

# Economics of standalone battery storage in India

March 2025



# Introduction to the Aurora team and key information for today's session

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**Debabrata Ghosh**  
*Head of India*



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**Siddhant Shah**  
*Lead, Flexible Energy*



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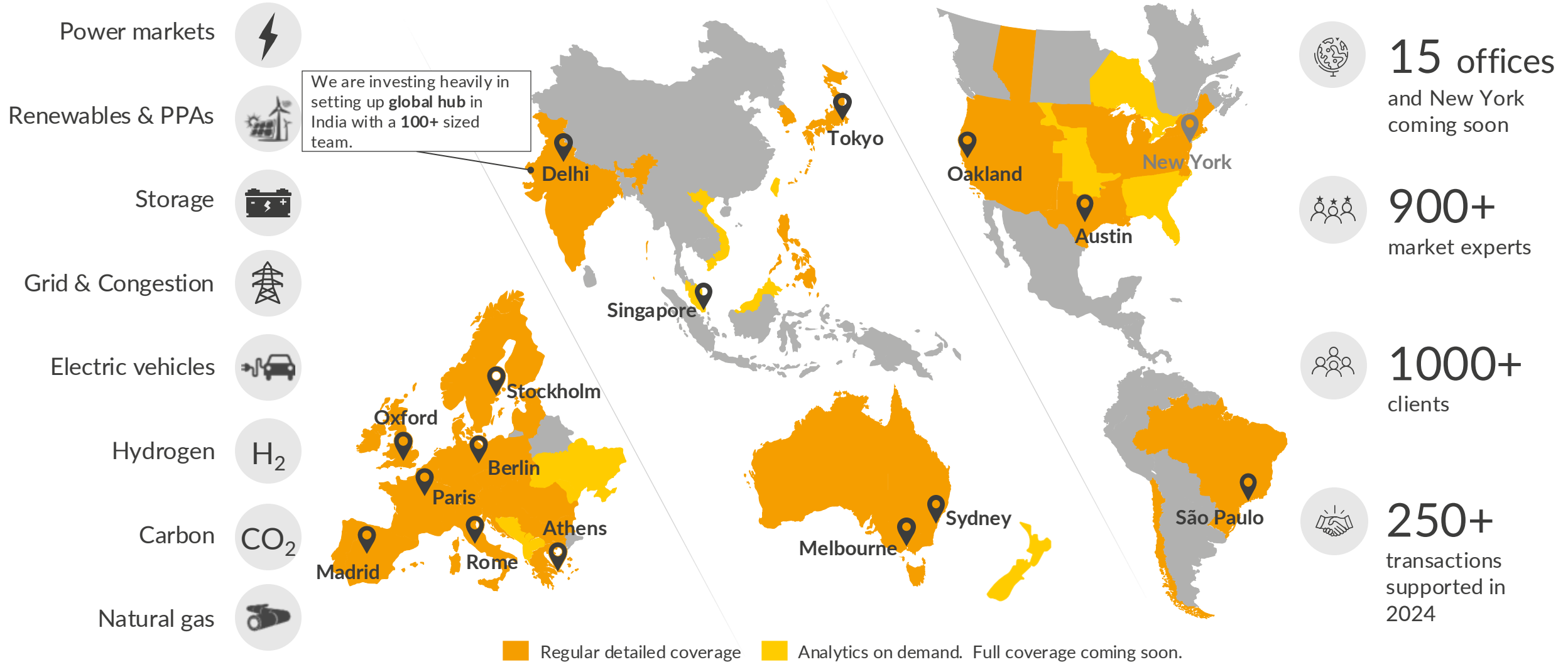
**Namit Agrawal**  
*Senior Analyst, Research*

## Aurora's bespoke offerings

For more information on scenario analysis, site-specific asset economics including comparison of revenue models, bespoke forecasting, competitor analysis and auction bidding support, please reach out at [mrunal.karnik@auroraer.com](mailto:mrunal.karnik@auroraer.com).

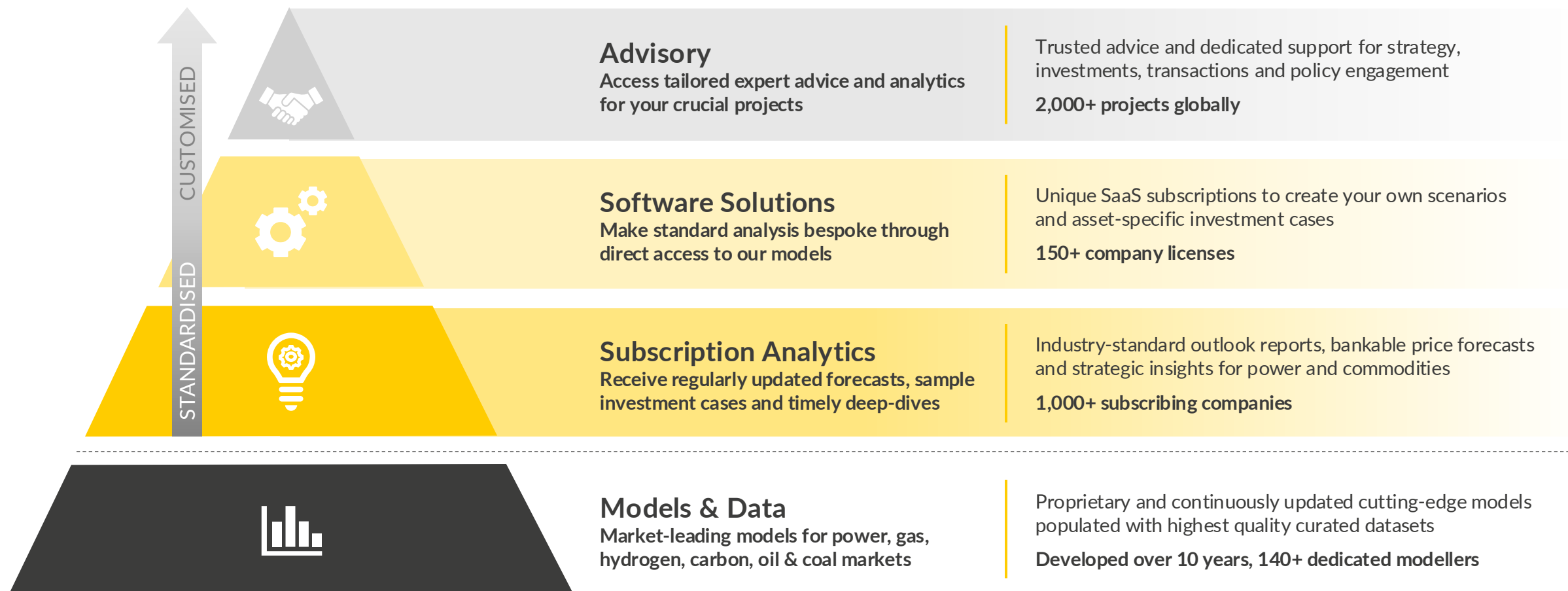
# Aurora provides market leading forecasts & data-driven intelligence to power the global energy transition

