

NIA Project Registration and PEA Document

Date of Submission

Aug 2019

Project Reference

NIA_WPD_041

Project Registration

Project Title

Automatic Location of Arc-faults through Remote Monitoring (ALARM)

Project Reference

NIA_WPD_041

Project Licensee(s)

Western Power Distribution

Project Start

September 2019

Project Duration

2 years and 9 months

Nominated Project Contact(s)

Chris Harrap

Project Budget

£493,000.00

Summary

The project will demonstrate an alternative approach to identifying the location of transient LV (pecking) faults while the cable is in normal service, before they have developed to a permanent fault requiring immediate location and repair. The project will achieve this by installing 26 newly developed monitoring devices at selected sites in the East Midlands region, and assessing the effectiveness of the associated distance to fault calculation results on real networks in normal service.

Nominated Contact Email Address(es)

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Problem Being Solved

It is widely understood that underground LV networks regularly experience pecking faults – short duration arc faults typically caused by water ingress at partially damaged cable sections or connection/transition points in the network. Such events progressively damage the cable system, and can lead to the development of fuse-operating transitory faults (with customers off for the time required to change fuses). This can then develop to permanent faults with longer customer outages occurring for reactive fault location and repair to be completed.

Fault data from the last four regulatory years shows there have been 331 LV feeders with four or more transient fuse incidents in the East Midlands region of WPD. In total, 526 fuse incidents occurred after there had already been four incidents.

Method(s)

The project proposes to test the feasibility of a technical alternative and lower cost fault locating device. This will be achieved by WPD providing a real-world testing opportunity, and by the manufacturer using this opportunity to demonstrate (and tune at their cost) the fault locating device's operation.

The project proposes to install substation monitors capable of identifying and locating distance to cable arcfaults. Each monitor consists of Rogowski Coil based phase-current sensors (for up to five LV feeders) together with voltage taps, connected to a Metrology and Communications Unit (MCU) which processes the sensor data and generates and logs substation loading and condition parameters.

Each monitor will capture and retain voltage and current waveforms from the monitored LV feeders when preset triggers are activated (e.g. rate of change of voltage or phase current). The captured waveforms will be forwarded via a GPRS/mobile data connection to a processing data centre where inductance and resistance values for the faulting network will be estimated. The estimated value of inductance will then be used to establish a distance to fault estimate.

Scope

The project will follow a two phase approach.

In Phase One, monitors with the supplier's existing fault location capability will be installed, and data will be analysed by the supplier. This Phase One data will primarily be used to confirm operating parameters for improved data capture hardware that the supplier has also already designed. This improved fault location hardware and capability will then be deployed and tested in Phase Two of the project.

Phase Two will then seek to demonstrate optimised fault location data for monitored feeders to the distribution business.

Objective(s)

1. Test the feasibility of a technical alternative and lower cost fault locating device.
2. Derive insight into the potential to more widely and cost-effectively deploy such monitoring equipment to feeders showing early indications damage (e.g. transient fuse operations).

Consumer Vulnerability Impact Assessment (RIIO-2 Projects Only)

n/a

Success Criteria

Overall success will be:

- Identification of pecking faults within monitoring data, reliably distinguishing them from other network transients and disturbances
- Capture of sufficient pecking fault data to estimate confidence in DtF indications for transient arc-faults;
- Quality of captured auxiliary data (e.g. upstream and downstream network impedance indications) is sufficient to support reliable distance to fault calculations.
- Quantitative understanding of the frequency and magnitude of transient arc-faults on monitored feeders.
- Automatic generation and notification of distance to fault indications; and

DtF indications are successfully used by local teams to guide repairs ahead of permanent faults developing.

Project Partners and External Funding

This project will be supported by Lucy Electric GridKey.

Potential for New Learning

It is expected that the parties involved will learn to what degree the utilised relatively low cost hardware and associated software algorithms can accurately predict:

- The distance to fault for fuse operating faults; and
- The distance to damage for transient non-fuse-operating pecking events that frequently are the precursors to transitory faults/fuse operations and permanent faults.

