

Is Your Distribution Plan Future Proof?

As part of a utility company, you understand the importance of keeping up with rapid technology advances in order to prepare for the future of energy consumption. That may mean adapting your distribution planning to meet new utility business models, challenges and assets.

Changes in distribution planning have taken on new importance for energy utility companies as they face aging infrastructure, while pursuing modern grid solutions, and managing the onset of more distributed energy resources (DERs) on their grids.

So – how can utility companies understand if their distribution plans are ready for the future of energy consumption?

Using the checklist below, we're helping utility companies better understand their current grid position and look at what solutions are available to ensure they will benefit from the distribution planning grid of tomorrow.

Note: Remember to write down if you answer “YES” or “NO” to each question.

COMPLETE THE CHECKLIST TO GET YOUR RESULTS



Do you have a digital model of your grid in its “as operated” state?

YES NO

As distribution planners, you already work hard to plan for the long-term. However, you may feel that some planning just isn't done in the most efficient way. For example, picking and planning for the worst-case scenario to ensure infrastructure can support your grid 10, 20, or even 30 years from now. We recommend

considering additional inputs in the planning process and seeing planning as a continuous function. Having a digital replica of your grid is a great starting point for more advanced planning because it allows you to visualize the grid and even create test simulations for real-life situations that happen in operation.



Do you see your distribution planning as impacting just your business?

YES NO

Distribution planning (and the challenges that come along with planning) don't just affect utilities. In fact, distribution planning can impact a large number of consumers and institutions

outside of your utility business. For example, they also affect customers, regulators, and service providers (like DER developers and data aggregators).



Do you use tools that allow you to identify and understand how policy drivers can impact your grid systems?

YES NO

As the generation landscape shifts and the role of the distribution utility evolves, planners may require more effective tools to understand how external policies affect their systems. Different policy drivers have different impacts on the grid, and on planning abilities.

Some of these policies include: clean energy targets; proof that non-wire alternatives have been considered during planning; ensuring a specific reliability score can be achieved based on public hosting capacity maps that show where and how much DER can be accommodated on the grid.



Do you use advanced analytics to evaluate and compare possible grid investments?

YES NO

Grid investments could range from traditional poles and wires, DERs or hybrid solutions. You may or may not use analytics to decide whether or not to invest in these options based on cost and technical capacity to meet grid needs. Thankfully, there are

software solutions available that help identify what, how, and where investments should be made for utility companies. No guesswork required!



Are you able to quickly and easily review data and make informed, actionable decisions?

YES NO

If you answered no, you're not alone. Many utilities spend a lot of time performing data analysis, which may not lead to informed or actionable insights. This can slow down and complicate the decision making process.

Utilities that opt to use layer-based visualization tools are better able to turn data into actionable insights, speeding up decision making. New solutions allow utilities to collaborate openly across departments and easily share data with external vendors. This type of solution provides native parallel computing, which instantly cuts down time spent on analysis.

YOUR RESULTS

Thank you for completing our checklist! Now, it's time to analyze your results. If you answered "NO" to three or more questions above, it's likely that your distribution plan is not future proof.

However, that doesn't mean you can't start planning now in order to adapt for the future. By exploring new, innovative planning solutions like [GridOS-IDP](#), your utility company can develop a truly integrated distribution planning system that is repeatable, scalable and secure.

Ready to adapt your distribution plan for the future?

[Learn more](#)