

# ISGAN Award of Excellence 2021

## Frequently Asked Questions<sup>1</sup>



### **Q1: What is ISGAN?**

ISGAN is the IEA Technology Collaboration Programme (TCP) on Smart Grids, though it is more commonly known as the International Smart Grid Action Network.

ISGAN is a voluntary, multilateral collaboration to advance the development and deployment of smarter, cleaner electricity grids around the world. ISGAN facilitates dynamic knowledge sharing, technical assistance, and project coordination in an effort to improve the understanding of smart grid technologies, practices, and systems, address gaps in knowledge and tools, and promote the adoption of related enabling government policies. ISGAN operates under the auspices of the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) and is formally organized under a framework of the International Energy Agency (IEA). Currently, 25 countries from 5 continents and the European Commission officially participate. More information on ISGAN can be found at its website, [www.iea-isgan.org](http://www.iea-isgan.org).

### **Q2: What is the ISGAN Award of Excellence?**

The ISGAN Award of Excellence is a prize given to one or more smart grid projects each year at the conclusion of an annual international awards competition. The Award of Excellence marks the recipient projects as exemplars in the global smart grid community.

Through the Award of Excellence, ISGAN showcases excellence in innovation, integration and transformation of smart grid systems around the world. By identifying and celebrating the best practices, leadership, and innovation exemplified by the award-winning projects, ISGAN aims to expand exchange of information among national and international entities, promote replication or adaptation of proven concepts in other markets, countries, and regions, stimulate cooperative pursuit of high-value smart grid targets, and accelerate field testing or demonstration of leading-edge smart grid concepts and technologies.

Each year of the ISGAN Award of Excellence competition focuses on one or more topical themes chosen by ISGAN to highlight a critical aspect of smart grid projects, policies, and programs. The theme for the Award of Excellence 2021 is "Excellence in Smart Grids for Future Proofing the Grid Operation via Advanced Digitalization & IoT". Entities engaged in smart grid projects that improve grid operation with the digitized smart grid technologies are encouraged to submit those projects for consideration.

Winning projects will be recognized during a formal ceremony targeted for May, 2021 at the Twelfth Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM12), in 2021 as well as in ISGAN and GSEF programs, events,

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<sup>1</sup>Please see the Official Rules, available at [www.iea-isgan.org](http://www.iea-isgan.org), for the official details about the Award of Excellence competition. In the event that this Frequently Asked Questions document and the Official Rules do not agree, the text in the Official Rules applies.

publications, and proceedings. Winners will be granted a limited individual license to advertise and promote the award granted to the project and a limited right to use and refer to ISGAN Award of Excellence mark (i.e., the logo) and the phrase “ISGAN Award of Excellence Winner”, subject to the Official Rules for this competition and any guidelines published by the Awards Administrator.

This is the seventh year of the ISGAN Award of Excellence, and the intent is to make strengthen its recognition and prestige across the global smart grid community.

### **Q3: What is the GSEF?**

ISGAN is implementing the Award of Excellence competition in partnership with Global Smart Energy Federation (GSEF), formerly known as Global Smart Grid Federation (GSGF) and its Best Smart Grids Project Award. GSEF is a global stakeholder organization committed to creating smarter, cleaner electrical systems around the world and is comprised of national smart grid associations, forward-looking utilities, and think tanks from around the globe working in the energy transition and clean transportation. GSEF brings together the intellectual capital of smart energy stakeholders from around the world to help member organizations initiate changes to their countries’ energy systems to enhance security, increase flexibility, reduce emissions, and maintain affordability, reliability, and accessibility to clean energy and promote clean transportation. GSEF is registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Corporation in Washington, D.C., United States of America.

In 2015, the GSEF awarded its first annual “Best Smartgrid Project Award”, which complements the ISGAN Award of Excellence and draws from the same pool of nominees as the ISGAN competition.

### **Q4: What smart grid topic(s) does the Award of Excellence cover?**

Each year of the ISGAN award focuses on a different “theme” within the broader smart grid vision.

The theme for 2021 is “Excellence in Smart Grids for Future Proofing the Grid Operation via Advanced Digitalization & IoT” in recognition of the critical importance of emerging digitized smart grid technologies IoT infrastructures. .

### **Q5: Who implements the awards process?**

The Korea Smart Grid Institute (KSGI) is the Administrator for the award competition. KSGI is the co-Secretariat of ISGAN along with AIT and, in that role, acts on behalf of ISGAN.

### **Q6: Who should apply?**

The focus of this Competition is to recognize one or more projects that exhibit excellence in supporting and improving grid operation using the digitalisation technologies, systems, and approaches. ISGAN is encouraging applications by entities, teams, and consortia that have any projects that “Future Proofing” the grid operation via advanced digitalisation, interconnected grid, data analytics, training programs, grid management systems, and enterprise architecture applied to electric grid operations technology.

