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EU Commission supports Smart Rural Grid research & innovation

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[1]

The new research project “Smart Rural Grid” sponsored by the EU Commission will cater for a more robust and resilient energy supply in rural districts.

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Local consumers and the environment will also be winners as the methods applied will help to curtail prices and encourage use of renewable energy production. The new technology and novel methods that will be developed should also enable the local distribution grid to efficiently embrace local, small scale energy production based on sun, wind and bio energy in an intelligent way.

“By exploring the convergence between electricity and telecom networks”, project coordinator Santi Martínez says, “the project is focused at enabling distribution grid operators to operate more efficiently, to integrate local renewable energy production and to interconnect local electricity producers who also consume electricity, so called electricity prosumers.

The project will also explore how the supply of electricity can be increased and the quality of supply

be guaranteed when part of the grid loses connection to the central grid, thus forming an “electricity island”. Any electricity distribution grid can only work properly when there is a balance of production and consumption at any time. This represents a special challenge for electricity islands, because balancing from the central grid cannot be used. So the use of local and distributed balancing instruments has to be explored, Combined Heat and Power generation units connected to grid being one of those. The project will also produce and deploy new industrial products, systems and devices, and create new services for electricity distribution and network management and control”, CEO Santi Martínez concludes.

The EU research project Smart Rural Grid started with a kick-off meeting in Granollers, Spain, February 4th, 2014.The project is funded by the 7th Framework Programme for Research, technological Development and Demonstration, by a total contribution of EUR 3,239,539 over 3 years. The project will invite a group of experts to join a Technical Advisory Group which will have its first meeting May 12th in Brussels.

Related Documents:
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Newsroom Item Type:

- News Article [3]

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