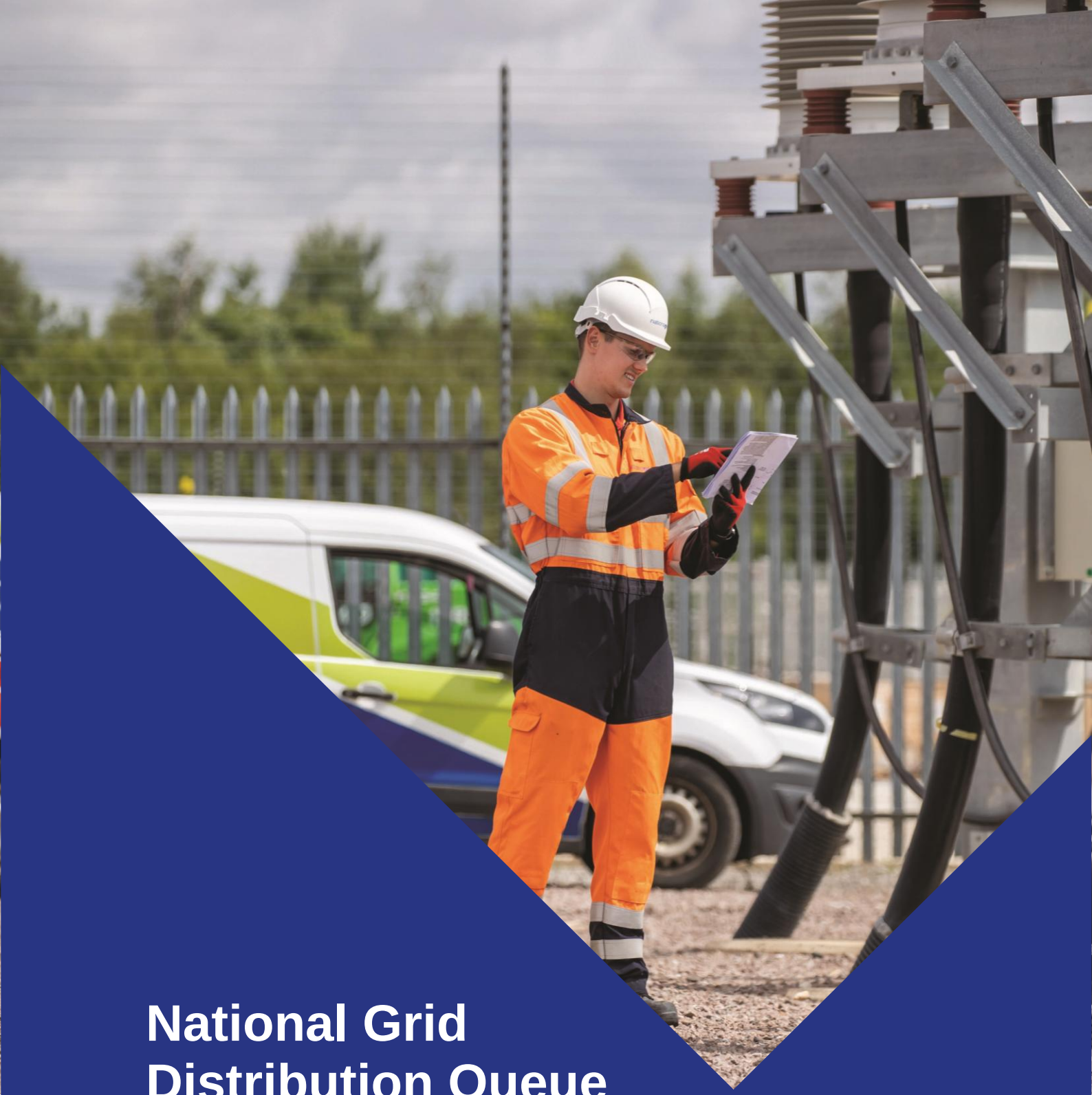

National Grid Distribution Queue Ordering Methodology for Connections Reform

26 March 2026

Electricity Distribution

nationalgrid

1.0 Contents

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2.0 Document Review

Date	24 March 2026
Version	Version 1
Circulation	Internal/External

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Reviewer	Ben Godfrey	Director of DSO

3.0 Distribution Queue Ordering Methodology

3.1 Executive Summary

National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED) is focused on creating a clear and fair distribution queue ordering approach for all projects/connections, regardless of if they are in scope for Connections Reform or not.

