

Western Power Distribution Bid Wins Ofgem Backing

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Western Power Distribution (WPD) has won financial backing for its bid as part of energy regulator Ofgem's Low Carbon Networks Fund.

The fund provides cash to support the best projects from electricity distribution businesses (DNOs) which seek out new technology, operating and commercial arrangements. It is designed to speed up the crucial development of smart grids to meet low carbon energy use.

The bidding process saw 11 projects from DNOs compete for funding from a total of £62million set aside by the regulator.

WPD's submission, one of four which was successful, will cost around £9 million, and will examine the effect that low carbon technologies have on the network.

Spanning an area of South Wales from Swansea to Newport the WPD project will involve deploying network-monitoring equipment capable of characterising the behaviour of a wide range of low-voltage networks anywhere in the UK.

The trial will help other companies become more efficient by allowing them to anticipate network behaviour and to know which solutions have already been proven to work well. It will work with existing Welsh Assembly Government and RWE npower initiatives.

WPD Chief Executive Robert Symons was delighted that the company had secured a winning bid as part of Ofgem's Low Carbon Networks Fund.

"This is an excellent project. It will benefit electricity users in South Wales and I am confident that it will provide valuable learning for the energy industry as a whole as well as other interested parties.

"An important factor has been collaboration with strong partners notably WAG, RWE npower, Bath University and Accenture. The project area was selected because of its proximity to existing and future WAG arbed sites, and to fit in with the npower Community Energy Saving Programme and Carbon Emissions Reduction Target.

"The expertise available at Bath University means that a number of reusable network templates can be created that will enable DNOs across the country to understand the characteristics of the low-voltage network and its capabilities to absorb low-carbon stresses."

Robert said a critical factor was that the project would be undertaken on an existing network. "This is vital 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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