

## **EPEE Session – Paris 2008**

# **CIGRÉ-UK Next Generation Network**

## **“Expectations of Incoming Members”**

The aim of this report is to address the expectations of incoming members in the context of CIGRÉ-UK Next Generation Network (NGN). This is a professional network established for people working, studying or living in the United Kingdom. This report introduces the NGN organisation and highlights the drivers for establishing such a network and discusses the NGN Members’ expectation from CIGRÉ.

### **What is the NGN?**

CIGRÉ-UK NGN is a network of professional engineers in the early stages of their careers either working or studying within the power industry (in the UK). It is expected that NGN Members will not only form the future of CIGRÉ-UK but form the future generation of engineers to be at the forefront of the industry in the 21st Century. CIGRÉ-UK NGN was conceptualised in 2006 and was formally launched in October of 2007 - our Launch Event was attended by Jean Kowal, Secretary General of CIGRÉ.



### **Why was NGN established?**

To the inexperienced engineer starting out their career within the power industry, getting involved with CIGRÉ can appear difficult and somewhat daunting. NGN aims to provide a phased transition into CIGRÉ. Furthermore, NGN was established to ensure that opinions and views of everyone are heard; to allow fresh talent to influence industry developments; and to afford inexperienced engineers the opportunity to learn from industry experts.

### **What are the Aims of CIGRÉ-UK NGN?**

- To assist the CIGRÉ-UK Executive Committee to focus resources and energy into key issues for the next generation of T&D industry personnel.
- To develop the technical knowledge of NGN Members through engagement with established CIGRÉ Working Groups and other technical visits and activities.
- To ensure that CIGRÉ continues to carry out the highly technical activities for which it is most reputable.

- To work with CIGRÉ-UK in making their activities more 'visible' to all members and potential members.
- To make sure membership of the NGN is enjoyable and worthwhile.
- To make a positive change to the current image of CIGRÉ by improving the age and experience profile to be inclusive of those new to the industry.
- To ensure there is easier access to CIGRÉ Working Groups.
- To actively participate in the Paris Session

## NGN Membership

At present, CIGRÉ-UK NGN has well in excess of 150 Members from both industry and academia with a fairly healthy 50:50 split. In order to encourage development of the NGN contingent within CIGRÉ-UK, the UK National Committee at present offers subsidised membership to NGN Members. Clearly some boundary conditions have to be put on the subsidised NGN membership: according to the NGN constitution, individuals eligible for NGN membership are said to be within their first 5 years working in industry (after completion of an appropriate degree) or alternatively are studying a relevant postgraduate qualification. CIGRÉ-UK NGN has experienced a healthy appetite for the services on offer to less experienced engineers working within the power industry in the UK: in the last year alone, NGN has seen an increase of over 100 members. It should be noted that there is no age restrictions on becoming an NGN Member – membership is determined by experience only.

## NGN Activities

CIGRÉ-UK NGN offers a number of services to its members:

### 1. Technical Events

NGN have committed to running three technical events per year dedicated to NGN Member interests. It is recognised that it can be difficult for a less experienced engineer on the first rung of the career ladder to get justification to attend events and spend time away from the office. For this reason, all of the NGN Technical Events are free of charge: all costs associated with the event tend to be covered by a modest budget allocated by CIGRÉ-UK or by securing company sponsorship.



### 2. Working Group Involvement

One of the key aims of CIGRÉ-UK NGN is to integrate NGN Members onto Working Groups (WG). NGN are now in a position to administer the process of integrating NGN Members onto WG's through the mentoring process. A handful of CIGRÉ-UK NGN Members are already actively involved in WG's with a number of requests to join pending.

### 3. Paris Session Involvement

The NGN have a dedicated stand at the 2008 Paris Session Exhibition to host a Poster Session for the NGN Members to showcase their views on “Power System Networks for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Beyond”. Ten NGN Members’ posters have been accepted for the poster session on the stand and in return each member received a free registration for the Session. Two NGN Members are also contributing to the main session proceedings.

