

PRESS RELEASE | 23 DECEMBER 2021

Federal government gives green light to the energy island

BRUSSELS – On Thursday 23 December, Belgian electricity transmission system operator Elia welcomed the federal Council of Minister's approval – further to a proposal made by the Ministers for Energy and the North Sea – of the planned extension of the modular offshore network to include the future Princess Elisabeth zone. This decision aligns our energy system with future developments by confirming the energy island as the solution that is not only most appropriate but also most conducive to integrating the offshore wind energy generated in the future zone and continuing efforts to ensure Belgium's interconnectedness with other countries. Thanks to this decision, efforts can continue to develop the project while respecting the schedule based on climate goals. The artificial energy island is the first step in developing an integrated offshore grid at European level and further underlines our country's status as a pioneer in offshore electricity.

An important step has just been taken and this timely approval means efforts to further develop the project can continue. In 2022, Elia will continue its detailed analysis of the artificial island in its host environment and will begin the tendering process for its construction.

The 2020-2026 marine development plan provides for a new offshore electricity generation zone – dubbed the Princess Elisabeth zone – in the North Sea. The electricity generated in this new zone will then have to be sent to the mainland. The Electricity Act of 29 April 1999 empowers Elia to build and operate the necessary grid extensions based on a design validated by the relevant ministers.

Elia has studied the various technical solutions for transmitting the energy generated in this new zone to the Belgian mainland. As a result of this research the energy island project is considered the best solution for the objectives pursued. In accordance with the federal government's requirements, the project will accommodate connection facilities for 3.5 GW of power generation as well as new interconnectors linking Belgium to other countries.

Contacts

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Elia Transmission Belgium SA/NV

About the Elia Group

One of Europe's top five players

Elia Group is active in electricity transmission. We ensure that generation and consumption are balanced at all times. We supply 30 million end users with electricity and manage 19,271 km of HV lines via our subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and north-east Germany (50Hertz). As such, our Group is one of Europe's top five system operators. With a reliability level of 99.999%, we provide society with a robust power grid that is important for socio-economic prosperity. We also aspire to be a catalyst for a successful energy transition towards a reliable, sustainable and affordable energy system.

We make the energy transition happen

By expanding international high-voltage connections and integrating ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy, the Elia Group promotes both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of our society. At the same time, innovation is reshaping Elia Group's operational systems and we are developing new market products to enable new technologies and market players to access our system. In this way, the Elia Group is making the energy transition happen.

In the interest of society

As a key player in the energy system, the Elia Group is committed to working in the interest of society. We are constantly adapting our transmission grid to the rapidly changing energy mix, incorporating ever more renewable energy. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget and guarantee maximum safety. When we carry out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication with all affected parties very early on in the development process. We also offer our expertise to our sector and relevant authorities to help build the energy system of the future.

International focus

In addition to its activities as a transmission system operator, the Elia Group provides various consulting services to international customers through its subsidiary Elia Grid International (EGI). Elia is also a member of the Nemo Link consortium, which operates the first subsea electricity interconnector between Belgium and Great Britain. The Group operates under the legal entity Elia Group, a listed company whose core shareholder is the municipal holding company Publi-T.

For more information: [elia.be](https://www.elia.be) & [eliagroup.eu](https://www.eliagroup.eu)

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