

Mitsubishi Electric launches 'smart grid' pilot project

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This picture taken in 2007 shows the wind turbines that generate electricity at Japan's largest wind farm on the Nunobiki highlands at Koriyama city in Fukushima. Mitsubishi Electric launched Monday a "smart grid" pilot project that aims to boost the stability of electricity supplied from weather-dependent sources such as solar and wind power.

Mitsubishi Electric launched Monday a "smart grid" pilot project that aims to boost the stability of electricity supplied from weather-dependent sources such as solar and wind power.

The Japanese giant said it would invest seven billion yen (76 million dollars) by March 2012 in facilities in its domestic production centres to test how to maintain stable power from fluctuating renewable energies.

"The project will contribute to the company's efforts to support the adoption of sustainable power supplies worldwide," said the company, one of Japan's leading solar panel makers.

Mitsubishi Electric said it aims to market smart grid products and systems soon in Japan and in Europe, China, India, North America and Southeast Asia.

Smart grids are seen as key systems for both advanced and emerging nations to cut their carbon emissions by improving renewable electric-system reliability, security and efficiency.

US President Barack Obama has unveiled a 3.4-billion-dollar bid to launch a new era of sustainable [energy consumption](#), aiming at building a nationwide smart grid to cut costs and improve the creaking system's reliability.

"Smart grid technologies will help to integrate in the power system a large amount of [renewable sources](#) without negative effects on the stability and reliability," the company said.

Mitsubishi Electric said it would build experimental facilities at its three Japanese production sites, which would be connected by a wide-area communication network and be remotely monitored.

These would include panels to collect solar energy, a large rechargeable battery for transmission, an electric vehicle [charging station](#), a power system simulator and other related equipment, the company said.

"The total system will be used to demonstrate the benefit of smart grid technologies in each sector of the electricity industry," it said.

"Our strength is that almost all of the products and technological know-how we will use for this experiment are our own," company president Kenichiro Yamanishi said at a Tokyo press conference.

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