A U R  R A

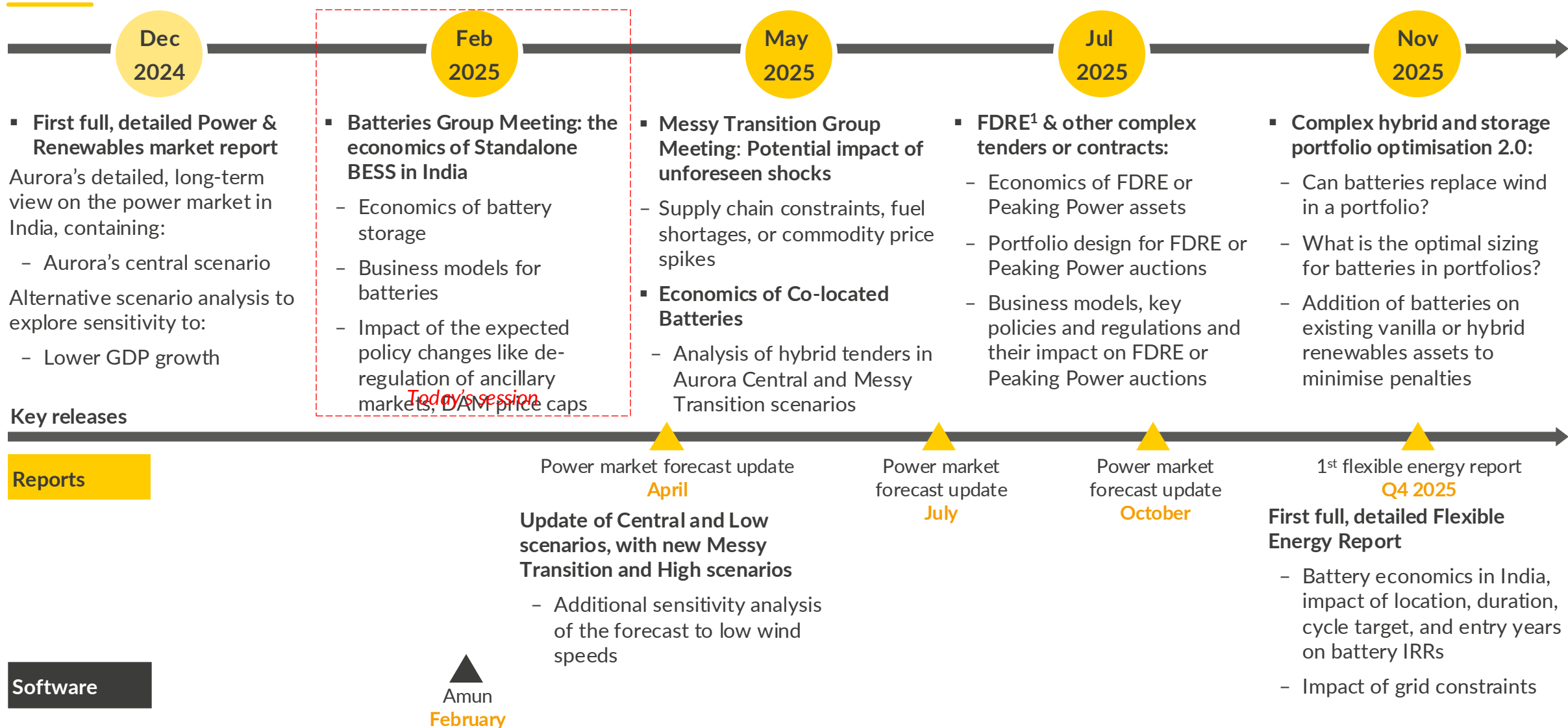


# Our market leading models underpin a comprehensive range of seamlessly integrated services to best suit your needs

## Aurora's product and service catalogue

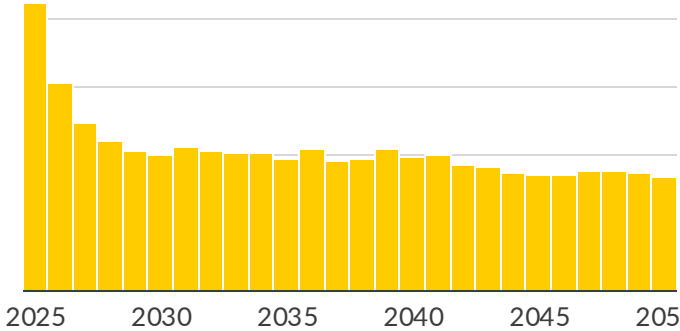


# This session will present Aurora's Central battery investment cases for India, followed by upside cases under a Messy Transition scenario in May

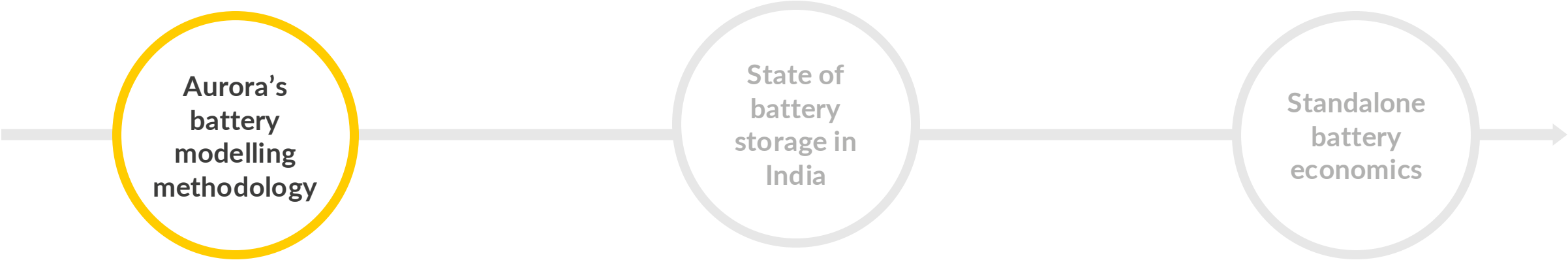


1) Firm and Dispatchable Renewable Energy.

# We offer tailored battery support for strategy, development and transactions

| Services                                   | Deliverable   | Illustrations  |
|--|---|--|
| 1 Battery revenue assessment               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bespoke site-specific forecast of key revenue streams for batteries (2025-2050) based on battery (duration, efficiency, cycling target, AC vs. DC) and solar technology (profile)</li> </ul> | <p>1 Battery revenues<br/>₹/kW</p>  |
| 2 Battery optimal sizing                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IRR sensitivities based on size, duration and target cycling rates</li> </ul>  |  |
| 3 Colocation benefits assessment           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market report covering the upsides resulting from co-location of a battery asset with a wind or solar asset (baseload PPA, portfolio effect, risk hedging)</li> </ul>                        |  |
| 4 Buy-side support for battery acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VDR review, market analysis, long-term volume forecast, probability of success, transfer sheet, regulatory overview</li> </ul>   |  |
| 5 Battery auctions bidding support         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Battery auction price forecast in countries with standalone battery subsidies</li> </ul>   |  |
| 6 C&I transaction support                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic asset-specific report, delivering in-depth insights into regulatory frameworks, portfolio optimisation, contract structuring, and related critical aspects</li> </ul>              | <p>2</p>                           |





## Aurora's battery modelling methodology

- How does the battery dispatch model interact with Aurora's power market model?
- What stages are involved in the battery dispatch process?

## State of battery storage in India

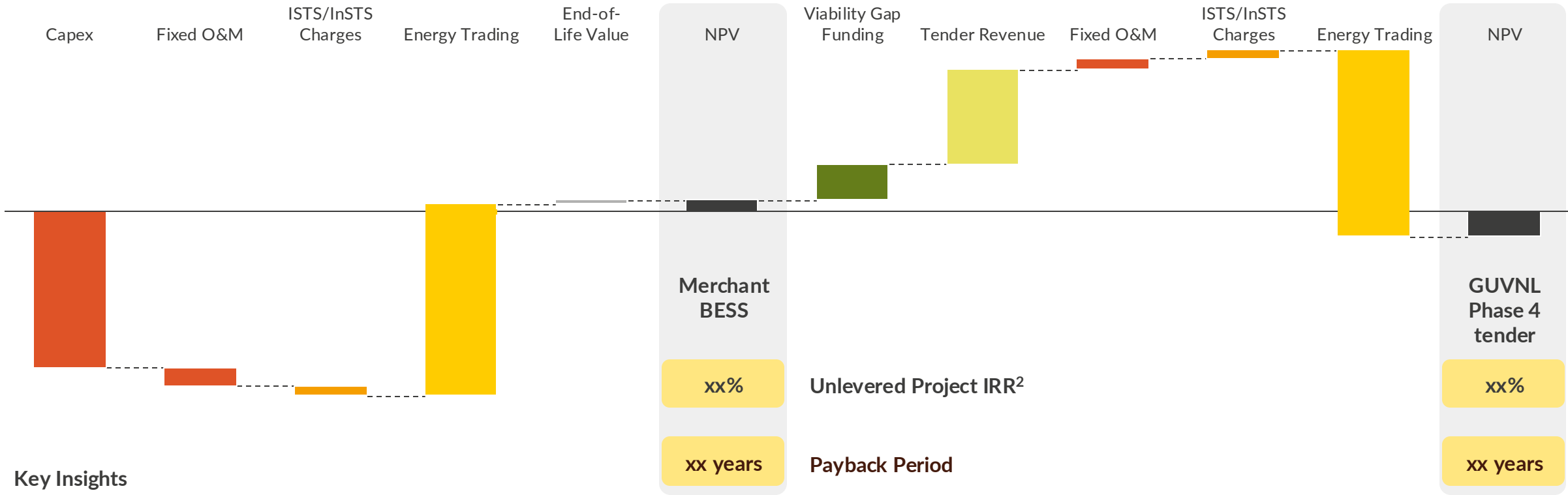
- Why is there a need for storage in India?
- Which states are announcing tenders for battery storage?
- What are the common business models observed in recent tenders?

## Standalone battery economics

- What are the economics for 2- and 4-hour batteries in different price zones in India?
- How do IRRs vary with changing cycling rate and commissioning date?

# Merchant returns for batteries materially exceed those based on recent tenders for standalone batteries

Economics for a merchant BESS asset commissioning in 2026 in Gujarat in comparison to a BESS asset commissioned under GUVNL Phase-IV standalone BESS tender  
Present value<sup>1</sup>, ₹/kW (real 2023)



### Key Insights

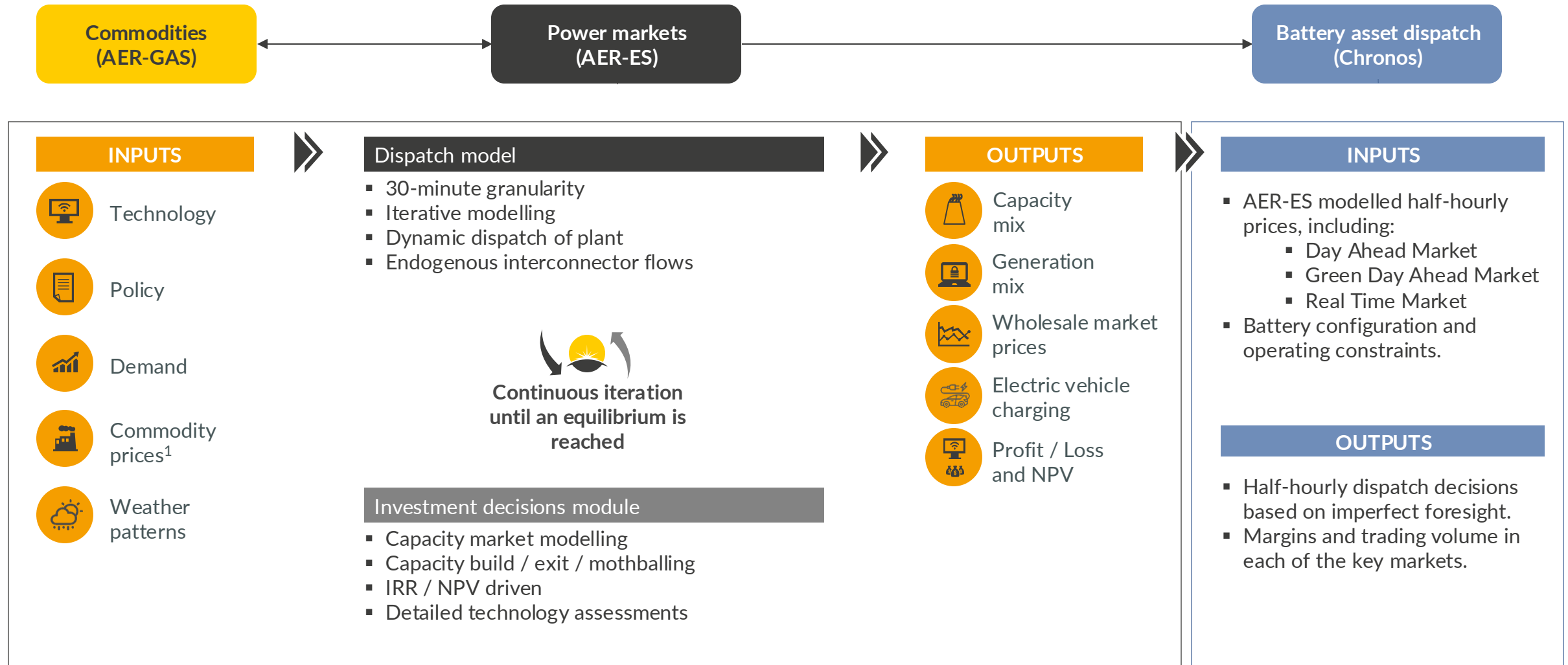
- IRRs for a 2-hour, 2 cycle battery entering the system in 2026 are xx percentage points higher than the returns based on GUVNL’s phase 4 tender.
- Tender participants are potentially bidding in with optimistic expectations of CAPEX or pessimistic expectations of merchant returns.
- Stable revenues from the tender, although lower than the more volatile merchant returns, can unlock debt financing.

