



Elia awards EPCI contract for world's first energy island to DEME and Jan De Nul

- **DEME Group** and **Jan De Nul Group**, two global players in offshore construction, together form the joint venture **TM EDISON**.
- The Engineering, Procurement, Construction & Installation (EPCI) contract covers the further design and the construction of the Princess Elisabeth Island in the Belgian part of the North Sea. The contracts for the high-voltage infrastructure will be awarded at a later stage.
- The artificial island (45 km from the coast) will form a crucial link in our energy supply. It will open up the future Princess Elisabeth wind zone (3.5 GW) and connect our country to Great Britain and Denmark via additional interconnectors (Nautilus and TritonLink projects).

BRUSSELS - The Belgian consortium TM EDISON (Jan De Nul and DEME) has won the tender for the construction of the world's first artificial energy island. The construction of the foundations of the Princess Elisabeth Island will begin in early 2024 and will last 2.5 years. After that, the installation of the high-voltage infrastructure can be started. The latter will be necessary for bringing the electricity from Belgium's future offshore wind zone to shore. The island will also be the first building block of an integrated European offshore electricity grid that will connect various hubs and countries together. For instance, Belgium wants to build additional joint interconnections with Great Britain and Denmark. These will give our country access to the massive amounts of renewable energy that are needed to make our industry less dependent on fossil fuels in the short term.

World-class in dredging, rock armour, offshore development and engineering

The tender process for the island started in January 2022. Elia received multiple bids from companies based in Belgium and abroad. On the basis of the defined criteria, the Belgian consortium TM EDISON emerged as the winner. Elements such as technical quality and commercial and contractual conditions played a significant role. Attention to safety also played a decisive role. In addition to a specialised fleet, DEME and Jan De Nul hold experience and expertise in the field of dredging, land extension, coastal protection and civil engineering.

An innovative tour de force

The Princess Elisabeth Island will be the world's first artificial energy island that combines both direct current (HVDC) and alternating current (HVAC). The island's high-voltage infrastructure will bundle the wind farm export cables of the Princess Elisabeth zone together, whilst also serving as a hub for future interconnectors with Great Britain (Nautilus) and Denmark (TritonLink). These are so-called 'hybrid interconnectors' that have a dual function and are therefore more efficient. They facilitate the exchange of electricity between countries and are also connected with gigantic offshore wind farms in the North Sea that will in due course provide our country with large volumes of renewable energy.

12 football pitches in size

The energy island will be located about 45 kilometres off the coast. The area set aside for the installation of the electrical infrastructure will be approximately 6 hectares in size, which is equivalent to about 12 football pitches. The artificial island will be located within the Princess Elisabeth wind zone and will be constructed from concrete caissons filled with sand. A small harbour and helicopter platform will also be provided in order to allow maintenance crews to visit the island. The energy island has received funding from the European Covid Recovery Fund. The Belgian government decided to award the island with a grant of approximately €100 million.

Timing

Now that the construction contract has been awarded, the design of the island can be finalised. The construction of the island will start in early 2024 and will continue until August 2026. The caissons will be built and installed in 2024 and 2025. These will form the contours of the island. After that, the base of the island will be raised and prepared for the construction of the electrical infrastructure. It will be connected with the new offshore wind farms and with the Elia onshore grid. In order to deliver the additional electricity to consumers, it is crucial that the Ventilus and Boucle du Hainaut grid reinforcement projects are realised at the same time. Elia aims to ensure all wind farms are fully connected to the mainland by 2030.

“This project is a pioneering one for several reasons. It is the most cost-effective and reliable way to bring offshore wind to shore. It will be an island that provides options for the future. When we connect it to other countries, the Princess Elisabeth Island will become the first offshore energy hub. After our construction of the first hybrid interconnector in the Baltic Sea, the island is another world first. It solidifies Elia Group’s position as a company that is at the cutting edge of technology, which is necessary for the energy transition.”

