Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

Date of Submission

July 2017

Network Innovation Allowance Progress Report

Notes on Completion: Please refer to the appropriate NIA Governance Document to assist in the completion of this form.

Network Licensees must publish the required Project Progress information on the Smarter Networks Portal by 31st July 2014 and each year thereafter. The Network Licensee(s) must publish Project Progress information for each NIA Project that has developed new learning in the preceding relevant year.

Project Progress

Project Title

Applied Integrated Vegetation Management

Project Reference

NIA_SSEPD_0025

Project Licensee(s)

Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution, Southern Electric Power Distribution

Project Start Date

Jan 2016

Project Duration

7 Years 3 Months

Nominated Project Contact(s)

David MacLeman

Scope

Integrated Vegetation Management is the practice of promoting desirable, stable, low-growing plant species which naturally inhibit the regrowth of taller tree species, coupled with annual control using selective application of herbicide (instead of mechanical cutting). The purpose of this project is to investigate if using IVM can reduce the operational expenditure, number of re-visits, exposure to hazardous activities, and impact on the environment compared to traditional techniques.

The project scope includes the following steps:
- Determine current knowledge about IVM strategies in the USA and elsewhere by reviewing existing literature and other information sources
- Literature review to assess current equipment and methods
- Decide management objectives and the range of herbicides and equipment to be used
- Carry out a baseline site and vegetation survey to understand the site specific plant succession applicable at the Tongham Railway path site
- Carry out a baseline ecology survey and willingness to pay survey
- Set up the trial, with different treatment options and control areas at Tongham Railway
- Monitor the effectiveness of the various methods used at Tongham Railway
- Monitor the changes in habitats for wildlife

The project has been extended to include a broadleaf woodland site adjacent to the railway. There is no public pathway on this parcel of land. It is typical of the kind of land for which integrated vegetation management should be particularly suitable and effective.

Objective(s)

- Determine current knowledge about IVM strategies in the USA and elsewhere by reviewing existing literature and other information sources
- Design IVM strategies based on current knowledge and test them in the field
- Implement IVM strategies on trial site(s)
- Quantify any financial savings of IVM compared to conventional techniques
- Assess the relative value of biodiversity of the habitat arising from the IVM compared to conventional techniques

Success Criteria

The success of the project will be defined by the following outcomes;
- Identification of the extent to which IVM can control trees returning and how effective it is as a tool to maintain regulatory standards around power lines.
- Determine if IVM is a cost effective method in the UK
- Production and dissemination of learning around IVM

Performance Compared to the Original Project Aims, Objectives and Success Criteria

• The literature review has been completed and a report written. Evidence indicates that IVM can result in significant cost reductions, and improvement in biodiversity of both plant and animal species
• The IVM strategy for the Tongham railway path has been written and initial selective clearance carried out
• Initial clearance has been carried out on the adjacent broadleaf woodland site, with a mulcher reducing all growth under the lines
• Both sites are now into the second year growth season under the IVM regime

Required Modifications to the Planned Approach During the Course of the Project

• The project is proceeding according to plan at both sites and no modification of the approach is required except for the extension to include the broadleaf wood site in the scope of the project
• It may be possible to extend the project to include a conifer plantation in the coming year, but this is not yet agreed with the landowner. This would be valuable to the trial since conifer woodland is widespread in all license areas and presents special issues in relation to tall, fast-growing woody species

Lessons Learnt for Future Projects

N/A