Given the technically alternative impedance measurement basis of the system, the project will also be testing this approach.

Scale of Project

The project proposes the installation of 26 monitors across the East Midlands region of WPD. This test deployment represents around 17% of the number of monitors that might potentially be required for the East Midlands, one of the four licence areas operated by WPD. The field work will last a period of up to 21 months.

Key to the project's success is fitting monitors to feeders that are suffering from pecking arc-faults, and that these arc-faults reoccur in a reasonable period of time. The judgement of scale is that 26 monitors will be sufficient to collect data on active arc-faults on a range of different feeder lengths/degree of branching and demonstrate the effectiveness of the fault locating capability. The risk of fitting fewer is that the project collects insufficient data to reasonably demonstrate capability and draw conclusions.

Each monitor would be capable of monitoring the LV feeder on which fuse operations have occurred, plus up to four further LV feeders at that substation location.

Technology Readiness at Start

TRL5 Pilot Scale

Technology Readiness at End

TRL8 Active Commissioning

Geographical Area

The project will take place in the East Midlands region of WPD. Specific LV feeders will be selected as an initial task in the project. Feeders will be selected based on incident history (with likely criteria being at least four fuse replacement incidents, of which one has occurred in the last 12 months), and discussion with local teams.

Revenue Allowed for the RIIO Settlement

0

Indicative Total NIA Project Expenditure

The project budget is £493,000, of which £443,700(90%) is NIA expenditure.

Project Eligibility Assessment Part 1

There are slightly differing requirements for RIIO-1 and RIIO-2 NIA projects. This is noted in each case, with the requirement numbers listed for both where they differ (shown as RIIO-2 / RIIO-1).

Requirement 1

Facilitate the energy system transition and/or benefit consumers in vulnerable situations (Please complete sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 for RIIO-2 projects only)

Please answer **at least one** of the following:

How the Project has the potential to facilitate the energy system transition:

n/a

How the Project has potential to benefit consumer in vulnerable situations:

n/a

Requirement 2 / 2b

Has the potential to deliver net benefits to consumers

Project must have the potential to deliver a Solution that delivers a net benefit to consumers of the Gas Transporter and/or Electricity Transmission or Electricity Distribution licensee, as the context requires. This could include delivering a Solution at a lower cost than the most efficient Method currently in use on the GB Gas Transportation System, the Gas Transporter's and/or Electricity Transmission or Electricity Distribution licensee's network, or wider benefits, such as social or environmental.

Please provide an estimate of the saving if the Problem is solved (RIIO-1 projects only)

Solving the Problem (cost effectively identifying the location of and acting on arc-faults on cable networks that lead to transient fuse operations and permanent faults) would lead to improved CI and CML performance of electricity networks. This is particularly important given the anticipated future increase in public reliance on electricity networks to underpin transport and heating. In addition, having a reliable fault location offers the potential for reduced operating costs with avoided restoration activity and less excavation work.

Please provide a calculation of the expected benefits the Solution

Modelling suggests that with around 150 LV feeder monitors installed at one point in time in a DNO region:

- Annual avoided CI/CML (IIS) value via the Interruptions Incentive Scheme could be around £106k per annum;
- The saved cost of not attending avoided incidents is £75k per annum; and
- The annualised hardware cost of monitoring with 150 systems would be around £43k.

Considering base costs and method costs over five years, based on the modelling:

- Base Cost is £3,834,000 (current levels of incidents on feeders considered).
- Method Cost is £3,148,000 (reduced levels of incidents on considered feeders, through acting on monitoring data, plus monitoring costs).
- Base minus Method Cost is £686,000 (£3,834,000 minus £3,148,000).

Please provide an estimate of how replicable the Method is across GB

The Method is expected to be widely replicable on radial LV cable networks across GB.

Please provide an outline of the costs of rolling out the Method across GB.

The initial equipment and installation costs of rolling out such a proven Method would be in the region of £380,000 per DNO region, based on consideration of the trial region. The cost of roll out across GB would be a multiple of this based on individual DNO region levels of LV faults, and number of units that could cost beneficially be deployed.

