

Network Innovation Call – Guide for Communities

Network Innovation

Innovation is the key to finding smarter ways to generate, distribute and use electricity so that we can achieve net zero, keep the lights on and save money on energy bills. We're looking to test innovative ideas with communities to help us ensure no one is left behind in the transition to a smarter, decarbonised network.



What ideas are we looking for?

For this call, we want project ideas that help us:

1. **Improve access to smart solutions for all of our customers and develop new solutions to enable the fuel poor to directly benefit from smart technologies and network flexibility opportunities.**
2. **Better understand how the needs of our vulnerable customers will change in the future and what new processes or systems we need to create to continue to offer excellent customer service to our vulnerable customers as their needs change.**
3. **Create novel ways to support our vulnerable customers through the transition to net zero and understand the role community energy groups can play.**

Funding Criteria

Successful proposals will be funded by the Network Innovation Allowance (NIA), regulated by Ofgem.

To secure NIA funding, projects must:

- Be a **new and innovative idea**. This could be new equipment, new applications of existing equipment or new commercial arrangements – with an unproven business case.
- Involve the research, development or demonstration of ideas that could **change how the physical network is used or how the system is operated**.
- Have the **potential to save customers money**, compared to the way things are done now.
- **Not duplicate other innovation projects** in the UK.
- Generate **learning relevant to other network companies**, not just WPD.

You can find out more about eligibility criteria for NIA funding on [Ofgem's website](#) and in the [Electricity Network Innovation Guide for Communities 2018](#).

Previous Projects

Here are some innovation trials exploring vulnerability

issues which cannot be duplicated. You can find out more on the [Smarter Networks Portal](#).

- [Project Inspire](#) – improving service delivery for vulnerable customers by sharing innovative approaches.
- [Value of Lost Load](#) (VOLL) – determining the VOLL for vulnerable customers and mitigating supply loss.
- [Resilient Homes](#) – re-purposing EV batteries as back-up supplies to vulnerable customers during a power outage.
- [Microresilience](#) – smart technologies for resilience so that vulnerable customers never experience an outage.
- [An Electric Heat Pathway](#) – decarbonisation of heat for all customers, including those with storage heaters.
- [Smart and Fair?](#) – fair access and not leaving vulnerable customers behind in a smart, decarbonised network.
- [Energywise](#) – how to increase the fuel poor's participation in energy efficiency schemes and time of use tariffs.
- [Urban Energy Club](#) – flexibility services access for fuel poor by virtual allocation of community assets.

Discuss your ideas with us

To talk through your ideas with us, you can **book a 30-minute slot** with our Innovation Engineers until **30th October**. Email wpdinnovation@westernpower.co.uk with your preferred date and a short explanation of your idea. Proposals must be submitted by **9th November**