Costs ISTS/InSTS Charges Energy Trading End-of-Life Value Viability Gap Funding Tender Revenue NPV

1) Discount rate of 12.5%; 2) Pre-tax, in real terms.



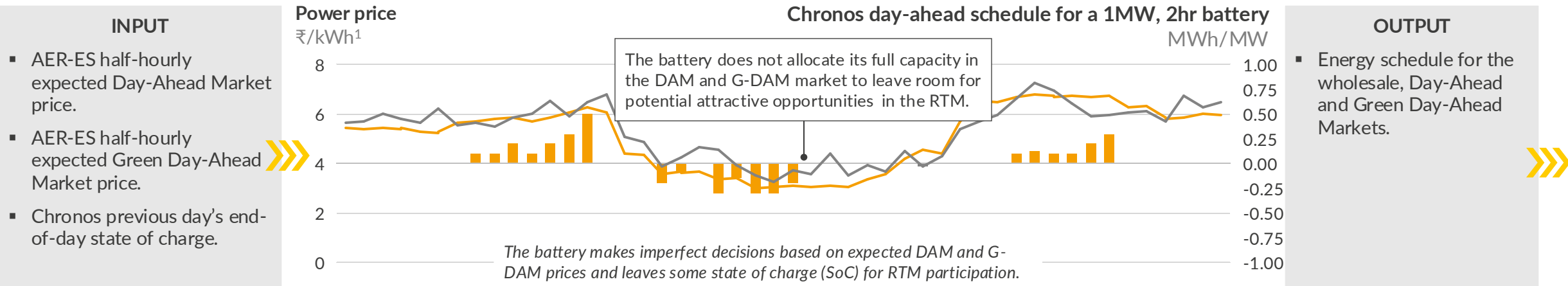
# Unique, proprietary, in-house modelling capabilities underpin Aurora's superior analysis



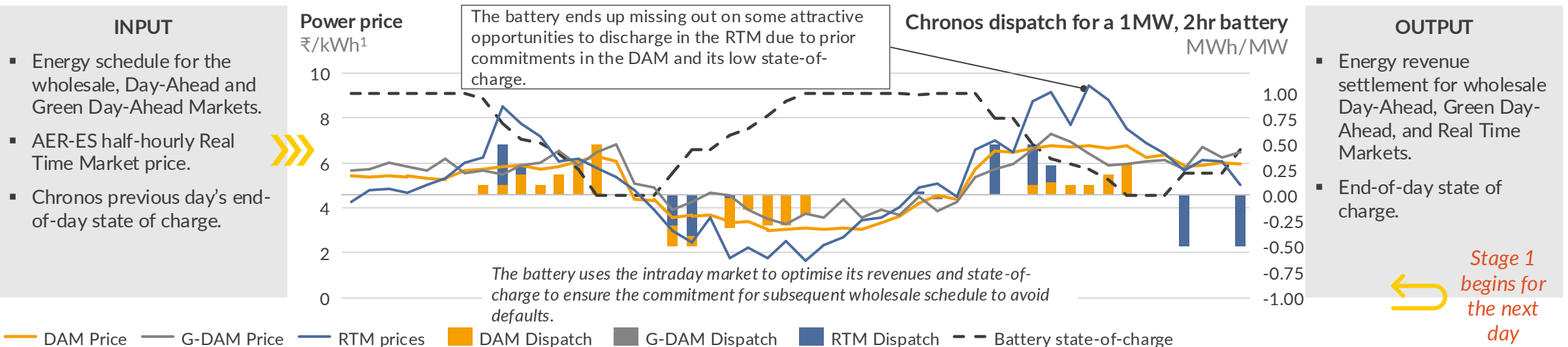
1) Gas, coal, oil and carbon prices fundamentally modelled in-house with fully integrated commodities and gas market model.

# Chronos dispatches battery through a two-stage process, a reflection of the market's operation across day-ahead and intraday markets

## Stage 1: Scheduling phase



## Stage 2: Dispatch phase



1) Discharging/export actions are shown as positive, while charging/import actions are shown as negative.

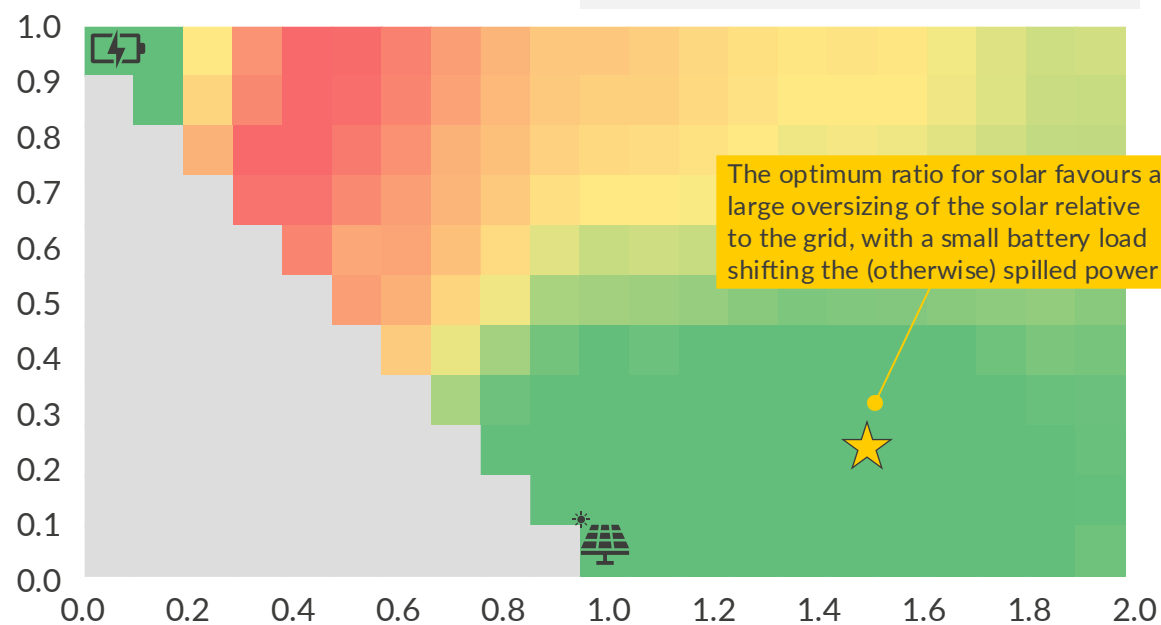
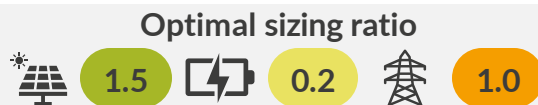
# Case study: In GB, we leveraged our model to identify the optimal sizing of renewables and battery relative to grid connection to optimise project IRR



## IRR<sup>1</sup>, solar PV and 2h battery, 2030 entry

### Battery sizing

kW, relative to 1kW grid connection



IRR<sup>1</sup> of RES and battery, %



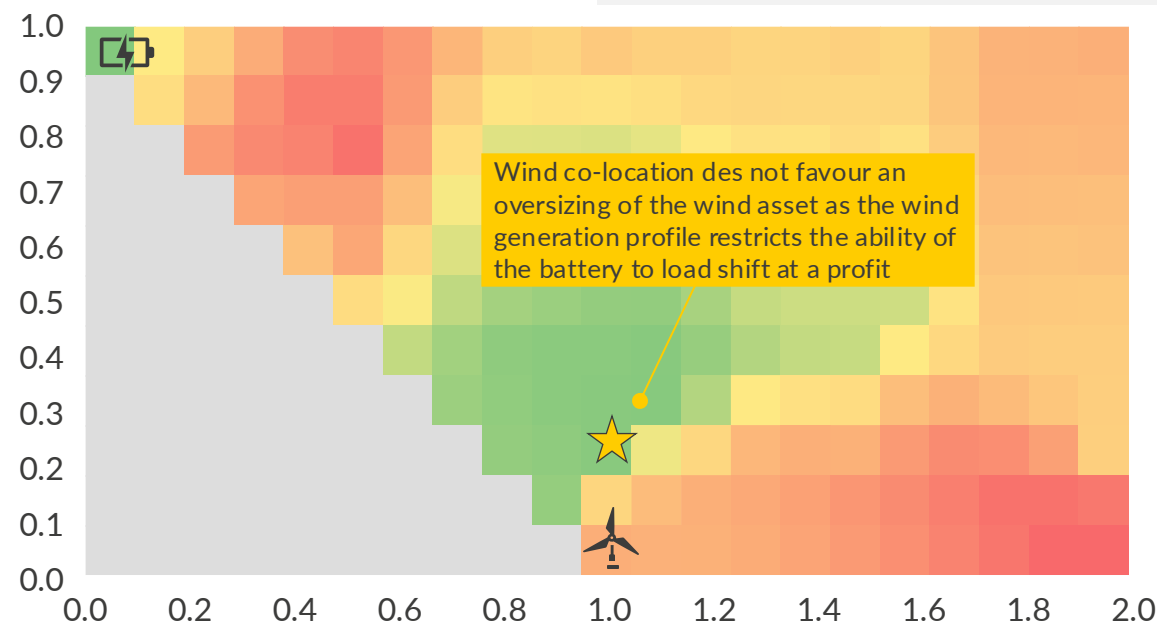
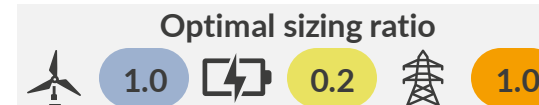
Standalone battery 
 Standalone solar PV 
 Standalone wind 
 Optimal sizing