Following collaboration with all DNOS across the energy system, it is clear that distribution networks have a unique set of additional factors which must be considered when projecting outcomes of the NESO Strategic Alignment process onto the distribution connections pipeline.

The Connections Reform (CMP435) process, as documented in NESO's Connections Network Design Methodology (CNDM), not only sets the methodology to be applied to existing generation projects, but also removes projects that are not Strategically Aligned.

At the distribution level, consideration must also be given to the interaction with projects below the Transmission Entry Assessment (TEA) threshold; projects entering the process via the next transmission window (CMP434 process); demand projects; and Third Party Works (TPW). This creates additional groups of projects/connections that need to be combined to create a clear and fair distribution queue.

This methodology document sets out NGED's approach to this and contributes to developing clarity in the CMP435 process.

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3.2 DNO Collaboration

National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED) has worked collaboratively with all DNOs to understand the challenges of projecting the outcomes of the transmission queue (aka Strategic Alignment) ordering process onto the distribution connections queue. This collaboration aimed to align with the Strategic Alignment outcomes, while considering different subsets of projects:

- CMP435 Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects (Strategically Aligned projects that were accepted before the NESO pause);
- CMP446 projects below the TEA threshold that were accepted both before and after the NESO pause; and
- Demand projects and Third Party Works

NGED is ensuring a consistent, transparent approach to managing the distribution connections pipeline by adopting the core principles identified through this cross-system collaborative working.

3.3 Distribution Queue Ordering Meaning

This section sets out the principles and approaches for how the NESO CNDM Strategic Alignment outcomes will be projected onto the DNO connections pipeline to form the distribution queue. Consideration is also given to projects that are not subject to the TEA process, such as demand projects, TWP, and projects below the TEA threshold.

Distribution queue ordering is based on 'commercial order' of the project/connection, or otherwise known as 'network access rights' order.

This is the order in which projects/connections are applied for, technically studied, and offered to determine the assignment of network reinforcement and curtailment. It is not the order in which projects/connections will be built or connected. Connection energisation order will continue to be agreed between the DNO and the customer. Opportunities for connection will be provided on a first refusal basis in the commercial order.

3.4 Approach & Project Classifications/Groupings

Project/connections are grouped into four distinct categories to enable the distribution connection pipeline queue ordering process. These groupings are described below. A high-level overview grouping process is shown in Appendix 4.1 Distribution Connection Pipeline – High Level Overview, and 4.2 Ordered Distribution Queue – High Level Overview.

3.4.1 CMP435 Phase 1 & Out of Scope Projects

This category is inclusive of projects that accepted a connection offer **before** the NESO Pause (**29th January 2025)**:

- And received a Gate 2 Phase 1 offer;
- Or are out of scope (CMP446, Third Party Works (TPW), or demand projects)

Distribution queue formation process:

- NESO applies the Strategic Alignment process, section 5.7 of the CNDM, to projects/connections submitted as part of Gate 2 To Whole Queue (G2TWQ) CMP435
- This determines the Phase 1 and Phase 2 allocation of Gate 2 projects
- Projects in Phase 1 are returned to their original queue positions, as per the original DNO contracted queue. This is the 'commercial order'

The primary benefit of this approach is that it simultaneously maintains the outcomes from the NESO Strategic Alignment process and maintains fair commercial order for network access and allocation of distribution network capacity to connections.

3.4.2 CMP435 Phase 2 & Out of Scope Projects

This category is inclusive of projects that accepted a connection offer **before** the NESO Pause, **29th January 2025;**

- And received a Gate 2 Phase 2 offer,
- Or are out of scope; CMP446 TWP, or demand projects.

Distribution queue formation process:

- NESO applies the Strategic Alignment process, section 5.7 of the CNDM, to projects submitted as part of Gate 2 To Whole Queue (G2TWQ) CMP435
- The Strategic Alignment process for the Phase 2 queue is primarily based on project readiness, and projects are not returned to their original queue positions
- The distribution queue is reordered in line with NESO Phase 2 queue positions/ranking
- There are no pre-pause CMP446 projects for NGED to consider in this group, as these have already been sorted with the Phase 1 projects, and they are expected to connect ahead of 2031.

The primary benefit of this approach is that it fully aligns with the NESO Strategic Alignment process, ensuring the principle of 'first needed' on the system is preserved.

3.4.3 CMP435 Out of Scope, Post-NESO Pause Projects

This category is inclusive of projects that accepted a connection offer **after** the NESO Pause, **29th January 2025**

- And are either a generation project below the TEA threshold (CMP446), TPW
- Or a demand project.

