



The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority Consultation on Gas Service Worker Regulations

Consultation Document

NGS 14/2026

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1 Introduction

The Natural Gas Act, 2024 (NGA) came into the force on 1 June 2024. The NGA established the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) as the independent regulator of the natural gas sector (NGS) in The Bahamas and provides a statutory framework for the introduction of natural gas into the energy mix of The Bahamas.

As the independent regulator of the NGS, URCA is responsible for, *inter alia*, developing the regulatory framework for the effective and efficient regulation of the NGS in accordance with the provisions of the NGA in a manner that is transparent and non-discriminatory. In particular, in exercise of its powers under Section 8 of the NGA and pursuant to Section 31 of the NGA, URCA is mandated to grant licences for all NGS activities in The Bahamas.

URCA developed an initial compendium of regulatory measures inclusive of licenses, regulations and codes that comprised the framework for the regulation of the NGS. On 1 October 2024, URCA published its Statement of Results and Final Decision – NGS 02/2024 document which established the initial licenses, regulations, and codes for the NGS in The Bahamas.¹ URCA signalled in that Statement of Results and Final Decision document that it would update the initial regulatory measures from time to time. URCA has conducted a review of the scope of the licences it initially issued for the NGS to determine whether they are fit for purpose and cover all activities contemplated under the NGA.

Consequential to URCA’s review of the regulatory measures it initially issued for the NGS and subsequent engagement with key NGS industry stakeholders, URCA further considered the operation of the regulations governing the licensing of Gas Service Workers (GSW). At present, the licensing of GSW is contained in the Gas Supply Regulations (NGS 08/2024)². In this regard, URCA has considered the operation of the licensing of GSW and has identified areas for improvement aimed to streamline the processing of GSW applications and the regulation of GSW.

URCA now issues this consultation document on the proposed issuance of its Gas Service Worker Regulations which are intended to repeal sections 5 and 6 (i.e. paragraphs 67 – 95) of the Gas Supply Regulations (NGS 08/2024).

¹ https://urcabahamas.bs/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/URCA_NGS-Statement-of-Results-and-Final-Decision_FINAL-JH240924.pdf

² <https://urcabahamas.bs/decisions/natural-gas-supply-regulation/>

1.1 Objectives of this Public Consultation

URCA is seeking views from members of the public, licensees and interested parties in relation to the proposed regulatory measures. The regulatory measures have been developed in accordance with the high-level sector policy objectives and the provisions of the NGA. URCA sets out the following objectives for conducting consultation with the public, licensees, interested parties and other stakeholders:

- (a) to obtain input, information and feedback from persons whose rights or interests may be materially affected or prejudiced by the proposed regulatory and other measures;
- (b) to ensure regulatory transparency and objectivity;
- (c) to protect consumer interests;
- (d) to ensure adequate and accurate information is shared between the public, licensees, interested parties, stakeholders and URCA;
- (e) to strengthen public, licensee and stakeholder understanding, participation and confidence in the regulatory process;
- (f) to ensure that the public, licensees, interested parties and stakeholders are given the opportunity to express their views on the matters and issues contained herein;
- (g) to ensure that URCA has duly considered the necessary aspects of an issue so that the public, licensees, interested parties and stakeholders are adequately informed of the issues surrounding a particular matter; and
- (h) to acquire substantive information and knowledge from the public, licensees, interested parties, stakeholders and industry professionals on any issue in order for URCA to make informed decisions.

1.2 How to Respond to this Consultation

URCA invites comments and submissions on this consultation document from members of the public, licensees, and other interested persons. The consultation period is thirty (30) calendar days. Responses to this consultation should be submitted to URCA on or before **19 June 2025**, by preferably by completing the electronic form³ or alternatively by email to info@urcabahamas.bs

Persons may obtain copies of the document by downloading it from the URCA website at

³ [Consultation Questions - URCA Consultation on Proposed Gas Service Worker Regulations – Fill out form](#)

www.urbahamas.bs.

URCA's preferred format for responses is as follows:

- Respondent's name;
- Name of organization (or state whether the Respondent is responding in their personal capacity);
- Contact information of the respondent including telephone, email and street address;
- Response to Question 1;
- Response to Question 2, etc.; and
- Any other matters that you believe URCA should consider under the instant consultation.

