

Western Power Distribution Bids Win Ofgem Cash Backing

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Two Western Power Distribution (WPD) initiatives – one in Bristol and one in Milton Keynes – designed to study the effects of connecting low carbon technologies to the electricity network, have secured over £14.5million from energy regulator Ofgem.

They were two of six successful projects submitted by UK distribution businesses to the regulator as part of its Low Carbon Networks Fund Tier Two initiative – a £64million annual contest to fund a small number of flagship projects.

The Tier Two initiative tasks distribution businesses like WPD to examine what they need to do to provide security of supply at value for money as the country moves to a low carbon economy. It also encourages partnerships with suppliers, generators, technology providers, universities and commercial organisations.

WPD's successful trial schemes are known as BRISTOL and FALCON. The BRISTOL initiative includes collaboration with Bristol City Council and businesses like Siemens to improve the energy efficiency of schools, businesses and homes in locations across the city.

It investigates the benefits of battery storage and involves installing converter equipment that requires less energy and which may also save customers money on their bills. It is designed to improve the efficiency of electrical equipment in homes by maximising benefit from the power householders can generate from solar panels and the like.

The FALCON project, which is being conducted in the South East Midlands area around Milton Keynes, deploys engineering and commercial trials as alternatives to traditional network reinforcement. These are designed to help the industry identify gainful techniques that are swifter and which optimise future network investment plans to provide customers with value for money.

WPD Chief Executive Robert Symons was delighted that the company had secured two winning bids in this year's initiative.

"They are both excellent projects that will benefit electricity users by providing valuable learning for the energy industry as a whole, as well as other interested parties."

He said a critical factor was that the initiatives would also be undertaken on an existing electricity network.

"This is important when you consider that the majority of low-carbon impacts will not be on newly built networks."

For further information: WPD Corporate Communications on 0117 933 2005

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