Distribution queue formation process:

- CMP446, TWP, and demand projects are appended to the back of the Phase 2 connection queue and are ordered based on the DNO queue order.

3.4.4 CMP434 Projects

This category is inclusive of projects that accepted a connection offer **after** the NESO Pause, **29th January 2025,** or after the previous CMP434 transmission window.

Distribution queue formation process:

- CMP446 and demand projects are appended to the back of the Phase 2 connection queue and are ordered

3.5 Non-firm Connections/Technical Limits

Some projects/connections may be offered, or may have previously been offered, an accelerated connection date. This is commonly known as a ‘non-firm’ or ‘Technical Limits’ offer.

An accelerated connection date is achieved by bringing forward the connection date, ahead of the associated reinforcement works being completed, and providing a non-firm connection.

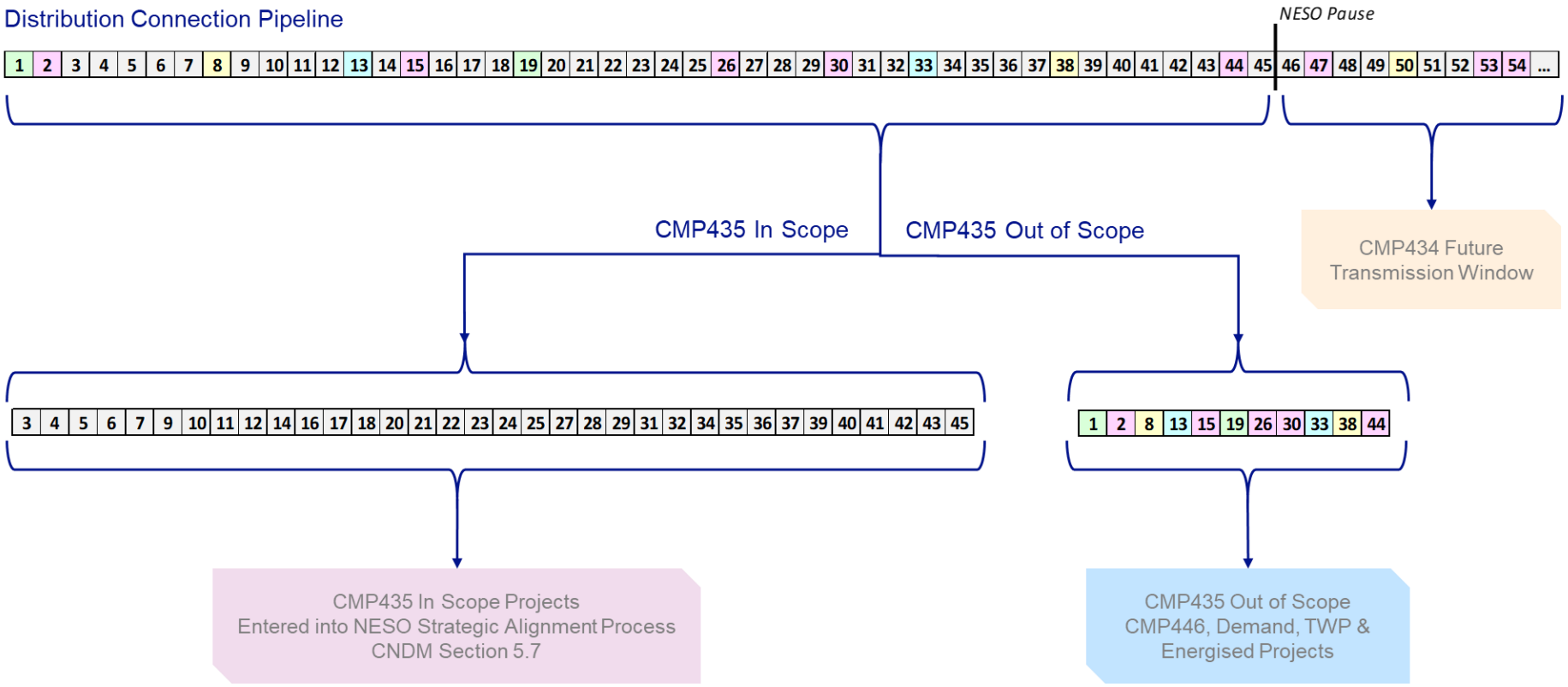
Non-firm means the customer would agree to an estimated level of curtailment, coordinated by the DNO, to facilitate their connection. The non-firm arrangement and terms in the Connection Agreement are temporary and fall away once the firm connection date is reached. The estimated level of curtailment can vary from year to year with non-firm connections; however, curtailment is not enduring, as the connection will eventually become firm.

