

## **ELECTRICITY: Collaborative plans projects to improve transmission efficiency**

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**Katherine Ling, E&E reporter**

A new international industry collaborative will invest in projects to demonstrate electricity-transmission efficiency and create industrywide "best practices" to reduce power losses on the grid, the Electric Power Research Institute announced yesterday.

The collaborative includes EPRI; the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; independent systems operators in New York and California and PJM in the mid-Atlantic; and transmission owners and operators, including Southern California Edison and Électricité de France -- France's state electricity utility -- and a Polish utility, according to Arshad Mansoor, vice president of EPRI's power delivery and utilization sector.

"This is a timely initiative in that it comes as the government and industry work together to improve the efficiency of the transmission system," FERC Chairman Jon Wellinghoff said. "Clearly, implementing new technologies on the bulk power system would benefit both the industry and consumers, while at the same time, reducing the sector's carbon footprint."

A staggering 300 billion kilowatt-hours are reportedly lost because of inefficiency of U.S. transmission and distribution lines.

Mansoor said EPRI is reaching out to other countries, including China -- which is investing millions of dollars in high-voltage lines -- and to manufacturers such as General Electric Co., Siemens AG and AREVA T&D.

The initiative will include 30 to 40 projects that use efficiency measures and technologies, Mansoor said. A final project list will be announced early next year after another meeting with FERC, he said.

The projects will test technology in late stages of research and demonstration and be funded by individual companies, Mansoor said. Each project could cost as much as \$15 million and will likely take one to two years to complete, he said. Some projects are ready to start, and "a handful" have been funded by federal stimulus grants.

EPRI's role is to make sure the information is documented "in a very consistent way" about how much a project costs, how it works and what the efficiency benefits are, Mansoor said.

"We want to make sure these demonstrations are leading to information that is widely deployed and has a significant impact," he said.

"This is in line that efficiency is not just changing the bulb or weatherization but across the spectrum," Mansoor said. "It's not just consumer side but also on the delivery side -- anything we can do to move in that direction."