Press Release

ABB develops gas recycling technology that helps reduce environmental impact

Purity of recycled SF_6 gas ~99.99 - new recycling center set up in Australia

Zurich, Switzerland, Dec.5, 2011 – ABB, the leading power and automation technology group, has developed a patented technology for the comprehensive recycling of contaminated SF_6 (sulfur hexafluoride) gas, based on a new energy efficient cryogenic process. The new technology will be implemented at a dedicated SF_6 gas recycling center, which ABB has recently established in New South Wales, Australia.

Purity of recycled SF_6 gas using the newly developed technology is ~99.99 percent. This exceeds the purity that can be achieved using traditional methods and removes the need for costly and energy intensive gas destruction. Using recycled SF_6 gas will help reduce carbon emissions and could result in a cost saving potential of up to 30 percent.

“This breakthrough actively supports a complete lifecycle management approach, improving asset optimization and performance while reducing environmental impact in a cost effective manner,” said Giandomenico Rivetti, head of ABB’s high-voltage products business, a part of the company’s Power Products division. “It is yet another example of how ABB remains at the forefront of technology and innovation while developing solutions for a better world.”

SF6 gas is extensively used in the electrical industry for dielectric insulation and current interruption in circuit breakers, switchgear, and other electrical equipment. Pressurized SF6 gas is used for the safe and reliable operation of gas-insulated switchgear as it has a much higher dielectric strength than air or dry nitrogen, making it possible to significantly reduce product footprint and enable installation in constrained spaces. However its lifecycle management is a challenge for utility and industrial users. The cost of handling SF6 in a compliant manner can also be substantial, particularly when decommissioning aging substations.

The new service offering will see contaminated SF_6 gas recycled into technical grade standard (according to IEC 60376 standards) for reuse using approved handling practices that do not allow the escape of SF_6 gas into the atmosphere. The service also covers monitoring to ensure compliance with changing local and international regulations and standards.

ABB (www.abb.com) is a leader in power and automation technologies that enable utility and industry customers to improve performance while lowering environmental impact. The ABB Group of companies operates in around 100 countries and employs about 130,000 people.

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