#### **4. Mentoring Scheme**

An NGN mentoring scheme has now been established for our Members and is currently in the process of being rolled-out. The aim of the mentoring is to facilitate the integration of NGN Members into WG’s. Senior Members from CIGRÉ-UK will coordinate requests from NGN Members and pair them up with an appropriate mentor from CIGRÉ. Initially the scheme will be limited to ten NGN Members where the process will be tracked by NGN to ensure that it is working effectively.

#### **5. Annual General Meeting**

CIGRÉ-UK NGN has its own constitution that has been accepted by CIGRÉ-UK. The NGN constitution defines three roles that require election by our Members. An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held to brief the NGN community on progress and to undertake any necessary elections as defined in the constitution.

#### **6. CIGRÉ-UK Executive Committee Representation**

CIGRÉ-UK amended its constitution to make a provision for a seat on the UK Executive Committee for the Chairman of CIGRÉ-UK NGN. This is the main communication mechanism between CIGRÉ-UK and NGN.

### **NGN Member Benefits**

Active involvement in NGN not only brings benefit to the NGN Member but also to their employer / institution. Each NGN Member will have their own personal goals from NGN – below is a summary of five key member benefits:

#### **1. Access to Technical Information**

CIGRÉ prides itself on the quality of its technical publications whether this is Electra, the CIGRÉ Journal, or the numerous reports summarising the findings of the Working Groups.

#### **2. Professional Development**

CIGRÉ involvement provides an excellent opportunity for those wishing to understanding of the broader industry out with the context of their own company / institution. Professional development will be of particularly interest to those undergoing development towards becoming a Chartered Engineer.

#### **3. Access to dedicated NGN Technical Events**

As referred to previously, NGN hold three key technical events per year which are free of charge to NGN Members. The aim is to be as inclusive as possible and not limit anybody on the grounds that the event is ‘too expensive’. NGN Members often receive invitations to non-NGN events e.g. Liaison Meetings.

#### **4. Access to the CIGRÉ Session**

The 2008 Paris Session has afforded many NGN Members that opportunity to attend the Paris Session with no registration fee. This year’s contribution to the Paris Session is the Poster Session (referred to previously). The nature of NGN involvement in future Sessions is yet to be defined.

#### **5. Professional networking**

One can never underestimate the importance of a professional network. NGN events provide an excellent opportunity for networking; in fact, it is the aim that every NGN

technical event will include a dedicated networking event. CIGRÉ being a truly international organisation offers an opportunity meet likeminded engineers from across the world.

## **Benefits to CIGRÉ**

CIGRÉ's investment in NGN should offer the following benefits:

- To ensure the future sustainability of CIGRÉ.
- To improve the accessibility of CIGRÉ to less experienced engineers.
- To provide Working Group Members.
- To provide fresh ideas from NGN Members.
- To improve the age and experience profile of CIGRÉ.

## **NGN Expectations of CIGRE**

During the early stage of establishing CIGRÉ-UK NGN, potential members were asked what their motivation was to become involved in CIGRÉ. These motivations translate into the expectations of the NGN Members and can be summarised as follows:

- Access to CIGRÉ publications.
- Access to CIGRÉ Working Groups.
- Exposure to the industry worldwide.
- Development of networks / friendships.
- Professional development.
- Mentoring scheme.
- Access to biennial Paris Session.
- Free access to dedicated NGN Technical Events.

It is no great surprise that these expectations form the services that NGN currently offer to its members.

## **Summary**

The skills shortage within the power industry globally is much discussed and well documented. It is imperative that CIGRÉ takes a leading role in developing the future generation of power engineers, both to ensure the future sustainability of CIGRÉ and the broader industry. With much of the industry's expertise retiring in the next decade or so, CIGRÉ must embrace initiatives such as the Next Generation Network to engage with and retain the skill set that we have within the industry at present. The growth rate that NGN has seen in the UK has been staggering – this clearly demonstrates that there is a demand for such a professional network within the UK. There is no other network in the UK that is dedicated to the interests of the less experienced engineer working within the power industry. It is anticipated that this situation is not unique to the UK and for this reason it will be interesting to see whether Next Generation Network remains a UK only initiative in future.

## **Further Information**

For further information on CIGRÉ-UK NGN please visit our website:

[www.cigre-ngn-uk.org](http://www.cigre-ngn-uk.org)