Chris Peeters, CEO Elia Group

“As a company, we are proud to put our weight behind this project through which we, as a Belgian consortium, can support our country to achieve its climate objectives. Belgium is a front-runner in the field of offshore wind energy. We are making this clear once again by constructing this energy island. The combined experience of Jan De Nul and DEME as offshore specialists in dredging, rock armour and offshore energy is an absolute added value.”

– Julie De Nul, director Jan De Nul Group

“We are looking forward to working together to achieve this technical tour de force. The construction of the world’s first artificial energy island reaffirms our country’s expertise in realising complex projects at sea. The focus for TM EDISON lies in qualitative execution that involves the lowest possible carbon footprint and the rising water level of the North Sea.”

– Luc Vandenbulcke, CEO DEME Group

“Belgium has been a pioneer in offshore wind power for 15 years and is once again demonstrating its expertise today through its first energy island - which is also a world first. Our offshore expertise is now recognised worldwide. By continuing to innovate, we are also strengthening our position for the future. We are giving our Belgian companies another chance to be true pioneers, both here and abroad. So we are once again highlighting our country on the world map.”

– Tinne Van der Straeten, Federal Minister of Energy

“The North Sea will become the engine of our energy independence. The Princess Elisabeth Island will be an essential link in this. Our country has long been a pioneer in the field of offshore wind power with companies such as DEME and Jan De Nul, which are world leaders. They are proving it once again with these plans for the world’s first energy island. It is thanks to their expertise and their role as global pioneers that we can accelerate the energy transition together.”

– Vincent Van Quickenborne, Federal Minister of Justice and the North Sea

“With vision, ambition and good interactions between government and business, Belgium has established itself over the past 20 years as one of the world leaders in the development of offshore wind energy. Just as they did in the beginning, Belgian companies now have the opportunity to take the mead with regard to the next developments. The multifunctional energy island - which is being subsidised by €100 million under the Recovery and Resilience Plan - will be the first of its kind. The expertise acquired by DEME Group and Jan de Nul Group during its construction can be shared around the world to contribute to a lower carbon, more sustainable and more resilient economy as we combat climate change. Our knowledge and know-how constitute the Belgian export product par excellence.”

– Thomas Dermine, Secretary of State for Recovery

About Elia Group

One of Europe's top five

Elia Group is a key player in electricity transmission. We ensure that production and consumption are balanced around the clock, supplying 30 million end users with electricity. With branches in Belgium (Elia) and the north and east of Germany (50Hertz), we manage 19,192 km of high-voltage connections, meaning that Elia Group is one of Europe's top five. With a reliability level of 99.99%, we provide society with a robust electricity grid, which is important for socio-economic prosperity. We also aspire to be a catalyst for a successful energy transition, helping to establish a reliable, sustainable and affordable energy system.

We are making the energy transition happen

By expanding international high-voltage connections and incorporating ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy production, we are promoting both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of our society. We also continuously optimise our operational systems and develop new market products so that new technologies and market parties can access our grid. In this way, Elia Group is accelerating the energy transition.

In the interest of society

As a key player in the energy system, Elia Group is committed to working in the interest of society. We are responding to the rapid increase in renewable energy sources by constantly adapting our transmission grid. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget, with a maximum focus on safety. In carrying out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication channels between all involved parties very early on in the development process. We also offer our expertise to different players across the sector in order to build the energy system of the future.

International focus

In addition to our activities as a transmission system operator, we provide various consulting services to international customers through our subsidiary, Elia Grid International (EGI). In recent years, Elia Group has set up a number of new non-regulated activities, including re.alto and WindGrid. re.alto is the first European market place for the exchange of energy data via standardised energy APIs. With WindGrid, a subsidiary, we are further expanding our overseas activities and contributing to the development of offshore electricity grids within and outside Europe.

The legal entity Elia Group is a listed company whose core shareholder is the municipal holding company Publi-T.

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