs and the API Portal during RIIO-GT3. As with our UX/UI enhancements, we will leverage our industry engagement platform to understand what users want and prioritise their needs. We will also work closely with our solution architects and vendors to ensure we make the correct technology decisions to improve without impacting performance.

This investment further strengthens compliance with the following Data Best Practice principles:

- 2. Use common terms within Data Assets, Metadata and supporting information.
- 5. Make Data Assets discoverable for potential Data Users.
- 8. Ensure Data Assets are interoperable with Data Assets from other data and digital services.

Problem / opportunity statement

Without investment, the accessibility of our data by other systems would fall behind the evolving expectations of our customers and stakeholders. Demand for data grows continuously, as do requirements for interoperability and we are committed to responding to these.

The new process of whole system management will evolve, leading to new and more demanding requirements and we need to be able to respond to these.

5.2.2 Optioneering

The options for this investment were selected to contrast the outcome of not investing with alternative approaches to continuous improvement. Option A builds a prioritised requirements pipeline which has an uncertain budget forecast whereas option B continues the current successful practice of defining a budget and prioritising scope within that budget.

The table below sets out the options considered for this capability.

Ref.	Option Description	Pros	Cons
DNI	Do not invest	• N/A	• Failure to maintain and enhance the APIs customers and stakeholders use will impact the efficiency of the gas market in making use of the RESTful API functionality they have come accustomed to.
A	Agree incremental pipeline of changes with Gas Operational Data Community and Solution Architects	• Funding is agreed based on baselined plan.	• Current uncertainty of required change and therefore lack of ability to agree a plan with the Gas Operational Data Community. • May constrain ability to meet new/emerging industry needs. • Lack of clarity in funding requirements.
B	Agree an annual budget, scope changes prioritised regularly with the Gas	• Continues existing approach that has been used in RIIO-T2 to deliver change.	• Fixed annual budget may constrain scope of changes that can be delivered. This could

[3] Application programming interfaces (APIs) which use Representational State Transfer (REST) approach.

[4] Application programming interfaces (APIs) which use Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) approach.

	Operational Data Community and Solution Architects. **RECOMMENDED**	• Provides a mechanism to address emerging requirements. • Flexibility to deliver value in an agile way, in line with customer and stakeholder data needs.	require the industry community to prioritise changes within budget.

5.2.3 Preferred option

Our recommended investment approach is Option B - Agree on an annual budget, scope changes regularly with the Gas Operational Data Community and prioritise within the agreed fixed budget. This option means that we can continue the development of the architecture of our APIs from RIIO-T2 while supporting the capabilities of sharing large data sets in an easy-to-understand format to accommodate the interpretation of customers and stakeholders from different backgrounds, contributing to the underlying goal of enhancing the customer journey and developing our technology in line with industry trends. This approach of an annual budget has worked successfully through RIIO-T2 and is preferred to Option A as it creates flexibility to respond to new and changing customer requirements and priorities.

The annual budget set out below is based on the historic annual scope of work to respond to requirements and costs checked through benchmarking for this scope.

Agile methods will be used to prioritise features to be added, ensuring optimisation of value delivered for the fixed annual investment. Such prioritisation constantly reviews the backlog and reprioritises as appropriate to best value.

Customer / stakeholder benefits

Our RIIO-2 initiatives have provided our customers and stakeholders with the flexibility to manage and modify APIs as per their requirements, thereby supporting data interoperability objectives. Further investments in our API capabilities will enable us to improve our data sharing and modification capabilities, aligning them to meet user needs. These enhancements will also provide a friendly user and timely experience for organisations who connect directly to our open data source to drive their business critical processes and decisions.

5.2.4 Cost and deliverability

The cost drivers for this investment are in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.3. Costs are for the full scope of deliverables as described above. Deliverability of this investment is in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.5.

The spend profile and delivery plan are shown below.

IT 047 NIP: Continued Development of New Information Provision APIs							Gartner Benchmark Range		Gartner Rating
Investment (£m)	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	Totals	Low	High	
CAPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
OPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows a process of continuous updates across the period.

IT 047 NIP: Continued Development of New Information Provision APIs	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31
Continuous Agile Delivery					

5.3 IT 049 New Information Provision: Smart apps

5.3.1 Background and scope summary

Problem / Trigger	Strategy	Business Outcome	Primary Regulatory Outcome	Cost sub-category
Technology opportunities. Data best practice compliance.	Enhance	Deliver sustainable value for our customers and stakeholders	High quality of service from regulated firms	Digital platforms

Throughout the RIIO-T2 period, we have observed increased demand for a mobile applications amongst our customers and

stakeholders including Government Officials, who have expressed interest in the continued development of our existing application to enable on demand access to gas data. We developed an application that enables them to access specific subsets of data conveniently. This investment builds on this concept, to create a progressive web application to meet these needs and allow easy viewing of the data portal across multiple devices. We will provide tailor-made views for individual customers or stakeholder groups and stay abreast of the changing market trends.