Non-firm projects/connections do not ‘jump the queue’. These connections may be built and brought onto the system ahead of other connections, based on their readiness; but they do not move position in the ‘commercial queue’. This ensures no customers are disadvantaged when it comes to network access and assignment of reinforcement.

The objective of the ‘commercial queue’ is to assign fair network access and assignment of reinforcement. However, projects/connections are not necessarily connected to the system in that order. The DNO may connect projects/connections in a different order, which may be driven by project readiness or reinforcement lead time, for example. This is known as the ‘connection queue’ and is illustrated in Appendix 4.3 Ordered Distribution Connection Queue – High Level Overview. This process is applicable to projects that have secured a protection status for the non-firm connection date through the Gate 2 to Whole Queue (G2TWQ) process.

4.0 Appendix

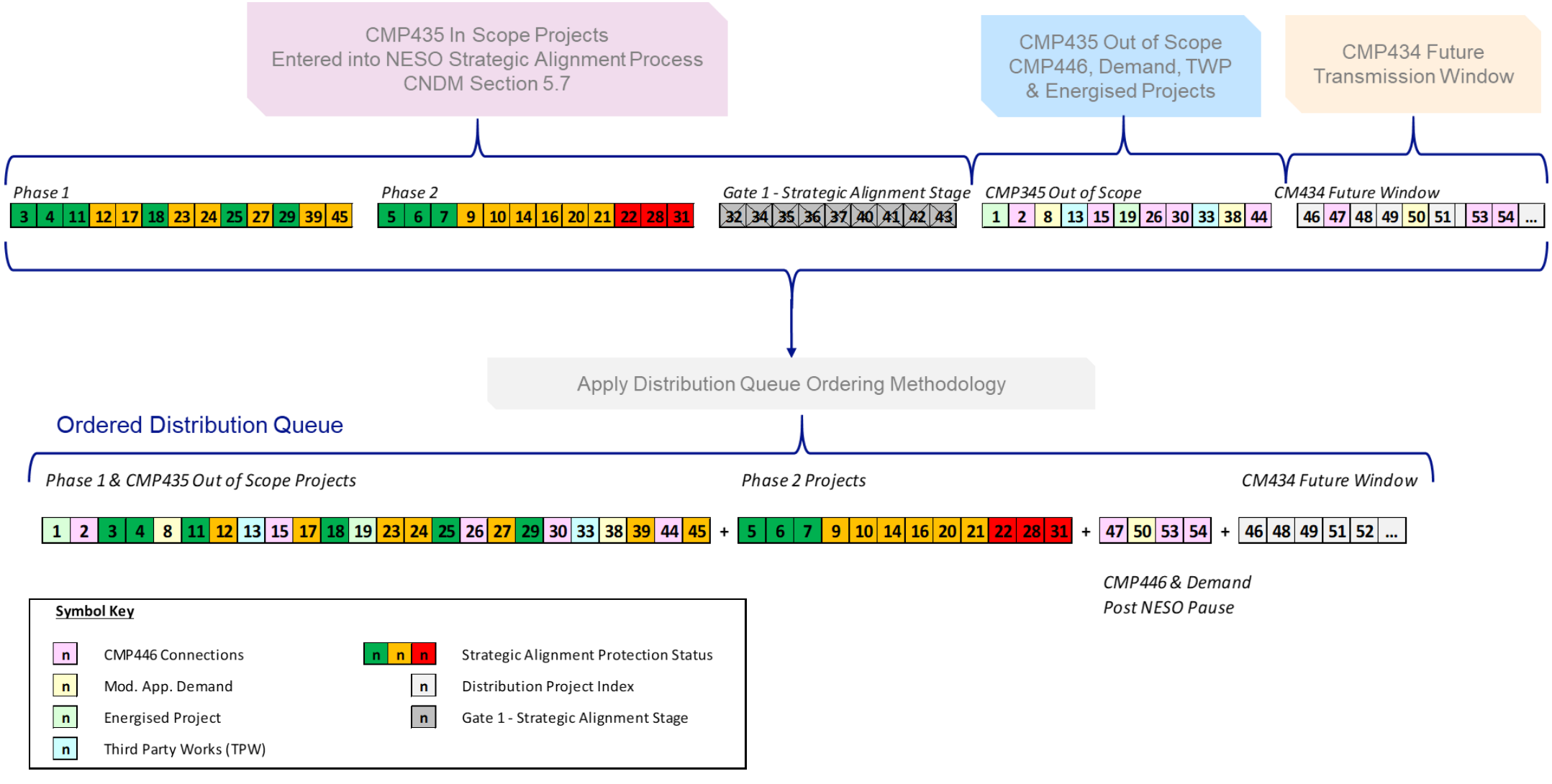
4.1 Distribution Connection Pipeline – High Level Overview