When submitting responses, URCA urges respondents to;

1. indicate clearly the questions addressed for each of the responses provided;
2. reference the specific document, section, and item number being commented on; and
3. provide supporting explanations in submissions.

URCA will review the responses received and publish a Statement of Results and Final Decision on the consultation along with the final regulatory documents consequential to this consultation process.

URCA reserves the right to make all responses available to the public by posting responses on its website at www.urbahamas.bs. Responses marked 'confidential' should provide reasons to simplify the evaluation by URCA of the request for confidentiality. URCA may, in its sole discretion, choose whether to publish any confidential document or submission.

Any response to this public consultation that does not comply with the aforementioned rules may not be considered by URCA.

1.3 Structure of the remainder of this document

The remainder of this Consultation Document is structured as follows:

Section 2: Outlines the legal basis and framework under which URCA is conducting this consultation and proposing to introduce the regulatory measures;

- Section 3: Provides a high-level overview of the proposed regulatory measures;
- Section 4: Describes URCA's "next steps" in the consultation process; and
- Annex: Contains the draft regulation. The annexed document is uploaded and published separately on URCA's website simultaneously with this Consultation Document and by such publication is deemed to be included in the Annex of this document.

2 Legal Framework

This section sets out the legal basis on which URCA is proposing to issue the regulatory measures under consultation. The regulatory measures under consultation have been set out under a discrete heading, namely, “licensing”. The regulatory authority for URCA to issue the regulatory measures, as proposed, is discussed under that heading.

2.1 Licensing

URCA is empowered to carry certain regulatory functions pertaining to licensing within the NGS sector as outlined in section 8(3)(g) of the Natural Gas Act (NGA). This includes issuing, suspending, varying and revoking licences. According to section 19 of the NGA, URCA is authorised to establish a licensing framework for gas service workers, including prescribing the application process, requiring supporting documentation and fees, granting licences subject to conditions, and varying, suspending or revoking licences where appropriate. The NGA further provides URCA with broad discretion to determine the conditions applicable to licences and to ensure that persons undertaking gas service work are subject to effective regulatory oversight.

2.2 URCA’s statutory consideration

URCA has a statutory obligation in accordance with section 6 of the NGA, which mandates that all regulatory measures, decisions and laws relating to the sector must be developed with a view to implementing the main goals, governing principles and objectives of the sector policy and gas supply regime. The NGA further requires that market forces be relied upon wherever possible, that regulatory intervention only occur where market forces are insufficient to achieve policy objectives within a reasonable timeframe, and that regulatory measures be efficient, proportionate, transparent, fair and non-discriminatory. In addition, where significant regulatory measures are introduced or amended, URCA must identify the policy objectives advanced by the measure and demonstrate compliance with the statutory guidelines governing proportionality, necessity and transparency.

In considering the proposed regulatory measures, URCA has had regard to the principles and objectives governing the sector policy and gas supply regime, including promoting natural gas as a secure, stable and economically efficient source of energy, protecting the public from dangers

arising from the transportation and use of gas, promoting fair competition and investment, encouraging continuous improvement in operational performance and customer service, and ensuring that the sector is overseen by an independent regulator.

URCA considers that the proposed regulatory measures advance these statutory objectives by establishing a clearer and more comprehensive licensing and qualification framework for gas service workers across the NGS value chain. The existing Gas Service Worker Regulations appeared to be limited in practical application because they were embedded within the Gas Supply Regulations, which principally addressed supply-side activities within the NGS. However, the definition of a gas service worker under the NGA extends beyond the supply segment and applies more broadly to activities throughout the natural gas sector. The proposed regulatory measures therefore provide greater alignment with the statutory framework established under the NGA and ensure that the regulatory treatment of gas service workers is consistent with the scope contemplated by Parliament.

URCA further considers that the proposed framework is proportionate and necessary to address operational and public safety risks associated with gas service activities. The measures are intended to streamline the licensing and qualification process, improve regulatory clarity, provide more detailed guidance to industry participants, and support greater consistency in competency standards and oversight obligations. The proposed approach also enables operators to implement qualification systems that are responsive to the operational realities and risks of their respective systems, while preserving accountability for ensuring that individuals performing safety-sensitive work are competent to do so.

Accordingly, URCA considers that the cumulative effect of the above-cited statutory provisions provides URCA with the legal basis upon which to issue the proposed regulatory measures under this consultation process.