These enhancements will include the following features:

- An enhanced version of our discrete application that allows government and legislators to see information sets that are relevant to their needs.
- An application that helps industry players to view real-time data in a readily consumable format,
- An application that supports data requirements for interoperability that can be consumed by key players such as the National Energy System Operator (NESO) and gas distribution network companies.
- An application that could be readily enabled for key industry players in an emergency scenario.

This investment further strengthens compliance with the following Data Best Practice principles:

- 5. Make Data Assets discoverable for potential Data Users.
- 8. Ensure Data Assets are interoperable with Data Assets from other data and digital services.
- 11. Treat all Data Assets, their associated Metadata and Software Scripts used to process Data Assets as Presumed Open.

Problem / opportunity statement

In the current digital age data consumers are often overloaded with the volume and breadth of data that is available for consumption. Simplifying data management and visualisation through the use of Applications can overcome this challenge and offer the following benefits:

- Productivity – Automated data collection and organisation reduces manual activities and time consuming searches.
- Usability – A user-friendly interface ensures data visualisation tools are accessible to all and result in greater adoption.
- Transparency – Simplified views enhance transparency and enables effective decision making.
- Data Democratisation – Simplified data management tools and interfaces make complex data more accessible to non-technical users, supporting data democratisation.
- Efficiency – streamlined workflows and navigations drive efficiencies for users.

User expectations for easy access to data and highly usable applications will continue to rise and without investment during RIIO-GT3 we would fall behind industry norms and the expectations of consumers and industry participants. The expanding data availability (under the Presumed Open principle) will exacerbate this issue, if not addressed.

The current application was developed to a narrow set of requirements and, though it has proved valuable, it is of limited scope. The breadth of data is narrow, it is not sufficiently integrated with other systems to extend its data reach or reflect UI/UX improvements to our web application, and it does not facilitate interoperability with other parties. This investment will take a successful initial product and re-architect it to extend its scope and supported devices.

5.3.2 Optioneering

The options for this investment were selected to contrast the outcome of not investing with alternative technology approaches to achieving target outputs. Option A uses existing Web App technology whereas option B uses a more flexible native app technology.

The table below sets out the options considered for this capability.

Ref.	Option Description	Pros	Cons
DNI	Do Not Invest	• N/A	• May become outdated due to evolving technology and expectations. • Reduced user retention. • Our decision not to invest will lead to missed opportunities to share data subsets with our customers and stakeholders in a user-friendly manner and cause

			inconvenience and limited accessibility due to network downtime. • Does not further data best practice compliance.
A	Enhancements to the existing Web App version of New Information.	• Address and fix bugs and errors can improve stability and reliability. • Allow for new features and functionalities.	• Significant enhancements can require system downtime. • Significant enhancements may require data migration which can be complex. • Can take time to develop enhancements.
B	Development of a customised Native App which can reflect the changes in UI and UX based updates to the Web Application. **Recommended**	• Can function partially or fully offline. • User experience is more intuitive and generally smoother. • Can be tailored to optimise performance.	• Managing maintenance complexity. • May require developers with specific skills to develop and enhance.

5.3.3 Preferred option

Our recommended investment approach is Option B. This option means that any changes that are made to the web-based app are reflected on the native app while allowing access to native features that may not be available on the web-based app. Implementing an offline capability would be a major enhancement to data accessibility, as users would be able to download content to their devices and access it when no internet connection is available.

A custom native app that mirrors the web-based app for both customers and stakeholders would be a game changer. It can be distributed on app stores like Apple App Store and Google Play Store, enabling it to reach a wider audience. With a native app, users can utilise device features such as GPS, camera, and push notifications, which are unavailable on web-based apps. Additionally, the app can work offline, allowing users to access crucial functionality without an internet connection. This feature is invaluable as it ensures uninterrupted content consumption.

Customer / stakeholder benefits

The benefits gained through an advanced app are that it delivers crucial information quickly and easily to government, legislators, and industry players, supports data interoperability and provides customised views for different stakeholders.

5.3.4 Cost and deliverability

The cost drivers for this investment are in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.3. Costs are for the full scope of deliverables as described above. Deliverability of this investment is in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.5.

The spend profile and delivery plan are shown below.

IT 049 – NIP: Smart Apps							Gartner Benchmark Range		Gartner Rating
Investment (£m)	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	Totals	Low	High	
CAPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
OPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows a process of continuous updates across the period.