## IRR<sup>1</sup>, wind and 2h battery, 2030 entry

### Battery sizing

kW, relative to 1kW grid connection

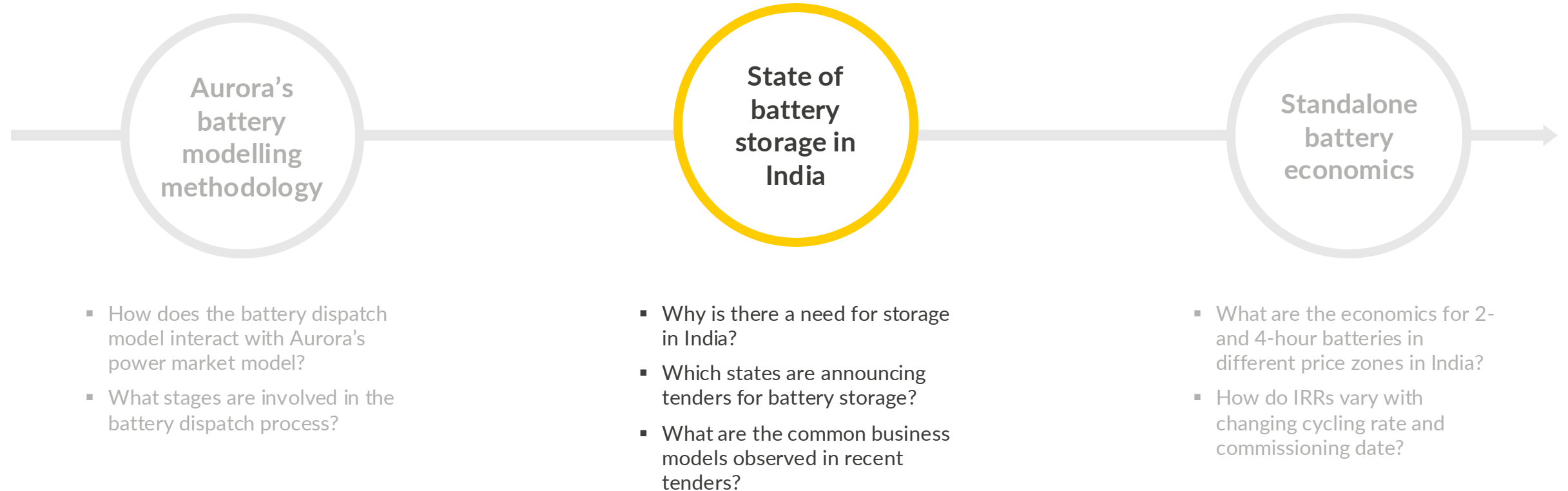


IRR<sup>1</sup> of RES and battery, %



AC wind sizing  
kW, relative to 1kW grid connection

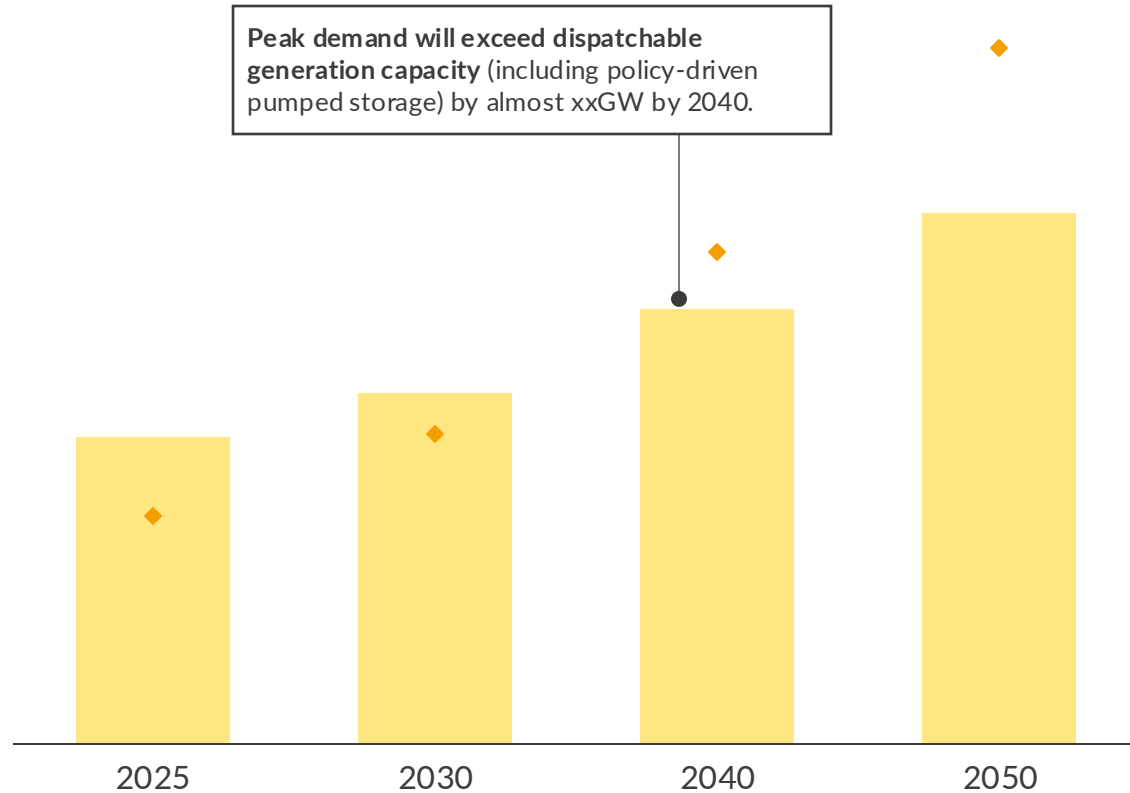
1) Assuming 30-year lifetime for renewable asset, and 15 years for the battery with refurbishment after 15 years. Assumes 15-year capacity market contract from year of entry. IRRs shown pre-tax and do not consider any financial costs.



# Storage will play a critical role in managing the hourly mismatch between supply and demand, driven by the growth in renewables capacity and demand

- 1 Dispatchable generation capacity will lag the growth in rapidly rising peak demand; peak demand will be greater than dispatchable capacity by 2040

Dispatchable generation capacity and peak demand  
GW

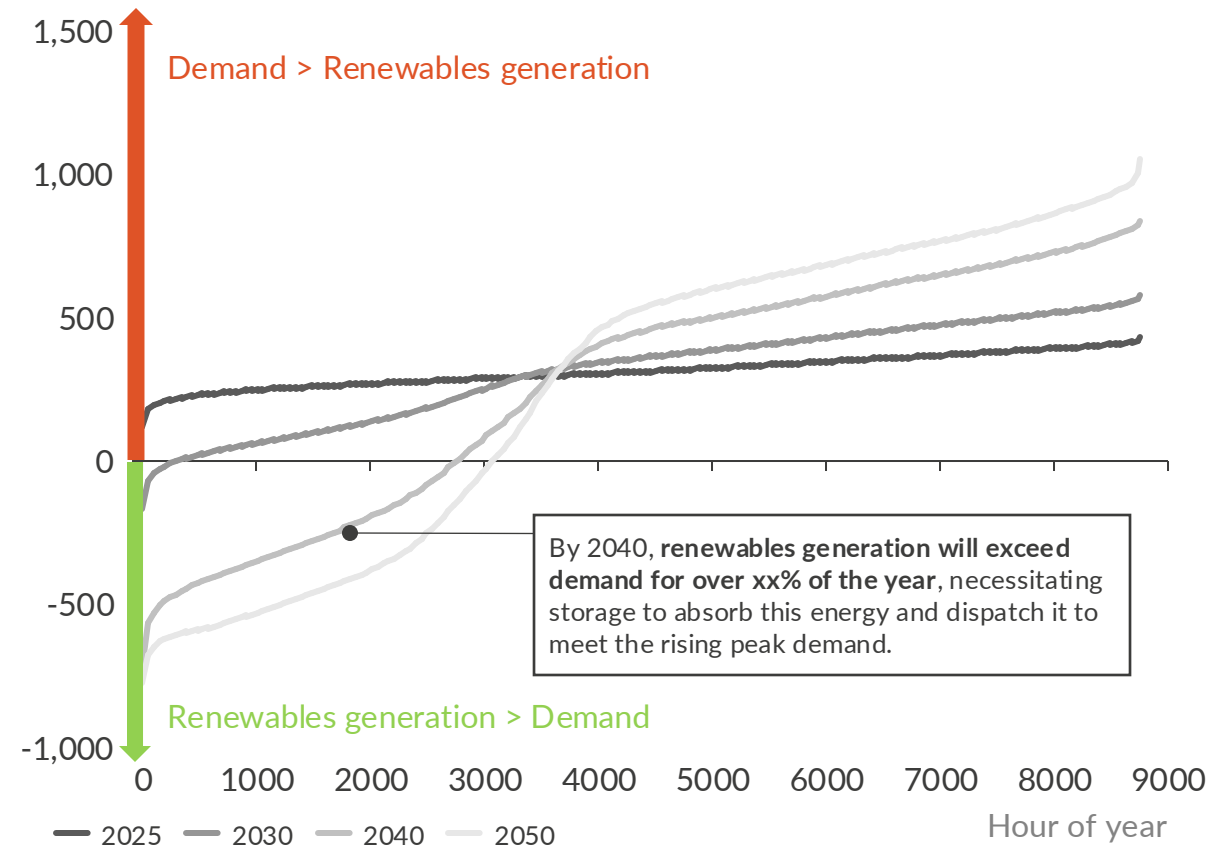


◆ Peak Demand ■ Dispatchable Generation Capacity<sup>1</sup>


1) Includes nuclear, coal, gas turbines, reservoir hydro and pumped storage; 2) Residual demand is the demand net of renewable technologies like solar PV and wind.