An acceptable project may have any kind of digitalisation technologies including Big Data and IoT (Internet of Things), or smart devices developed to help the grid operators to “Future Proofing” its operation including but not limited to understanding and anticipating customer behaviour by offering a simple and secure way even under constrained environment.

The Competition is not limited to large-scale, deployment-level projects. Smaller, innovative pilot projects that address critical challenges and might lead to significant impacts if implemented at scale are eligible and encouraged to apply.

Applications from entities in developed, developing and emerging economies will be accepted and are encouraged regardless of grid scale and status of economic development. To be clear, although ISGAN operates under a framework of the IEA, the award is not restricted to activities hosted within or by IEA member nations. In fact, ISGAN is eager to recognize excellence in smart grid projects in developing and emerging economies.

It is not required that the project be fully completed at the time of award application. However, it is expected that the project have demonstrable results, supported by evidence, for the selection jury to make a reasoned judgment about the strength of the project measured against the evaluation criteria. To ensure that the project results are current and relevant, only projects that were active during or after 2013 will be considered.

Any entity or team of entities may apply, but only one entry per project (per annual competition) will be allowed.

#### **Q7: How do I apply?**

Simply download and complete the Official Project Submission Form available at [www.iea-iscan.org/award2021](http://www.iea-iscan.org/award2021). Completed templates, along with any additional information or exhibits, must be submitted by **23:59 UTC, November 20, 2020** via email to [award@smartgrid.or.kr](mailto:award@smartgrid.or.kr).

#### **Q8: What are the minimum requirements for a nomination?**

- (1) The nominations package must focus substantively on how use of smart grids relates to local integrated energy systems, as described in Q6 above, although the overall project described can be focused on other aspects.
- (2) Submissions must align with the ISGAN mission “to accelerate progress on key aspects of smart grid policy, technology, and related standards.”
- (3) The project must have been active during or after 2013.
- (4) All sections of the nominations package, as described in the Official Rules available at [www.iea-iscan.org/award2021](http://www.iea-iscan.org/award2021), must be complete.
- (5) The primary nominations package must be in English, though attachments in other languages are permitted.
- (6) The entity submitting the nomination must include a signed statement or corresponding letter signifying acceptance of all provisions in the ‘Official Rules’.
- (7) Any additional partner entities included in the nomination must include a signed statement or send a letter designating their representation to the submitting entity and signifying their acceptance of all provisions in the ‘Official Rules’.
- (8) Only one nomination or entry per project is permitted.

The competition Administrator will review each submission to ensure it meets the minimum requirements as described above and in the Official Rules. Nominations packages that do not meet the minimum requirements will be rejected for evaluation.

Applicants are free to address the problems and resubmit their nominations package for re-consideration at any time up to the final deadline.

The Administrator may contact the Applicant to schedule a teleconference call or similar interaction to validate information and claims included in the Submission.

The described project is also expected to have demonstrable results, supported by evidence, for the expert review jury to make a reasoned judgment about the strength of the project measured against the evaluation criteria (described in Q9 below).

**Q9: How will the nominated projects be judged?**

A jury of international experts will be convened to review the submitted materials. The jury will select one or more winning projects reflecting five criteria as follows:

**Potential impact** (25 points) - The potential impact of the project, including its approach, design, implementation, and similar elements, in particular related to the influence of smart grids on improvements to local integrated energy systems (microgrids) as well as the magnitude of realized socio-economic benefits (e.g., number of people affected by improvements, level of improvement to underserved populations, etc.).

**Economic rationale** (25 points) - The degree to which the project or the concepts underlying the project exhibit strong evidence of direct or indirect economic benefits such as (but not limited to) a compelling and effective business case, avoided economic losses, or expansion of value-added services, whether the targeted stakeholders for the project are end-user customers (residential, industrial, commercial), the utility, the distribution system operator, network owners, energy traders, generators, or others.

**Potential for replication or adaptation** (25 points) - The degree and ease with which the project attributes can be replicated, adapted or scaled to other markets, environments, and/or countries to improve grid flexibility using smart grids, taking into account key attributes such as (but not limited to) the costs of implementation, prevailing regulatory environment, and depth of inter-institutional cooperation required.

**Innovation** (15 points) - The degree to which one or more major project elements is new, novel, and potentially highly effective or transformative.

**Other benefits** (10 points) -- The degree to which smart grid technologies, systems, and approaches add value and produce non-economic benefits, directly or indirectly, across one or more societal, environmental, health and safety, community or other dimension not considered in the criteria above.

The likelihood of winning depends primarily on the number and quality of all submissions, as determined by the jury.

