

Keynote Speech by Ambassador Richard H. Jones, IEA Deputy Executive Director

Technology Platform H2G workshop: Smart grids for distribution networks.

Venue: MUTEK, Mexico city, Mexico.

Date: Monday 26th March 2012.

Introduction + IEA

Good morning. It is great to be here with you all. And it is most kind of our colleagues at SENER and CFE to host the forthcoming workshop on Smart Grids in Distribution Networks. In all honesty, you could not have chosen a more appropriate venue - a building dedicated to science, a museum devoted to sharing knowledge and inspiring technological advance.

Indeed I understand that this museum was first opened in 1970, just a few years prior to the global oil shocks which promoted the creation of the IEA. Today, like then, the price of energy is on the rise. However the context has changed, and the challenges have broadened. While energy security continues to be the key aspect of the IEA's work, our concept of what energy security entails has evolved and expanded with this changing context, and as a result the IEA is now at the heart of global dialogue on all forms of energy, providing authoritative and impartial statistics, analysis and recommendations on both energy technology and policy.

This event is a continuation of global engagement we have seen from Mexico over the last years and therefore it is no surprise to see us here again. Over the last year we have valued engagement with Mexico at the IEA ministerial, the IEA Technology Platform and through its membership in the IEA's International Smart Grid Action Network, to name just a few highlights. Last year we have met in this same place to share experience on smart grids with an event attended by over 150 people. We are pleased to be here again to further the discussion.

Global context + SmartGrids

Since the doors of this museum were first flung open to public attendance, the world's population has doubled. Widespread economic growth has promoted an ever increasing

number of consumers who expect access to both affordable and reliable energy. Heightened environmental awareness in the minds of both politicians and citizens is encouraging the decarbonisation of energy, both when it is produced and when it is consumed. Smarter grids are needed to meet these challenges.

Yes, high and volatile energy costs will continue to encourage energy usage to become more efficient. And yes it will also encourage the research and development of new more affordable energy technologies. Tackling long term global emission reduction targets will require the transition away from fossil fuels to low carbon energy sources. But overall, successfully tackling today's energy challenges will require more than just the isolated address of the individual elements that make up our energy systems. In future, we need to overhaul the policymaker's approach to energy system design, we need an integrated approach. Underlying, underpinning and connecting both the demand and supply side of our energy system will be the Smartgrid.

Roadmaps + How2Guides

Accelerating the evolution of our energy systems to achieve shared goals for energy security, economic development and climate change mitigation will be a complex process. And we at the IEA understand that different countries may vary on their motivations, their ambition, and their emphasis. We know that smartening the grid is not a one time only event, but that it is best performed in a co-ordinated approach such that optimal benefits are secured both now and in the future. And we believe the IEA has a positive role to play in supporting individual countries obtain this level of co-ordination, as well as a solid understanding of how others have attended such challenges before them.

Over the past 4 years the IEA has developed and published a series of international energy technology roadmaps. Each of these documents represents the consensus view of governments, industry, and academia on the essential technology, and policy, milestones necessary to support a specific technology's contribution to long term global energy goals. Having successfully secured such consensus on the international stage, we now want to build on this process and help support the serial development of national level roadmaps.

Not only do we want to collect, collate, and disseminate international best practice on detailed technology and policy considerations. We also want to share our experience, and the expertise of our partners, in terms of the how roadmaps are developed and how they can be implemented. We hope this workshop will be a strong first step toward the development of a How2Guide for Smart Grids in Distribution Networks, and that once concluded this guide will form the basis of widespread training and capacity building activities that enable national governments to develop their own smart grid strategies with clarity, with confidence, and with a full sense of the opportunities and tools available to them.

For those participating in the forthcoming workshop, and in particular our ISGAN partners I would like to thank all of you in advance for providing your time and contributing to this truly worthwhile initiative. We recognise the world of smart grids is a busy place to be in right now, but in future we trust our ongoing collaboration will successfully support it to become even busier!... and thus liberate the many benefits that smartgrids offer our energy systems and the people and business that depend on them.

Thank you!