IT 049 – NIP: Smart Apps	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31
Continuous Agile Delivery					

5.4 IT 050 New Information Provision: Tech health

5.4.1 Background and scope summary

Problem / Trigger	Strategy	Business Outcome	Primary Regulatory Outcome	Cost sub-category
Asset health – updates	Regular update	Operate safely, reliably, and flexibly – refresh	Secure and resilient supplies	IT & Telecoms

We will continue to invest in our NIP platform to keep it supported in line with vendor releases. It is a Platform-as-a-Service

(PaaS) and so we will be required to complete necessary regression and user testing on a bi-annual basis when upgrades are rolled out by the vendor. This is to maintain the stability and security of the platform and ensure it remains supportable. Regular system upgrades also support the deployment of new out the box product features when released to enable further process enhancements.

This investment sustains our compliance with the following Data Best Practice principles:

- 5. Make Data Assets discoverable for potential Data Users.
- 8. Ensure Data Assets are interoperable with Data Assets from other data and digital services.
- 9. Protect Data Assets and systems in accordance with Security, Privacy and Resilience (SPaR) best practice.

Problem / opportunity statement

Regular investment is required to keep systems secure and reliable by applying security updates and new releases. Without these, system performance and security would degrade, and it would become unsupported. Integration with other systems would also degrade and eventually stop working.

5.4.2 Optioneering

The options for this investment were selected to contrast the outcome of not investing with alternative ways of achieving the target outputs. There is only one alternative to letting the system fall out of asset health policy – investing in applying updates as they are released by the software vendor.

The table below sets out the options considered for this capability.

Ref.	Option Description	Pros	Cons
DNI	Do not invest	• N/A	• Increasing system security vulnerability. • Eventual loss of service. • Inability to maintain systems. • No additional ability to report issues. • Issues get resolved slower leading to loss in productivity.
A	Continue to invest in incremental technology health upgrades and testing. **Recommended**	• Continued secure and reliable system performance through regular updates. • Remain current with emerging technologies and best practices. • Target specific improvements that are a priority. • Reduced risk of platform downtime and minimised disruption.	• Investment cost.

5.4.3 Preferred option

Our recommended investment approach is Option A, to ensure continuation of the secure and reliable services provided by the system.

Customer / stakeholder benefits

The benefits gained by external parties are continued provision of data services from NGT, covering 12-minute, hourly, and daily interval data on supply and demand, linepack, flow rates, storage and capacity.

5.4.4 Cost and deliverability

The cost drivers for this investment are in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.3. Costs are for the full scope of deliverables as described above. Deliverability of this investment is in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.5.

The spend profile and delivery plan are shown below.

The costs for this investment have been based on the current annual spend associated with maintaining the system through regular upgrades.

IT 050 – NIP: Tech Health							Gartner Benchmark Range		Gartner Rating
Investment (£m)	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	Totals	Low	High	
CAPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
OPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows a process of continuous updates across the period.

IT 050 – NIP: Tech Health	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31
Annual Upgrades & Solution Maintenance					

5.5 IT 102 New Information Provision: Refresh

5.5.1 Background and scope summary

Problem / Trigger	Strategy	Business Outcome	Primary Regulatory Outcome	Cost sub-category
Asset health – end-of-life	Refresh	Operate safely, reliably, and flexibly – refresh	Secure and resilient supplies	IT & Telecoms

We have a priority to ensure the availability of a robust data platform for our customers and stakeholders, and to maintain a comprehensive and cohesive approach to managing information that is published and available to assist with decision-making. The availability of this dedicated data platform ensures that stakeholders can access relevant data promptly, fostering transparency and trust. Moreover, the availability of a centralised data platform contributes to streamlining data management processes, reducing redundancy, and reducing the risk of errors.

Overall, ensuring the platform is up to date, whether with our current vendor or an alternative, leads to improved business performance, stakeholder satisfaction, and a competitive edge in the dynamic business landscape.

This investment sustains our compliance with the following Data Best Practice principles:

- 5. Make Data Assets discoverable for potential Data Users.
- 8. Ensure Data Assets are interoperable with Data Assets from other data and digital services.
- 9. Protect Data Assets and systems in accordance with Security, Privacy and Resilience (SPaR) best practice.

Problem / opportunity statement

This data platform will reach the end of contract early in RIIO-GT3. To ensure continued service, we need to refresh the platform through a procurement event that will see us either continuing with the current provider or a new one. This system is fundamental to our information provision to the industry, and we must act at the end of the current contract. A procurement event will be necessary to ensure fit with requirements and value for money.

5.5.2 Optioneering

The options for this investment were selected to contrast the outcome of not investing with alternative ways of achieving the target outputs. There is only one alternative to letting the system fall out of asset health policy – investing in a refresh once current contractual arrangements end. This refresh will use the best available offering at the time.

The table below sets out the options considered for this capability.