- 2 Flexibility is critical in integrating the rapidly expanding renewable capacity and bridging the gap between supply and demand

Residual demand<sup>2</sup>  
GW



# 2024 saw 4.3GW of standalone BESS tenders, with key trends emerging in terms of project costs, location of projects and business models used

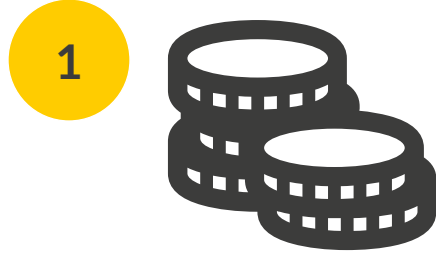
 Deep dive ahead



## Standalone BESS tender volume

- 4.3GW of standalone BESS tenders were issued in 2024, compared to 0.9GW in 2022 and 2023 combined.
- Upcoming battery tenders aim to procure 4-8 hours of storage, signaling demand for longer-duration solutions.

**18%** Of the tendered BESS capacity had durations longer than 2-hours<sup>1,2</sup>



## BESS project costs

- Battery system cost has fallen sharply over the last 2 years driven by decline in Chinese Li-ion cell prices.
- We expect the projects costs to further decline by % over the next five years based on our view of supply chains and regulations.

**56%** decline in price of Li-ion cells in China between 2022 and 2024



## Locations of BESS projects

- There is a greater need for BESS assets in regions with higher renewable deployment to aid grid stability and renewable integration.
- States like Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan have a greater need for batteries.

**80%** of standalone BESS capacity tendered in these 3 states<sup>1,2</sup>



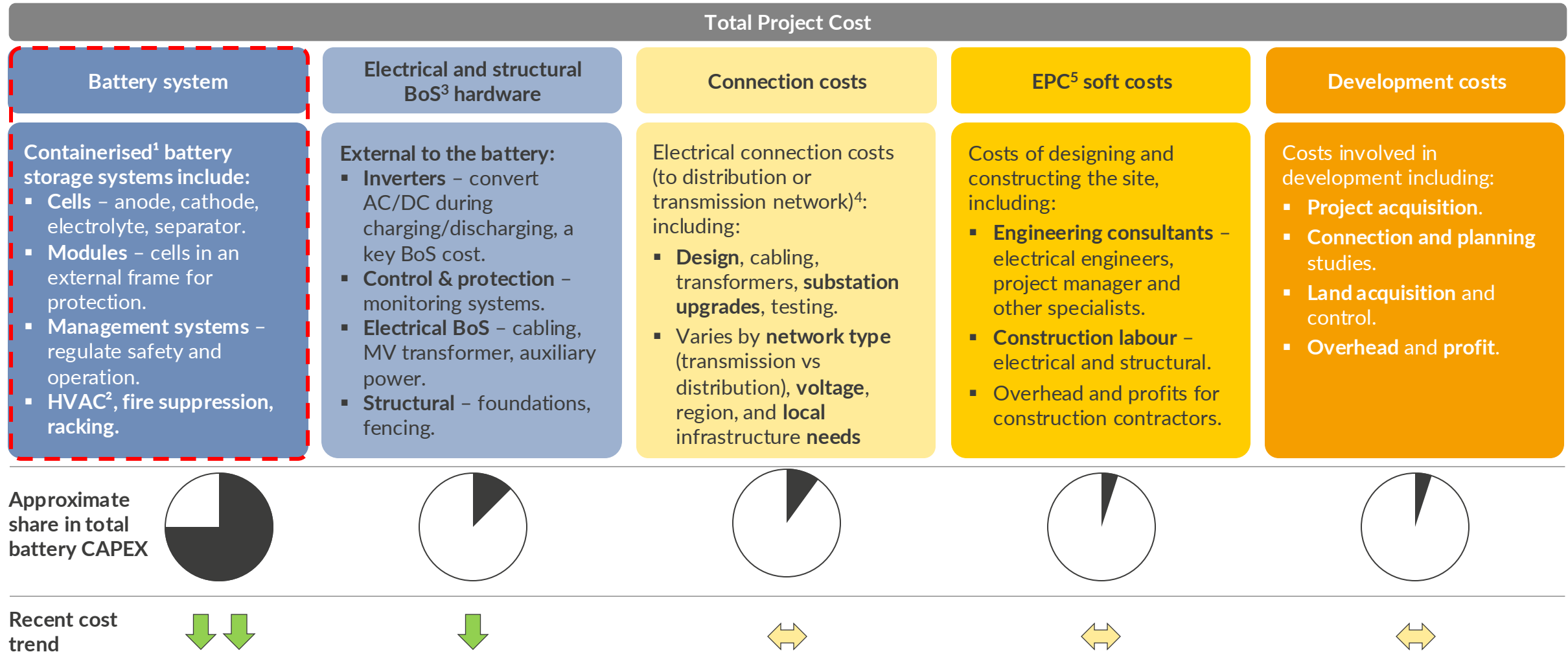
## Business models

- Tenders announced so far have had a variety of business models, ranging from BOO (Build, Own, and Operate), to BOOT (Build, Own, Operate, and Transfer), to EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction).
- Each model offers varying levels of risk-return profiles to developers.

**67%** of tenders announced in 2024 were under the BOO model<sup>1</sup>

1) Tender cancelled or under appeal are not considered; 2) Tenders open for > 1 year are considered on hold in absence of any notification clarifying status.

# 1 Aurora independently researches all aspects of battery CAPEX both globally and in India



 Deep dive ahead

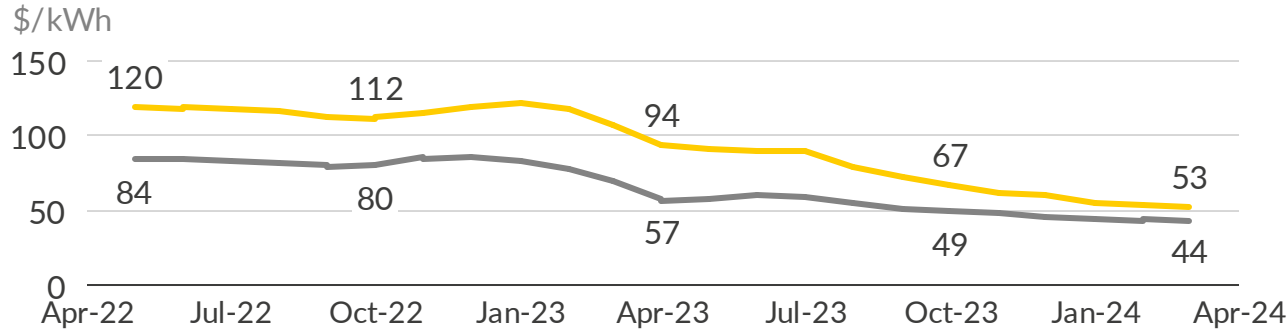
1) Typically ~40ft containers of ~2 MWh capacity, although they are trending to 20ft containers and higher MWh capacities, and trending to a single DC block (batteries and PCS in same container) to optimise space; 2) Heating, ventilation and air conditioning; 3) Balance of System; 4) Inclusive of all contestable works (can be undertaken by network operator or independent provider) and non-contestable works (can only be undertaken by network operator); 5) Engineering, Procurement and Construction  
 Sources: Aurora Energy Research, NREL, O. Schmidt et al, IRENA, STA, ADB, McKinsey and Company



# 1 Battery system cost has fallen sharply over the last 2 years driven by declining manufacturing costs and increased competition

## Key drivers of battery system cost

### Price of Li-ion cells in China and manufacturing cost



### Historical drivers

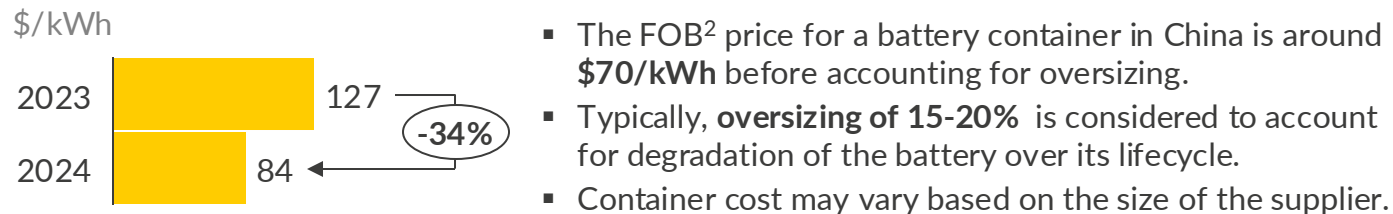
- Manufacturing costs have declined ~49% since their peak in December 2022 driven by lower Lithium prices and process improvements.
- Producer margins have reduced due to increased competition.