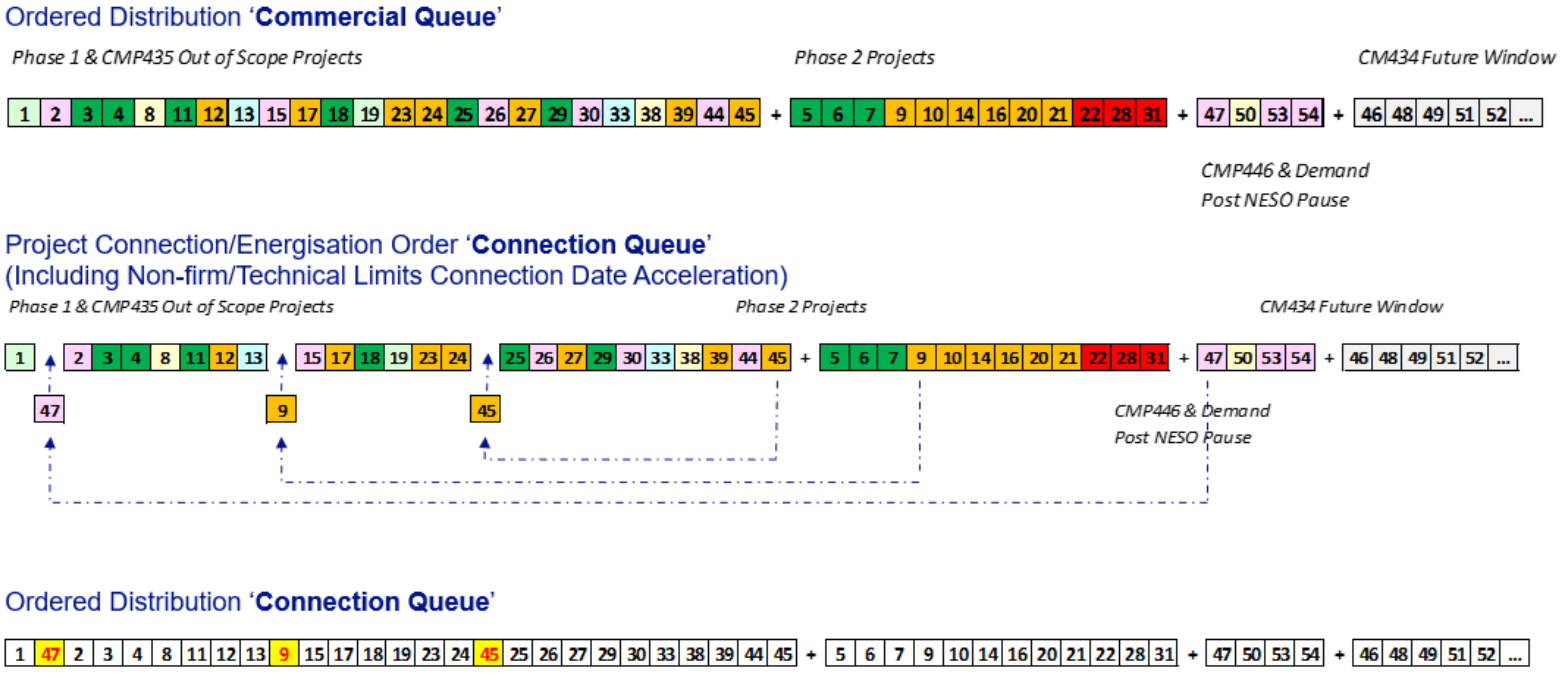
Symbol Key

n	CMP446 Connections	n	Energised Project
n	Mod. App. Demand	n	Distribution Project Index
n	Third Party Works (TPW)		

4.2 Ordered Distribution Queue – High Level Overview



4.3 Ordered Distribution Connection Queue – High Level Overview



Symbol Key

n	CMP446 Connections	n n n	Strategic Alignment Protection Status
n	Mod. App. Demand	n	Distribution Project Index
n	Energised Project	n	Gate 1 - Strategic Alignment Stage
n	Third Party Works (TPW)	n	Connection Queue Movement