



**THEME:**

Research and Innovation

**FUNDING (ERDF+MATCH):**

€6,462,927.87

**MATCH FUNDERS:**

Department of Business,  
Enterprise and Innovation,  
Ireland and the Department for  
the Economy, Northern Ireland

**LEAD PARTNER:**

Ulster University

**PROJECT PARTNERS**

Queens University Belfast;  
Ulster University; Arbarr;  
Dundalk Institute of  
Technology; University of  
Strathclyde and Sunamp.

**Start Date:** 01/01/2017

**End Date:** 30/09/2022



[https://  
www.ulster.ac.uk/  
spire2/the-project](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/spire2/the-project)



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## SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

### Project Case Study: (SPIRE 2) Ulster University and the Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland: NI - Reforming the Energy Vision (NIREV)

**SPIRE 2** is addressing how consumer-owned energy storage can resolve the problem of the variability of renewable energy (RE) output. It will explore how homes and businesses can store renewable energy effectively, allowing very high levels of RE to be integrated into power grids globally, at the same time as maximising the benefits to consumers. Find out more about its inspiring work below...

**Consumer-owned Distributed Energy Resources (DERs)** can create system value, not just by generating energy, but also by providing flexible demand to complement wind and solar generation. While demand flexibility can already create system value, very little of that can yet be monetised. The aim of NIREV is to learn from international examples how best to quantify and reward value delivered by consumer-owned resources, and to ensure that consumers, rather than incumbents, are the drivers and focus of the energy transition.

The NIREV title was inspired by New York State's ground-breaking Reforming the Energy Vision programme ([rev.ny.gov](http://rev.ny.gov)). NIREV is a joint collaborative programme between the Utility Regulator (UR) and Ulster University's SPIRE 2 Project. The ethos behind NIREV is to provide a "neutral space" to allow the exchange of ideas and the generation of debate on energy transition issues.

It will explore new thinking and bring high profile speakers from outside NI to inform innovative discussions about how to move from 'Business as Usual' to a clean, smart, fair energy system. Rather than passive observers, NIREV has a specific focus on how consumers can become energy actors.

The programme will examine international examples of successful markets and regulatory frameworks which are already enabling more democratic energy systems elsewhere. It will consider how flexible domestic demand and consumer-owned Low Carbon Technologies (LCTs - such as domestic PV, heat pumps, thermal/battery storage, EVs) can become critical system assets.



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The NIREV project is being delivered via a series of workshops comprising presentations from international and local speakers. Question and answer sessions will allow for audience participation and stimulate discussion and debate.

The workshops themes are:

- (1) **Climate, Governance and Empowering Consumers,**
- (2) **Regulators as Agents of Change and,**
- (3) **“Consumer Centric Digitalisation—application of technology, data & innovation”. Workshop information, including background on the various topics, the presentations, a summary of discussions and links to reference materials will be provided on the SPIRE 2 website.**

**NIREV will avail of local and international expertise to consider how it can be applied to the specifics of the NI energy consumer and system. It will:**

- (1) **create an evidence base of international experience and best practice to inform decisions about governance changes required to deliver an NI-specific, consumer-centric, smart, clean energy system,**
- (2) **raise awareness of the suitability of NI for decentralised energy; the central role of people – citizens, social enterprises, community groups and businesses; & the global market potential for smart, local energy demand,**
- (3) **identify barriers in the existing regulatory/market/governance structures and propose solutions,**
- (4) **define an NI-specific path to a decarbonised, consumer-centric energy system and**
- (5) **disseminate information to the energy stakeholders and consumer representatives to create momentum for change. A final NIREV report will be published which provide information on all workshop topics along with recommendations and actions.**