### Expected future drivers

- Trump's tariffs on imports from China is expected to reduce American demand for Chinese cells, leading to oversupply in other markets.
- China's stimulus driven electric vehicle demand growth can lead to increase in demand for Li-ion batteries.



### Total container cost in China



### Basic Customs Duty

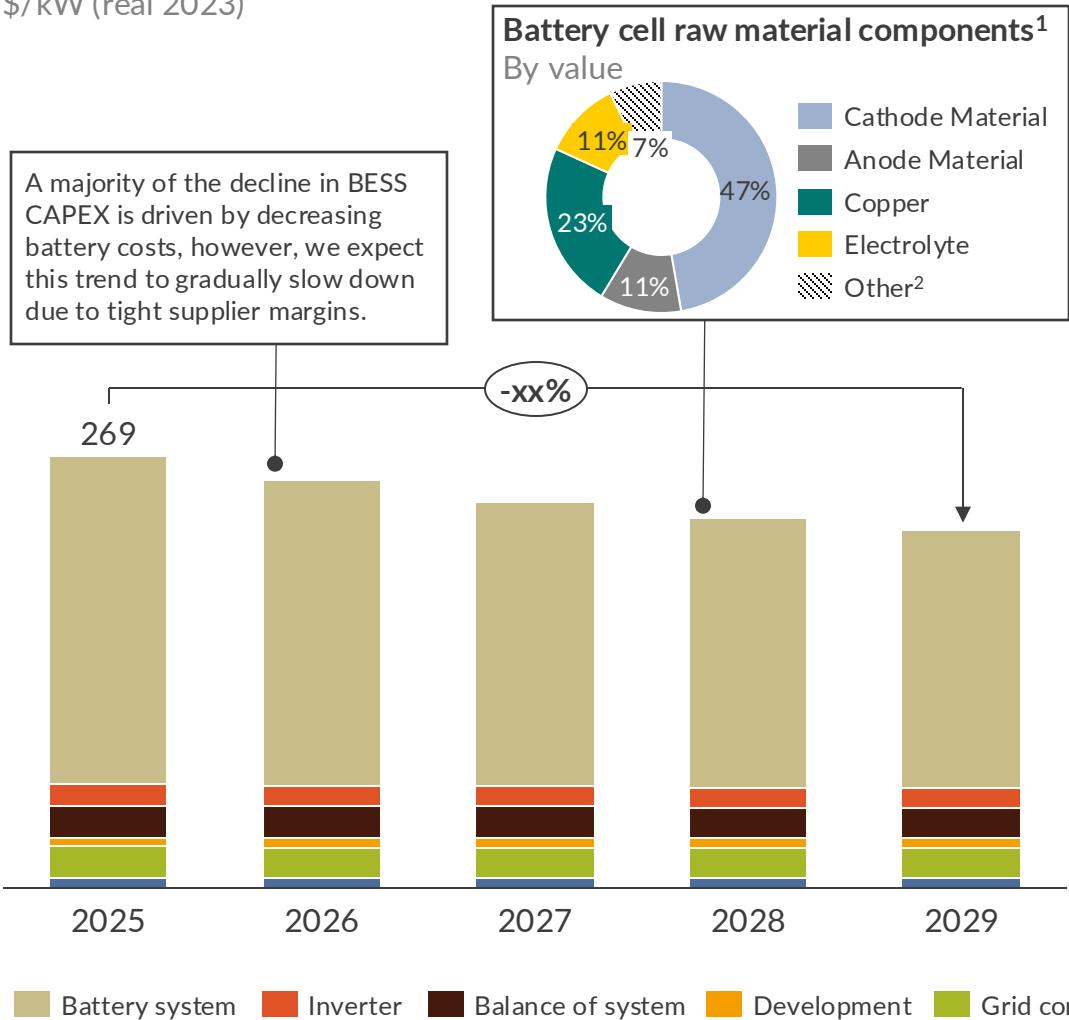
- Currently the Basic Customs Duty for imported batteries is 11-20% based on the HSN codes used.
- The government's focus on localising supply chains could lead to an increase in Basic Customs Duty as domestic manufacturing capacity increases.

— Li-ion cell spot price — Cell manufacturing costs

1) Battery Management System; 2) Free-on-board.

1 Our forward view on CAPEX hinges on trends in 6 key factors covering raw material costs, manufacturing costs and import duties

Battery CAPEX costs, 2-hour batteries  
\$/kW (real 2023)





| Key drivers              | Short-term price expectations <sup>3</sup>   | Impacted components         |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Lithium (cathode) prices | Lithium prices are expected to decline due to persisting overcapacity, decline in demand from the US, and lower than expected EV demand.   | ↓ Battery system, inverters |
| Graphite (anode) prices  | Graphite prices are expected to decrease due to persisting Chinese overcapacity and development of new capacity outside China to de-risk supply.   | ↓ Battery system            |
| Manufacturers' overheads | Manufactures are focussed on lowering manufacturing and finance costs through automation, process improvements and vertical integration.   | ↓ Battery system            |
| Copper prices            | Copper prices are expected to decrease due to Chinese real estate deflation and US tariffs reducing export demand.   | ↓ Battery system, inverters |
| Aluminium prices         | Aluminium prices are expected to remain stable due to the impact of rising alumina prices, and high-capacity utilisation and offsetting impact of reducing American demand due to US tariffs.      | ↔ Inverters                 |
| Basic Customs Duty       | Customs Duty on inverters are increased to 20% from 5% in the 2021 Budget. Any increase in Basic Customs Duty to promote domestic battery manufacturing would lead to an increase in landed costs. | ↑ Battery system, inverters |

1) Illustrative material value split for Lithium-Iron Phosphate (LFP) batteries (dominant technology in most markets). Based on material prices up to September 2024. 2) Other category includes aluminium and other structural materials used to construct battery pack; 3) Price expectations are specific to China as we expect the cell demands in the short-term to be met through imports.  
Sources: Aurora Energy Research

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## 2 There are 5 key business models possible for battery deployment in India, today's session focusses on standalone merchant batteries

|  <b>Standalone</b>  |   |  <b>Co-located with renewables</b>   |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Government/DISCOM-backed contracts   | Merchant  | Commercial & Industrial contracts   | Government/DISCOM-backed contracts   | Merchant  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenders by DISCOMs and Renewable Energy Implementing Agencies (REIAs)<sup>1</sup> to procure BESS capacity.</li> <li>The tenders are based on a capacity tolling model</li> <li>E.g. Tenders by GUVNL, NTPC.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BESS capacity set up to purely trade in wholesale and ancillary markets.</li> <li>Main revenue streams are wholesale arbitrage, and ancillary service payments.</li> <li>In some markets, capacity payments provide an additional revenue stream.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-located battery storage and renewables PPAs with C&amp;I clients to provide round the clock renewable power or black-start support.</li> <li>C&amp;I contracts have fixed payment structure with possible upside from feeding excess energy to grid.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenders by DISCOMs and REIAs<sup>1</sup> to procure co-located battery and renewables or hybrid capacity.</li> <li>The tenders provide fixed payments for energy with availability requirements.</li> <li>E.g. Tenders by KREDL, SECI.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-located capacity set up to purely trade in wholesale and ancillary markets.</li> <li>Co-locating assets can enable no-cost charging opportunities for the battery, along with unlocking some CAPEX savings due to shared infrastructure.</li> </ul> |
| Aurora's offerings   | Aurora's offerings  | Aurora's offerings  | Aurora's offerings   | Aurora's offerings  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bid advisory support through bespoke site-specific analysis.</li> <li>Battery optimal sizing support.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merchant investment cases through Flexible Energy Report.</li> <li>Bespoke site-specific valuations.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bespoke site-specific valuations and PPA fair price evaluation.</li> <li>Battery optimal sizing support for contract requirements.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bid advisory support through bespoke site-specific analysis.</li> <li>Optimal renewables and storage sizing support.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merchant investment cases through Flexible Energy Report.</li> <li>Bespoke site-specific valuations.</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Focus of today's session</i>  |   | <i>Focus of the next session</i>  |  |   |