**Q10: How is the evaluation criterion, "Innovation," characterized with regard to this award and theme?**

A project can exhibit innovative characteristics at various levels, whether it be technological innovation, operational innovation, innovative policy or regulatory measures, or novel marketing, outreach or stakeholder engagement practices.

**Q11: When and how will winners be announced?**

Winning project(s) will be individually contacted by the Award Administrator in February 2021. They will be publically announced in a press release and media notifications coinciding with the Twelfth Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM12). An awards ceremony will be held at the CEM12 to Publicly recognize the winning project(s).

**Q12: What benefit is there for winning applicants?**

Winning projects will be recognized internationally at a highly-publicized awards ceremony at the Twelfth Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM12). Entities participating in the winning projects will be invited to attend. Winners will be granted a limited individual license to advertise and promote the award granted to the project and a limited right to use and refer to ISGAN Award of Excellence mark (i.e., the logo) and the phrase "ISGAN Award of Excellence Winner," subject to the Official Rules for this competition and any guidelines published by the Awards Administrator. Winning projects will be further recognized in ISGAN and GSEF products, proceedings, and events over the ensuing months and promoted to ISGAN and GSEF's global audience. Moreover, the winners will be offered an opportunity for interviews and exposure via a promotional video which will be publicly distributed via a variety of networks, including ISGAN's official YouTube channel<sup>2</sup> and website<sup>3</sup>. Please note that, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, there is a possibility that the award ceremony might be held as a virtual event.

**Q13: Will project information be made public for projects not selected as a winner?**

If the jury identifies projects that do not rise to the level of an ISGAN Award of Excellence winner but nonetheless exhibit good, innovative ideas, ISGAN may contact the applicants to obtain permission to use project information in case studies, peer-to-peer information sharing, and similar activities. However, any such use will be on a case-by-case basis with the prior permission of the award applicants.

**Q14: Is this competition limited to large-scale projects?**

No. Projects at pilot, demonstration and deployment scales are all eligible to apply. Based on the evaluation criteria, small, innovative projects that could yield larger impacts if implemented at scale are eligible and encouraged to apply. All projects will be evaluated using the same five criteria, described in Q9 above.

**Q15: The Official Project Submission Form does not request data on specific metrics. Should I include quantitative data in my submission?**

If you have such data available, **yes!** ISGAN recognizes that a diversity of metrics and performance measures are tracked in projects around the world, with significant differences across markets based, in part, on local regulatory, economic and technical conditions. Hence, this competition does not require the submission of data on any specified metrics. However, applicants are encouraged to include relevant data that supports claims relative to the strength of the project measured against the five evaluation criteria, described in Q9 above.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCpCLaTYFVenCGioBIWdF4A>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.iea-isgan.org/>

**Q16: I have more questions about this Award of Excellence competition. How do I get them answered?**

Please carefully review this FAQ and the Official Rules, available at [www.iea-isgan.org/award2021](http://www.iea-isgan.org/award2021). If neither the Official Rules nor this FAQ answer your question, then please contact the Award Administrator at [award@smartgrid.or.kr](mailto:award@smartgrid.or.kr). When appropriate, ISGAN will add the questions and answers to future versions of this FAQ or similar documents.

**Q17: Is it possible to apply twice with the same project over several years of the competition? For example, if we apply this year and do not win, are we still eligible to apply again next year?**

Yes. Each annual round of the Award of Excellence competition is separate and distinct from the other rounds. Therefore, projects that apply in one year and are not selected for the award can still apply to future rounds of the competition. However, the content of each application must be tailored to the theme of the award for that particular year.

Within each annual round of the competition, any entity or team of entities may apply, but only one entry per project (per annual competition) will be allowed.

**Q18: With regard to Project Outcomes, is the response for this to be filled out on one page only (i.e., information on all four criteria on one page) or can we add one page per evaluation criteria (i.e., one page on potential impact, one page on system benefits, etc.)?**

Please confine your response on Project Outcomes in the Official Project Submission Form to one page. If you need more space, we encourage you to use also the Supplemental Information form; see page 6 of that form, for example. All forms are available at [www.iea-isgan.org/award2021](http://www.iea-isgan.org/award2021).

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**About ISGAN:** Launched in 2010, the International Smart Grid Action Network is an initiative of the Clean Energy Ministerial that brings together 25 countries from five continents and the European Commission to advance the deployment of smarter, cleaner electricity grids globally. ISGAN is organized as the Implementing Agreement for a Co-operative Programme on Smart Grids (ISGAN) under an International Energy Agency framework.

**About GSEF:** Global Smart Energy Federation (GSEF), formerly known as Global Smart Grid Federation (GSGF) is comprised of national smart grid associations, forward-looking utilities, and think tanks from around the globe working in the energy transition and clean transportation..