



FALCON

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Western Power Distribution partners with GridKey for project FALCON

LCNF trial aims to combat low carbon network problems

GridKey has announced that its low voltage substation monitoring system has been chosen by Western Power Distribution (WPD) for the FALCON (Flexible Approaches for Low Carbon Optimised Networks) project. Following a competitive down-select process, this selection reflects the work done by the GridKey team, working with WPD and other UK Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to create a monitoring solution that has been designed specifically for retrofit to existing low voltage substations.

FALCON, a Tier 2 Low Carbon Network Funded project led by WPD, aims to investigate how new 11kV network techniques work in practice and, by simulating their use in different scenarios, will determine the best ways to manage the network problems expected to arise from increased low carbon technologies and generation.

GridKey, a collaboration between Sentec and Selex ES, brings together a highly innovative current sensor with a custom developed electronics metrology and communications unit. The result is a highly accurate system that can typically be retrofitted to a substation in under an hour without the need for any interruption to the power. Considerable effort has been spent providing a range of installation options to cater for the wide variety of ground and pole mount substations that exist in the UK whilst ensuring the system is safe to fit.

Ben Godfrey, FALCON Project Manager at WPD, commented: "With the adoption of low carbon technologies such as electric vehicles and heat pumps expected to greatly increase the flow of energy through the network at peak times, we need to understand how our low voltage network operates. GridKey enables us to move forward with this at a cost-effective price point while avoiding inconveniencing our customers with power outages."

"The very first trial installation of GridKey we carried out was with WPD and they gave us very clear feedback on things that could be changed. We listened, went away and incorporated their suggestions so we are therefore very proud to have been selected for this second project. We are confident that GridKey provides them a solution that is optimised for the purpose intended," added Paul Beck, VP Advanced Projects for GridKey.

About GridKey

GridKey is a substation monitoring system designed specifically for the application and enables DNOs to make high quality network management decisions based on accurate and detailed information. The 'fit and forget' system can be fitted to live cables, is quick and easy to install with no calibration, retro-fittable and is suitable for the majority of installations.

GridKey is a collaboration between Sentec, the experts in smart grid and metering technology, and Selex ES, international leader in electronic and information technologies.

About WPD

Western Power Distribution is the electricity distribution network operator for the Midlands, South Wales and the South West. The company delivers electricity to more than 7.7 million customers over a 55,300 sq kms service area. Its network consists of 216,000 kms of overhead lines and underground cables, and 184,000 substations.

Ofgem's Low Carbon Networks Fund was established as part of its current price control arrangements for electricity distribution businesses (DNOs). It allows up to £500million of support between 2010 and 2015 to projects sponsored by companies that trial new technology, operating and commercial arrangements.

WPD now has five Tier Two projects and seven of the 22 Tier One projects. This is more than any other UK Distribution Network Operator for both categories.