Ref.	Option Description	Pros	Cons
DNI	Do not invest	• N/A	• No service available after contract end in 2026. • National Gas will not be able to meet the Asset Health Policy guidelines. • National Gas will not be able to implement a new platform should a better value contract be on offer.
A	Full Platform Refresh, potentially with new product **Recommended**	• Continuity of service through RIIO-GT3. • Ability to leverage the latest technologies and innovations.	• Investment cost.

		• Could be designed to be more efficient and performant. • Offers a competitive advantage with improved services and efficient operations. • Enables the Asset Health Policy guidelines to be met.	

5.5.3 Preferred option

Our recommended investment approach is Option A. This platform provides a vital service to the industry which must be continued. A procurement event will determine the best way forward, considering the cost and value available at the time.

Customer / stakeholder benefits

The benefits gained by external parties are:

- National Gas ensures it operates using contracts at the best value possible, reducing downstream costs on customers.
- New functionality may be enabled through a different vendor and through a fair procurement process National Gas ensures it is always at the forefront of current vendor capabilities.

5.5.4 Cost and deliverability

The cost drivers for this investment are in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.3. Costs are for the full scope of deliverables as described above. Deliverability of this investment is in common with other IT investments and are described in the IT & Telecoms Strategy document, section 3.4.5.

The spend profile and delivery plan are shown below. Note that the cost profile shows the cost spread across all five years, in line with data tables.

IT 102 – NIP: Refresh							Gartner Benchmark Range		Gartner Rating
Investment (£m)	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31	Totals	Low	High	
CAPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	
OPEX	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				

The project plan for this investment is set out below and shows two years of activity reflecting assuming the work to start in FY26/27.

IT 102 – NIP: Refresh	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31
Procurement					
Requirement & Design					
Development & Testing					
Deployment					

6 Outcomes, priorities, commitments and price control deliverables

6.1 Ofgem outcomes

Select all priorities that are supported by this programme/scheme.

☐Secure and resilient supplies

✓High quality of service from regulated firms

☐System efficiency and long-term value for money

☐Infrastructure fit for a low-cost transition to net zero

6.1.1 How will the programme/scheme support the regulatory priority/priorities?

High quality of service from regulated firms. Investments in technology health and refresh maintain our service levels and other investments are required to respond to requirements from users for better services on contact management and data provision. These investments also strengthen our compliance with Data Best Practice.

6.2 Our business priorities

Select all priorities that are supported by this programme/scheme.

☐ Drive positive environmental and community impact

☐ Shape the energy markets of the future

✓ Operate safely, reliably and flexibly

☐ Invest in our people, grow our capability, and value everyone's contribution

✓ Deliver sustainable value for customers and stakeholders

6.2.1 How will the programme/scheme support our business priority/priorities?

Operate safely, reliably and flexibly. Investments to refresh the technology or support technology health through regular updates enable us to sustain these business critical systems and ensure they operate securely and reliably.

Deliver sustainable value for customers and stakeholders. Investments other than technology health and refresh are required to respond to requirements from users for better services on contact management and data provision. These investments also strengthen our compliance with Data Best Practice.

6.3 Price control deliverables

Not applicable.

6.4 Commitments

The commitments related to this IJP are shown in the table below. All investments enable commitment number 12: Transforming our activities through our IT and data.

The investments in NIP also support commitments by the Gas System Operator (#4: Delivering a resilient network fit for the future, and #10: Operating the system safely, reliably and flexibly).

Ref	Investment Line	Commitment
IT 052	Contact Management: Digital Support Centre (Streamlined Help Location)	12
IT 054	Contact Management: Process Automations & Enhancements	12
IT 055	Contact Management: Omni-channel Support	12
IT 051	Contact Management: Refresh	12
IT 056	Contact Management: Tech Health	12
IT 046	New Information Provision: Open data publications	10, 12
IT 047	New Information Provision: Continued Development of APIs	4, 10, 12
IT 049	New Information Provision: Smart Apps	4, 10, 12
IT 050	New Information Provision: Tech Health	4, 10, 12
IT 102	New Information Provision: Refresh	4, 12

7 Conclusion

This Investment Justification Paper (IJP) sets out our planned investments to sustain and extend our Contact and Relationship Management (CRM) and New Information Provision (NIP) systems. Both systems are critical to our services to customers and stakeholders, and through RIIO-GT3 will respond to demands for easier access, better and broader data, and easier ways to interact with us.

Investments in this paper primarily support a single Ofgem key outcome: High Quality of Service from Regulated Firms. There are 10 planned investments with a Totex of £39.310m. There are two investments not in baseline and put forward under the Uncertainty Mechanism (UM) with a combined value of [redacted], leaving the Baseline Totex as [redacted]