3 Summary Overview of Draft Licenses

To guide the review of the draft regulatory measure contained in this Consultation Document, URCA sets out below a brief overview of the draft regulation.

The proposed Gas Service Workers Regulations would repeal and replace sections 5 and 6 of the existing Gas Supply Regulations, the provisions of which relate to the licensing of Gas Service Workers. The proposed Regulations are intended to modernise and consolidate the existing licensing and qualification framework for gas service workers in The Bahamas, while providing greater clarity, consistency, and alignment with the broader statutory framework established under the Natural Gas Act, 2024.

Under the current Gas Supply Regulations, the licensing regime distinguishes between two classes of gas service worker licences, namely Class A and Class B licences. A Class A Gas Service Worker is authorised to design, construct, install, alter, fix, repair, maintain, and renew gas mains, pipes, fittings, meters, apparatus and appliances for installations operating at pressures not exceeding 30 mbars. The current framework also permits a Class A Gas Service Worker, acting under the supervision of a Professional Engineer within the discipline of Mechanical Engineer, to participate in more complex works involving gas booster systems and gas leakage detection systems. A Class B Gas Service Worker is authorised to carry out more limited activities relating principally to the installation, alteration, repair, removal, and replacement of gas meters.

URCA considers that the existing framework, while appropriate at the time it was introduced, is limited in scope because it was principally designed around traditional downstream gas activities and the supply side of gas systems. The existing provisions do not clearly address the broader range of activities contemplated under the Natural Gas Act, including LNG facilities, pipelines, transfer systems, storage infrastructure, and wider operational activities across the natural gas value chain. Further, the fact that the regulations are housed within the Gas Supply Regulations and the limit in activities could lead to confusion surrounding the statutory requirement which requires licensing of all Gas Service Work activities.

The proposed framework would apply broadly to both self-employed Gas Service Workers and individuals employed or engaged by licensed companies, contractors, subcontractors, or other operators within the Natural Gas Sector. The proposed regulations therefore establish

obligations both on individual workers and on licensed natural gas companies responsible for developing and implementing qualification programmes for their personnel and contractors.

The proposed Regulations introduce a modern qualification framework aligned with international regulatory practice, including a blend of 'Operator Qualification' approaches adopted in jurisdictions such as the United States under the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subpart N in 49 CFR Part 192 and Subpart G in 49 CFR part 195 and accreditation framework in the United Kingdom under the Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme (ACS).

The proposed framework establishes minimum competency requirements based on the nature of the activities being performed and the level of technical responsibility involved. Rather than maintaining the existing Class A and Class B licensing structure, the proposed approach establishes a single Gas Service Worker Licence, with the scope of authorised activities determined by reference to the qualifications, certifications, training, and practical experience of the individual licence holder.

URCA considers that maintaining a single licence class provides a more proportionate and flexible regulatory approach, particularly given the increasing diversity and technical complexity of activities now undertaken across the natural gas sector, including LNG facilities, pipelines, transfer systems, and downstream gas installations. Under the proposed framework, regulatory oversight would focus less on rigid licence classifications and more on ensuring that individuals only undertake activities for which they are demonstrably qualified and competent. This approach is intended to reduce unnecessary administrative complexity while preserving clear accountability for safety-critical work.

The proposed regulations establish three personnel categories, namely apprentices, technicians, and professional engineers, and define the activities each category may perform across LNG facilities, natural gas pipelines, and supply-side gas systems. The framework also identifies minimum educational standards, safety training, industry certifications, practical experience requirements, and continuing education obligations applicable to each category.

In balancing regulatory considerations, URCA proposes a framework which places primary responsibility for qualification compliance on both the individual Gas Service Worker and, where applicable, the licensed company engaging that worker. In this regard, licensed companies would be required to develop and maintain written Qualification Programmes tailored to their

operations and authorised activities. These programmes would be subject to URCA approval and would require operators to identify covered tasks, verify worker qualifications, maintain records, provide ongoing training, and ensure that contractors and subcontractors comply with equivalent competency standards.

The proposed framework also incorporates elements of self-certification and operator accountability. Rather than requiring URCA to pre-approve each specific activity undertaken by a Gas Service Worker, the framework places primary responsibility on licensed companies and individual workers to ensure that only appropriately qualified personnel perform authorised activities within the scope of their demonstrated competence, qualifications, training, and experience.

