

US details smart grid development plans

US Vice-President Joe Biden has detailed plans by the Department of Energy to develop a smart, strong and secure electricity grid which “will create new jobs and help deliver reliable power more effectively with less impact on the environment to customers across the nation”. Biden has outlined plans to distribute more than US\$3.3 billion in smart grid technology development grants and an additional US\$615 million for smart grid storage, monitoring and technology viability as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. “We need an upgraded electrical grid to take full advantage of the vast renewable resources in this country – to take the wind from the Midwest and the sun from the Southwest and power areas across the country,” says Biden. “By investing in updating the grid now, we will lower utility bills for American families and businesses, lessen our dependence on foreign oil and create good jobs that will drive our economic recovery – a strong return on our investment.” Officials have announced plans for a smart grid meeting in Washington DC in early May which will bring together leaders from key stakeholders’ organisations, largely from private industry, to begin a critical discussion about developing industry-wide standards that will enable the smart grid to become a reality. Additionally, industry leaders at the meeting forum will be expected to pledge to harmonise industry standards critical to developing the smart grid, commit to a timetable to reach a standards agreement and abide by the standards devised.

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