

# National Grid switches to Alcad Vantex batteries for backup power

The UK's National Grid, the owner and operator of the gas National Transmission System (NTS) for Great Britain, is installing Alcad Vantex rechargeable nickel-based batteries in a programme to upgrade the DC power backup systems at some of its gas compressor stations.

"The Vantex batteries, developed to ensure maximum reliability and optimum TCO (total cost of ownership) in stationary industrial installations, will support vital control and safety functions at the compressor stations in the event of a loss of mains power," said a company official.

National Grid has 25 compressor stations that boost gas pressure up to 85 bar to increase transmission capacity and move gas through the pipelines. Industrial gas turbines do this being fuelled by gas from the pipeline or by electrical compressors.



The programme to upgrade the DC backup power systems at the compressor stations is focussing on three main types of battery systems: fire and gas detection; switchgear control; emergency power. The first two systems are supported by 24V batteries, while a 110V battery provides the emergency power.

One of the main contrac-

tors for the upgrade programme is PE Systems. Mark Wilson project manager for PE Systems says: "National Grid had received excellent service from Alcad nickel-based batteries in previous compressor installations, where in some cases they were still going strong when replaced after 30 years.

"So the customer was keen to use them again for

the current programme.

"By making the change to the latest Vantex design we have been able to provide a very low-maintenance solution. At the same time, the wide range of capacity steps available in the Vantex range offers greater flexibility that enables us to optimize the battery system for each site."

The first compressor station to have been fitted with the Alcad Vantex batteries is in Scotland. The next site to be upgraded will be in the east of England. Alcad is supplying and installing the Vantex batteries complete with battery stands.

"A key feature of the Vantex is its high-technology, low-maintenance design that ensures a very high level of gas recombination (around 90%) and very low gas emission levels," says a company official. "This low-maintenance concept means that the Vantex battery may require just one topping-up operation throughout its entire service life.

Vantex offers very good chargeability, reaching over 95% of its capacity in less than 15 hours using single-level low-voltage charging. ■

## Daramic reveals larger separator plant in Thailand

Daramic, is expanding its manufacturing facility in Prachinburi, Thailand. The site is already the largest polyethylene battery separator manufacturing site in Asia.

The project is estimated for completion in early 2012 and includes the addition of a full production line.

"Growing Daramic's presence in Asia-Pacific is a top priority for our company," says Pierre Hauswald, vice president and general manager, Daramic. "Our continued investment in Prachinburi furthers our

commitment to provide customers with a local source of high-performance products and innovative solutions."

Daramic manufactures a range of high-performance polyethylene battery separators at its Prachinburi plant. The previous expansion, completed in late 2008, significantly increased the site's capacity.

Separately in Asia, Daramic received a Class A Quality Ranking from Shin-Kobe Electric Machinery Co in Japan. Daramic and its Prachinburi, Thailand

battery separator manufacturing facility is the only supplier based outside of Japan to receive this award. To obtain the Class A Quality Ranking, Daramic had to meet Shin-Kobe's 11 key elements of quality in manufacturing management and best practices.

Shin-Kobe Electric Machinery Co is an affiliate company of the Hitachi Group and a leading battery producer in Asia. Shin-Kobe and Daramic are long-standing partners.

Daramic is a subsidiary of Polypore International. ■