Under the proposed framework, all persons engaging in Gas Service Work would still be required to hold a Gas Service Worker Licence issued by URCA. However, where a licensed company has implemented a URCA-approved Qualification Programme, that company would be permitted to submit licence applications on behalf of its employees together with a certification confirming that the individual has successfully completed the company's Qualification Programme and satisfies the applicable requirements under the Gas Service Worker Regulations. Upon review of the application and supporting certification, URCA may issue the relevant Gas Service Worker Licence.

By contrast, individuals applying independently, including self-employed Gas Service Workers, would be required to demonstrate competency directly to URCA, including through completion of URCA's Entry-Level Qualification Framework assessment and submission of supporting qualification and experience documentation.

URCA considers that this approach appropriately balances regulatory oversight with operational efficiency by allowing operators to assume greater responsibility for workforce competency management while preserving URCA's supervisory, audit, inspection, and enforcement powers. At the same time, the proposed framework preserves effective regulatory oversight through ex post supervision, including inspection powers, audit requirements, record-keeping obligations, investigations, and random verification or competency testing by URCA. Licensed companies and workers would remain subject to enforcement action, including suspension, revocation, regulatory fines, or criminal penalties, where work is performed outside the scope of authorised

qualifications or in contravention of the regulations. URCA further considers that the proposed framework is consistent with international operator qualification models and better reflects the operational realities of the natural gas sector.

The proposed regulations further establish updated application, renewal, suspension, revocation, and enforcement provisions, including offences and penalties for unlicensed work and obligations relating to continuing education and record keeping. The proposed framework also introduces enhanced licence security features and a formalised register of licensed Gas Service Workers maintained by URCA.

URCA considers that the proposed Regulations would provide a more proportionate and risk-based framework capable of addressing the expanding complexity of the natural gas sector in The Bahamas, while improving public safety, accountability, worker competency, and regulatory oversight. Through this consultation, URCA seeks stakeholder views on the proposed framework, including the qualification requirements, licensing arrangements, operator responsibilities, continuing education obligations, and practical implementation of the proposed regime.

4 Conclusion and Next Steps

In this document, URCA has presented its proposed regulations. This consultation also raises the following consultation questions which are outlined below:

Question 1: *Do you agree with URCA's proposal to replace the existing Class A and Class B Gas Service Worker licensing structure with a single Gas Service Worker Licence framework based on qualifications, competencies, certifications, and practical experience? Please provide reasons for your response.*

Question 2: *Do you consider that the proposed qualification and competency requirements for apprentices, technicians, and professional engineers are proportionate, practical, and appropriate for the natural gas sector in The Bahamas? Are there any additional qualification or training requirements which URCA should consider?*

Question 3: *Do you agree with the proposed requirement for licensed natural gas companies to develop and maintain Qualification Programmes for employees, contractors, and subcontractors performing authorised gas service activities? Are there any implementation challenges or operational concerns which URCA should take into account?*

Question 4: *Do you consider that the proposed licensing, renewal, suspension, revocation, inspection, and enforcement provisions provide an appropriate balance between regulatory oversight, public safety, and administrative efficiency? If not, what alternative approaches would you recommend?*

Question 5: *Are there any additional activities, categories of work, transitional arrangements, or implementation considerations which URCA should consider before finalising the proposed Gas Service Worker Regulations, 2026?*

URCA invites interested persons to comment on the documents contained in this Consultation Document. **URCA encourages responses to be submitted in the format as requested in section 1.2 of this Consultation Document.**

Submission of Feedback

Persons wishing to provide feedback may do so by accessing the link and completing the online form⁴, or alternatively by accessing the form through the QR code provided below. The online version of the feedback form may also be accessed by scanning the following QR code.



Upon consideration of written responses, URCA will publish on the URCA website: www.urcabahamas.bs its Statement of Results and Final Decision simultaneously with standalone final versions of the documents under consultation.

URCA looks forward to constructive engagement with the public on its proposed regulatory measures contained in this Consultation Document.

⁴ [Consultation Questions - URCA Consultation on Proposed Gas Service Worker Regulations – Fill out form](#)

5 Annex – Documents Under Consultation

The documents under consultation, annexed and incorporated by reference, are separately provided as pdf documents under the link to this consultation document and available on URCA's website: www.urcabahamas.bs.