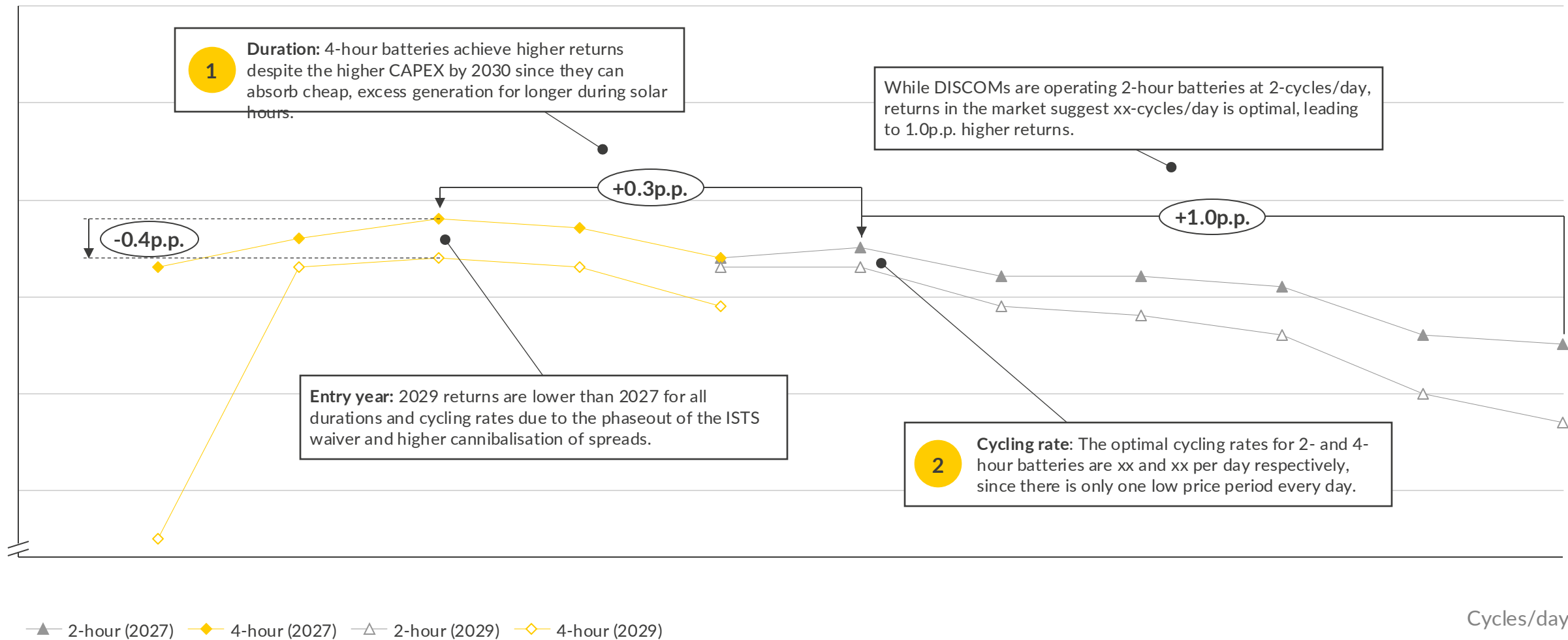
1) Renewable Energy Implementing Agencies (REIAs) are designated by Ministry Of New and Renewable Energy.



# Through granular analysis, IRRs can be maximised by optimising entry year, duration, and cycling rate

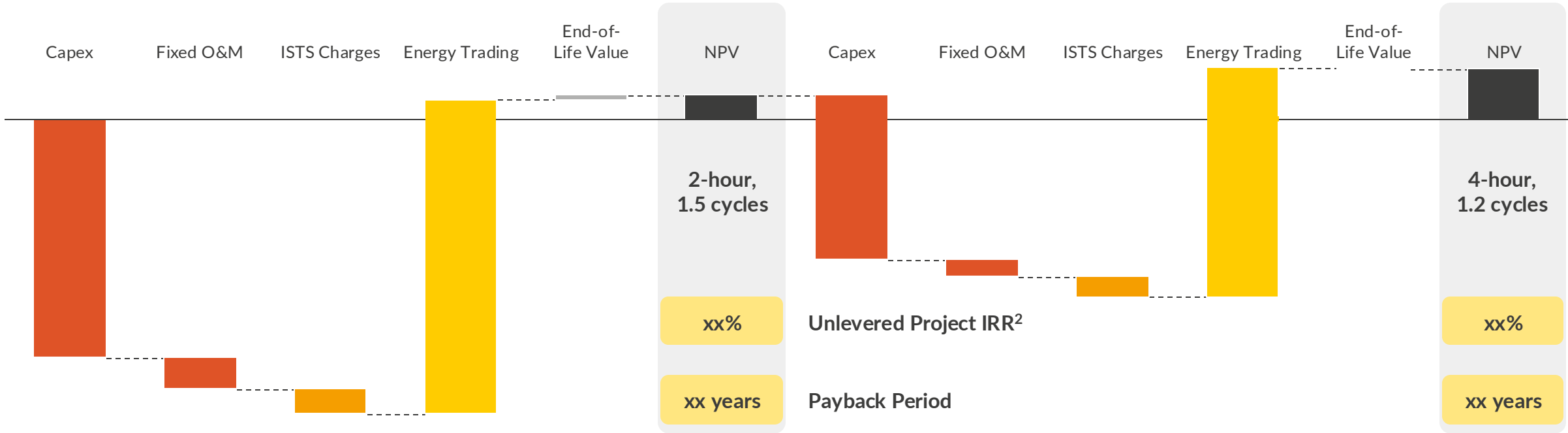
IRR for 2- and 4-hour batteries commissioning in W2 in 2027 and 2029  
% (unlevered, pre-tax, real)

 Deep dive ahead



1 IRRs for 4-hour batteries commissioning in 2027 are xx p.p. higher than 2-hour batteries as the need for longer duration storage rises with solar deployment A U R ☀ R A

Economics for a new-build BESS asset commissioning in 2027 in W2 (Gujarat or Maharashtra)  
Present value<sup>1</sup>, ₹/kW (real 2023)



- 4-hour batteries outperform 2-hour batteries as they are more effective in serving system requirements of longer duration storage.
- Batteries with a longer duration are able to charge up more of excess solar generation around mid-day, and discharge over a longer period during the evening peak, resulting in better captured spreads.
- The NPV of costs increases by 67% on increasing the duration from 2-hours to 4-hours, while the NPV of energy trading revenues increases by 73%.

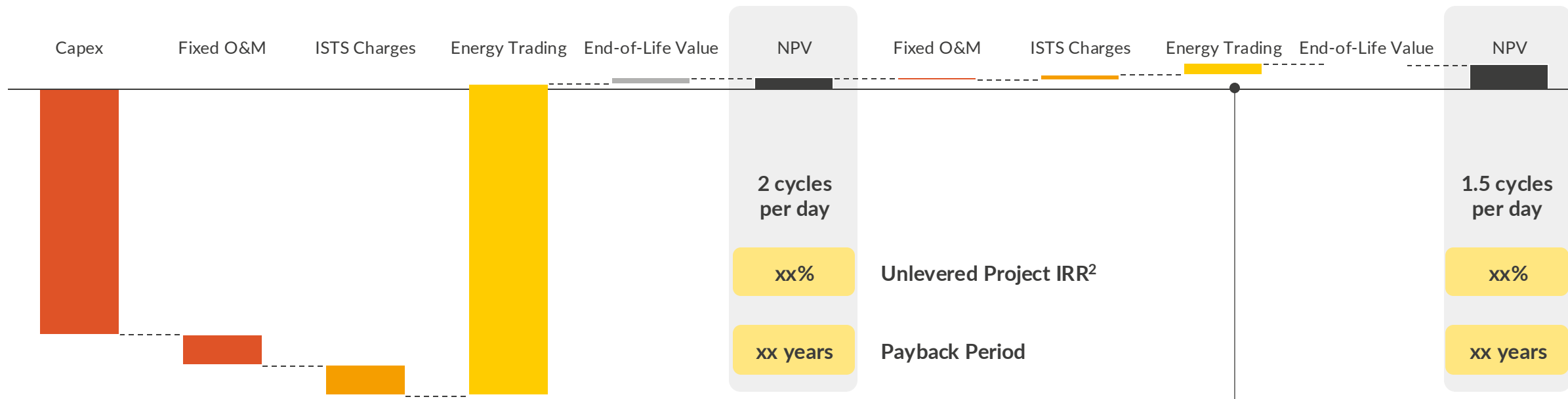
Costs ISTS Charges Energy Trading End-of-Life Value NPV

1) Discount rate of 12.5%; 2) Pre-tax, in real terms.

## 2 The lack of two low-price periods in the daily DAM prices results in 2-hour 1.5-cycle batteries having xx p.p. higher IRRs than 2-hour 2-cycle batteries

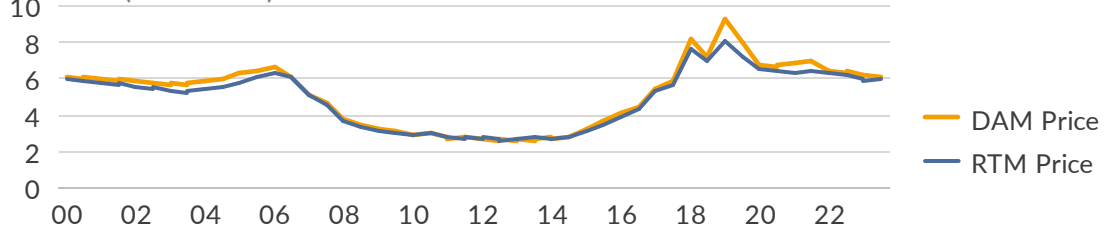
Economics for a new-build 2-hour BESS asset commissioning in 2027 in W2 (Gujarat or Maharashtra)

Present value<sup>1</sup>, ₹/kW (real 2023)



Power price by hour of day for year of entry (2027)

₹/kWh (real 2023)



- Standalone 2-hour battery economics improve on decreasing the number of cycles per day from 2 to 1.5 due to increased energy trading returns.
- The intraday shape of power prices has a pronounced duck curve, with lower prices in the middle of the day and higher prices in the morning and evening.
- As a result of this shape, the battery finds it difficult to complete 2 cycles in a day.

Costs ISTS Charges Energy Trading End-of-Life Value NPV

1) Discount rate of 12.5%; 2) Pre-tax, in real terms.



# Rajasthan (N2) and Gujarat (W2) offer the highest returns for standalone BESS projects as solar deployment drives RTM volatility higher

Battery project financials by COD and duration









| Entry year | Scenario | Duration | Cycles per day | Project IRR <sup>2</sup> (%) |    |    |
|------------|----------|----------|----------------|------------------------------|----|----|
|            |          |          |                | N2                           | W2 | S1 |
| 2027       | Central  | 2-hour   | 2 cycles       |                              |    |    |
| 2029       | Central  | 2-hour   | 2 cycles       |                              |    |    |
| 2027       | Central  | 2-hour   | 1.5 cycles     |                              |    |    |
| 2029       | Central  | 2-hour   | 1.5 cycles     |                              |    |    |
| 2027       | Central  | 4-hour   | 1 cycle        |                              |    |    |
| 2029       | Central  | 4-hour   | 1 cycle        |                              |    |    |
| 2027       | Central  | 4-hour   | 1.2 cycles     |                              |    |    |
| 2029       | Central  | 4-hour   | 1.2 cycles     |                              |    |    |

1) Discount rate of 12.5%; 2) Pre-tax, in real terms.

