

More than 80% of Iberdrola's high and medium voltage grids worldwide will be smart by 2025

- The energy company has celebrated the first edition of Innovation Week, in its Global Smart Grids Innovation Hub with the presence of Mario Ruiz - Tagle, CEO of Iberdrola Spain.
- The company will spend €27 billion to develop its global networks business over the next three years.

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As part of its strategy towards energy transition, and with the aim of contributing to the decarbonisation of the economy, Iberdrola is committed to digitalising more than 80% of its transmission and distribution networks by 2025.

Grids are the backbone of the new energy model and the way forward for the transition to a green economy, enabling the integration of more renewables, sustainable mobility and electric vehicles, smart cities and self-consumption.

Therefore, by 2025, the company will allocate €27 billion to its network business to develop its activity globally. In Spain, in particular, it will allocate 5% of the total, which will amount to €1.35 billion.

"The role of electricity grids in connecting and integrating distributed renewable generation, mobility and air conditioning into the system is strategic if we want to achieve the electrification of the economy", said Mario Ruíz-Tagle, CEO of Iberdrola Spain, in his closing speech at the first edition of Innovation Week, held this week at the [Global Smart Grids Innovation Hub](#), the company's global centre for smart grids, located in Bilbao.

Under the slogan "*Building the grid of the future together*", and with the aim of sharing the most advanced innovation projects in the field of smart grids, the meeting was attended by Arantxa Tapia, Minister for Economic Promotion and Infrastructures of the Basque Government, and Elena León, Director of the Networks Business of the Iberdrola group.

The event was also attended by all the agents involved in the process of transforming the electricity system, from universities and institutions to companies and young talent.

Boosting innovation

Investment in R&D&I is essential on the road to transforming grids into a smart, more reliable and secure infrastructure, enabling more economical and responsible consumption. "Innovation and technology, with the use of data and artificial intelligence as a lever to provide value, are the only way to continue advancing on this path," said Ruíz-Tagle.

Iberdrola's CEO also highlighted Spain's leading role in the grids of the future. "We are positioned as the engine of the transition, to generate employment and enable this necessary take-off, through innovation and growth", he stressed.

In recent years, Iberdrola has invested more than €100 million annually in innovation projects to continue advancing in the digitalisation of electricity grids. In Spain, this investment will continue

to grow by up to 25% over the next five years and will find in the Bilbao Hub one of its centres of activity.

In order to achieve this objective, collaboration and alignment of all the agents involved is also necessary, not forgetting the administrations. "To make the grids of the future a reality, we need frameworks to attract the necessary investment with practical and agile mechanisms, and to develop open innovation collaboration models that attract talent", said Iberdrola's CEO.

Technology Jobs Accelerator

The energy transition will require a generation of professionals with the highest skills to face the challenges of the future. To promote their preparation, more than 100 students from different universities and young people recently incorporated into the labour market have had the opportunity to participate in a collaborative meeting in which they have addressed the use of data provided by the digitalisation of the grid to offer a better service to customers.

Innovation Week also hosted a display of the most cutting-edge technology for grid management, such as the use of drones for remote monitoring of substations and the installation of birdlife protection elements on overhead lines, or the use of virtual reality in the supervision of electrical infrastructures, such as substations, without the need to travel. This type of development aims to reduce risk situations for field professionals and optimise grid maintenance.

Collaborative hub on decarbonisation

The meeting also brought together the companies collaborating with the Iberdrola group's global smart grid centre which, in its first year of operation, has managed to bring together more than 80 national and international companies and entities for the development of solutions for grid digitalisation, renewable energy integration, electric vehicle deployment, *big data*, efficiency and energy storage systems.

This technological space has already identified more than 120 R&D&I projects on which some 220 professionals are already working. Iberdrola has set up working groups with the various collaborators, in which the company's technical experts, together with the companies most active in R&D&I, analyse the needs of the business to prioritise the lines of work in the new technologies available.

The Global Smart Grids Innovation Hub has thus become a hub for growth and collaboration around decarbonisation and the fundamental role of smart grids in the energy transition. To this end, it combines its technological capacity with that of equipment and service providers, universities and *start-ups* from all over the world, thus considering the design of the electricity grid of the future.

Electricity grids will be a key pillar of the Iberdrola group's growth in the coming years, as a fundamental part of the integration of new renewable capacity and the implementation of new distributed solutions and services. The company expects to reach a regulated asset base of €56 billion worldwide by 2025, which represents a 44% growth compared to the €39 billion estimated for this year.