Requirement 3 / 1

Involve Research, Development or Demonstration

A RIIO-1 NIA Project must have the potential to have a Direct Impact on a Network Licensee's network or the operations of the System Operator and involve the Research, Development, or Demonstration of at least one of the following (please tick which applies):

- A specific piece of new (i.e. unproven in GB, or where a method has been trialled outside GB the Network Licensee must justify repeating it as part of a project) equipment (including control and communications system software).
- A specific novel arrangement or application of existing licensee equipment (including control and/or communications systems and/or software)
- A specific novel operational practice directly related to the operation of the Network Licensees system
- A specific novel commercial arrangement

RIIO-2 Projects

- A specific piece of new equipment (including monitoring, control and communications systems and software)
- A specific piece of new technology (including analysis and modelling systems or software), in relation to which the Method is unproven
- A new methodology (including the identification of specific new procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyse information)
- A specific novel arrangement or application of existing gas transportation, electricity transmission or electricity distribution equipment, technology or methodology
- A specific novel operational practice directly related to the operation of the GB Gas Transportation System, electricity transmission or electricity distribution
- A specific novel commercial arrangement

Specific Requirements 4 / 2a

Please explain how the learning that will be generated could be used by the relevant Network Licensees

n/a

Or, please describe what specific challenge identified in the Network Licensee's innovation strategy that is being addressed by the project (RIIO-1 only)

WPD's Innovation Strategy seeks to identify and test ideas that show the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in the way we deliver our services to customers. These innovation ideas are developed as part of a balanced programme of projects grouped by WPD around three main categories (Assets, Customers and Operations), and across five innovation themes that are common to the ENA's Innovation Strategy.

The proposed project (assessment of a technically alternative and lower cost approach to locating transient fuse-operating faults) fits within the Operations category of the programme, and aligns with the "Network Improvements and System Operability" theme.

Specifically, this theme has the goal of further developing asset management strategies and capabilities to minimise the cost of managing aging assets. This should be seen in the context of the expectation that future utilisation of, and reliance on these assets will increase through the anticipated uptake in low carbon technologies such as vehicle charging and also the longer term potential provision of energy for heating.

- Has the Potential to Develop Learning That Can be Applied by all Relevant Network Licensees

Is the default IPR position being applied?

- Yes

Project Eligibility Assessment Part 2

Not lead to unnecessary duplication

A Project must not lead to unnecessary duplication of any other Project, including but not limited to IFI, LCNF, NIA, NIC or SIF projects already registered, being carried out or completed.

Please demonstrate below that no unnecessary duplication will occur as a result of the Project.

Whilst LV fault location has been the subject of previous innovation funding, review of NIA and precursor documentation suggests that this technical method and monitor cost, focused on the capability to locating early development arc-faults has not previously been supported.

If applicable, justify why you are undertaking a Project similar to those being carried out by any other

Network Licensees.

n/a

Additional Governance And Document Upload

Please identify why the project is innovative and has not been tried before

The project brings together a technically alternative approach to identifying fault locations, building on established substation monitoring equipment, providing a lower cost point device/system than is currently available. If this proves technically viable, then the lower cost point offers the potential for wider costbeneficial deployment of systems to monitor networks and locate damage locations before they become subject to repeated incidents, a common feature of network fault development. Wider deployment could lead to improved reliability of electricity network, the reliance on which is likely to grow significantly in the future.

Relevant Foreground IPR

n/a

Data Access Details

n/a

Please identify why the Network Licensees will not fund the project as apart of it's business and usual activities

Given the current Technical Readiness Level of the product is 5, it is not yet appropriate to roll out such a product as part of business as usual activities.

Please identify why the project can only be undertaken with the support of the NIA, including reference to the specific risks(e.g. commercial, technical, operational or regulatory) associated with the project

Whilst the equipment provider has undertaken modelling and limited field testing of the product they have developed to date, the technical performance of the units cannot be fully tuned and demonstrated without systematic trialing on real world networks and the faults that occur on them. NIA support can provide this systematic testing.

This project has been approved by a senior member of staff

Yes