# Upcoming power market reforms like the introduction of market-based procurement of ancillary services should improve battery economics

 Deep dive ahead

## Policies affecting the economics of battery storage in India

| Policy   | Description   | Impact on BESS economics  |
|--|---|---|
| Market procurement of ancillary services               | In 2023, CERC allowed market-based procurement for Tertiary Reserve Ancillary Services through the power exchanges, with plans to introduce Secondary Reserve on the exchanges in the near future.  |    |
| Resource adequacy planning                             | In 2023, the Ministry of Power issued “Resource Adequacy Guidelines” to ensure State DISCOMs procure capacity to ensure security of supply. Resource Adequacy mandates can increase BESS procurement through tenders.   |    |
| Energy Storage Obligations (ESOs)                      | Energy Storage Obligations mandate that a minimum share of electricity be procured from renewable energy through storage. ESOs incentivise DISCOMs and Open Access C&I customers to contract battery capacity.  |    |
| <div>1</div> DAM price cap                             | The power exchanges have a price cap of <b>₹10/kWh in the DAM<sup>1</sup> and RTM</b> , and <b>₹20/kWh in the HP-DAM</b> . The price caps limit arbitrage opportunities for batteries, reducing their gross margins.  |    |
| ISTS waivers   | The ISTS waiver is expected to be gradually phased out for projects commissioned post-June 2025, which will reduce project competitiveness.   |    |
| Viability Gap Funding <sup>4</sup>                     | Viability Gap Funding provides financial support of up to 40% of the capital cost for BESS projects which provide at least 85% of their capacity to DISCOMs, reducing the capital investments for developers.   |   |
| Advisory for co-locating ESS with solar power projects | The CEA has advised to incorporate a <b>minimum of 2 hours of co-located ESS</b> , equivalent to 10% of installed solar project capacities, in future solar tenders. Distribution licensees have been advised to consider 2-hour storage mandates for rooftop solar. Increase in co-located ESS can reduce price spreads with negative impact on arbitrage. |  |
| Domestic manufacturing mandates for BESS <sup>5</sup>  | Potential mandates to source cells locally for BESS assets could lead to project delays or increased costs due to low domestic manufacturing capacity.  |  |

Impact on BESS economics  Positive  Negative

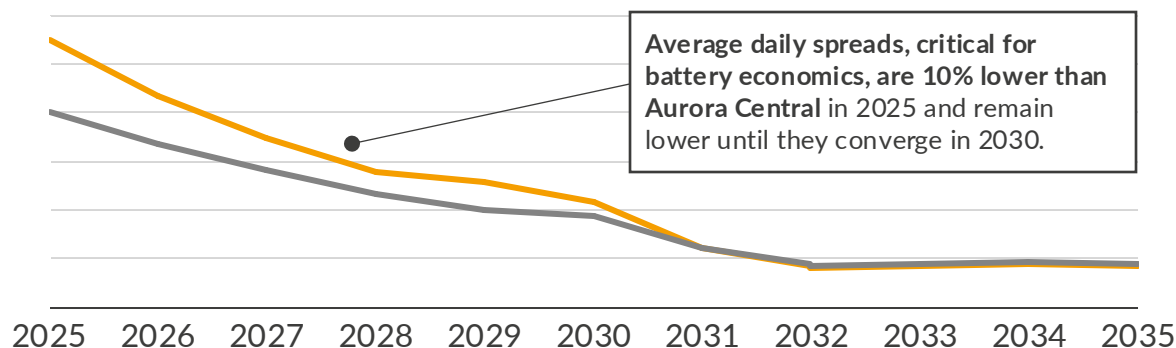
1) Day Ahead Market; 2) High Price – Day Ahead Market; 3) Interstate Transmission System; 4) The selection of BESS developers for Viability Gap Funding grants is mandated to be carried out through a competitive bidding process; 5) Domestic manufacturing mandates for BESS have not been introduced yet.  
Sources: Aurora Energy Research, CERC, Ministry of Power

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# 1 Sensitivity analysis: The price cap leads to xx p.p. decrease in returns for a 2-hour 2-cycle battery commissioning in W2 in 2027

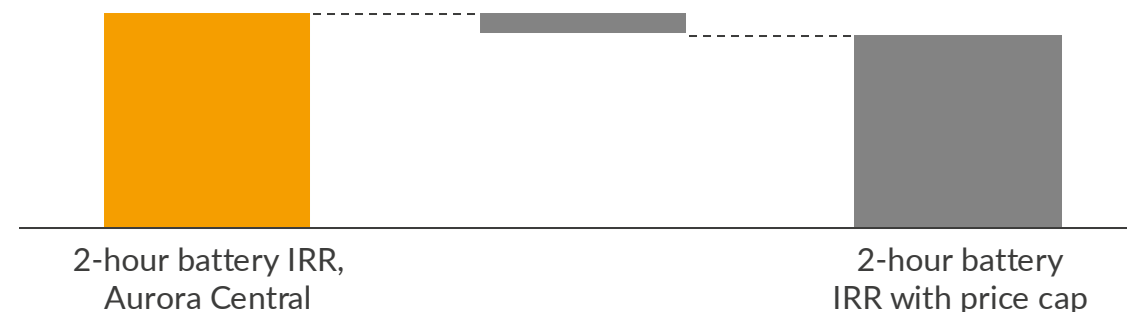
Average daily spread with price cap, relative to Aurora Central

₹/kWh (real 2023)



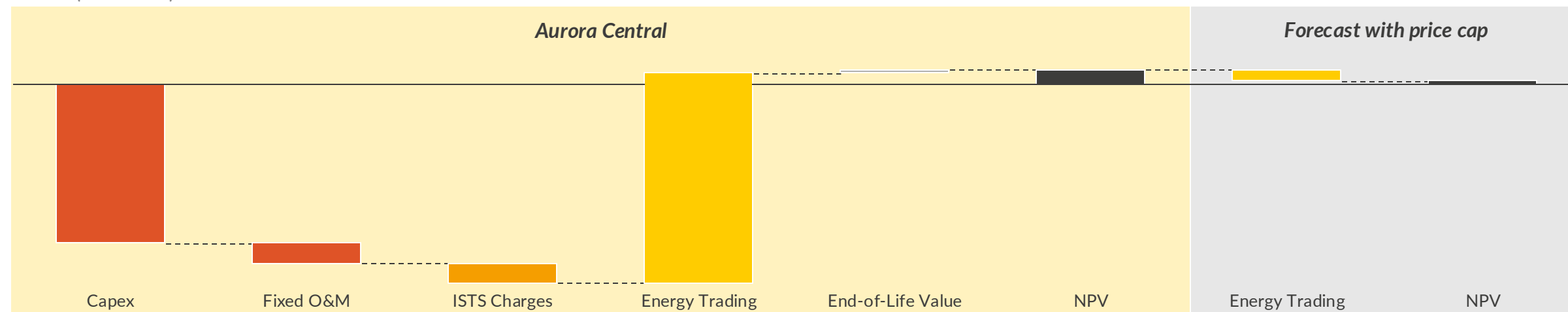
BESS IRRs<sup>1</sup> in W2 with price cap, relative to Aurora Central

%



Present value of cashflows for a 2-hour, 2 cycle BESS asset in W2

₹/kW (real 2023)



— Aurora Central — Forecast with price cap ■ Costs ■ ISTS Charges ■ Energy Trading ■ End-of-Life Value ■ NPV

1) Pre-tax, unlevered, in real terms.



Global experiences show that batteries typically rely on stacking revenue streams from a number of markets; ancillary markets can be an attractive source of revenue in the initial years of the project.



Most markets see some form of contracted long-term revenues, e.g. tolling agreements or capacity markets, forming a part of the revenue stack, unlocking debt financing for batteries and lowering the cost of capital; allowing access to merchant upside for equity.



Batteries participating in DISCOM tenders may have a lower cost of capital, but they also secure far lower returns: a battery securing a GUVNL Phase IV tender would achieve an unlevered IRR<sup>1</sup> of xx%, whereas a similar merchant asset could have achieved xx%.



4-hour batteries achieve higher returns than 2-hour batteries as they are able to discharge over longer durations during the evening and morning price peaks; 4-hour batteries operating at xx cycles per day achieve the highest unlevered IRR<sup>1</sup>.



The government has a key role to play in enabling the deployment of batteries in India – reforms like allowing batteries to participate in Secondary Reserve will help, certainty around the wholesale price caps will play a key role in unlocking investment.

1) Pre-tax, real.

# Indian Power & Renewables Subscription Service:

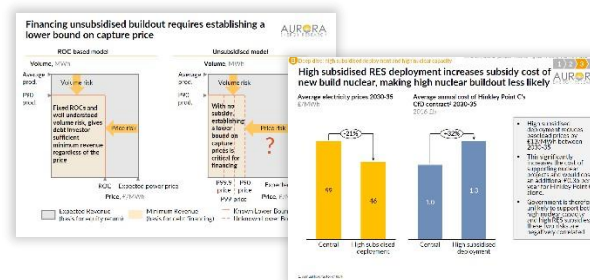
Key market analyses and forecasts for all participants in the Indian power market

## Quarterly Data and Market Reports:

- **All the latest trends and forecasts-** recent developments, full policy and technology outlook
- **Key market outcomes to 2060-** Capacity, Generation, DAM price outlook modelled at 30-min granularity for each of 13 zones
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  - Complex peak shaped/ FDRE tender optimization
  - C&I – novel structuring, data centers
  - Grid curtailment



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- **Biannual workshops** and support from analysts, including native speakers and on-the-ground experts.



**All Intelligence for a successful business, based on bankable forecasts**

## Details and disclaimer

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