

RGI **ANNUAL** **REPORT** **2017**



Renewables 
Grid Initiative

About RGI

The Renewables Grid Initiative is a unique collaboration of environmental NGOs and transmission system operators from across Europe. We promote transparent, environmentally sensitive grid development to enable the further steady growth of renewable energy and the energy transition.

More information:

www.renewables-grid.eu

Funding

RGI gratefully acknowledges funding from the European Commission's LIFE operating grant, Stiftung Mercator and the European Climate Foundation.

The sole responsibility for the content of this publication lies with RGI.





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FOREWORD



Dear readers,

It has been almost ten years since we started RGI in July 2009 – the little toy, as I like to call it sometimes – that can make quite an impact if used correctly. In 2017, as in previous years, I have travelled a lot and met interesting people around the globe who are all working on implementing the same idea: an electricity system which is secure, reliable, affordable, and instead of harming our planet supporting our fight against climate change. Most of the time I come back from my travels with a hundred new ideas of what to do next and how to help realise this vision.

We have planted many of these ideas throughout the years. In 2017, many of the project ideas we have initiated a long time ago, have finally become reality:

- Take the new RGI programme “Implementing RGI Declarations”, for example. The EU-supported project BESTGRID, which we coordinated from 2013 until 2015, enabled the set-up of collaborative pilot projects in Belgium, Germany and the UK. BESTGRID proved that the collaboration on national and local projects is of great value and that it should be continued. It took us a lot more conversations and negotiations until we finally developed a Memorandum of Understanding; today, two projects in Germany are already up and running and a big project is about to start in Italy with Terna and Legambiente fully committed. I hope that many other similar initiatives will follow with the other RGI Members. There is a strong value in local engagement – if we bind all these experiences together we can create a network of best practices and inspire others to search for collaborative solutions.
- I am also happy to see progress in our discussions about the future need for grids. We know that we need to upgrade and modernise our grid. However, we need to continue discussions about which grids are needed under what circumstances. ENTSO-E’s Ten-Year Network Development



Plan (TYNDP) is the most important tool to stir these discussions. We have therefore committed to collaboratively produce a scenario that is compliant with the goals of the Paris Agreement. This is not easy, but we are seeing an increasing number of actors fully recognising the need for this exercise and acknowledging the value that a scenario which is developed together with civil society can be much stronger from a political and societal point of view. I am confident that we will set up a team working on this in 2018.

Those of you who know me certainly agree that I am not one to hold on to the past. I much more enjoy looking ahead and shaping the future. Would you like to know which seeds we are currently planting? Here are two exclusive sneak previews into what I have on my mind:

- I think RGI needs to find the courage to grow. If we believe that renewable energy sources will continue to increase and their costs decrease, we can also believe that we may live in a world with low average costs for electricity. This will open up immense opportunities for electrification, well

beyond transport and heating. So we need to ask ourselves what the role of system operators is to facilitate the electrification and develop solutions on how the system can further evolve. This, of course, will feed in the already presented Paris Agreement scenario work.

- The second activity which I would like to see explored is very practical and to be used at local level. Inspired by the online environmental data viewer developed by the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) in the US, I think that we need to develop something similar, but more ambitious in Europe. The US version is used for comparative purposes, to assess risks and costs of different grid corridors. If we add gas grid infrastructure, we may also be able to use it for optimisation purposes, thus linking to the trend towards electrification. What's so special about the tool: the different risk categories have been jointly agreed upon by a very diverse stakeholder group, including environmental NGOs. You can try it out here: <https://ecosystems.azurewebsites.net/WECC/Environmental/>.

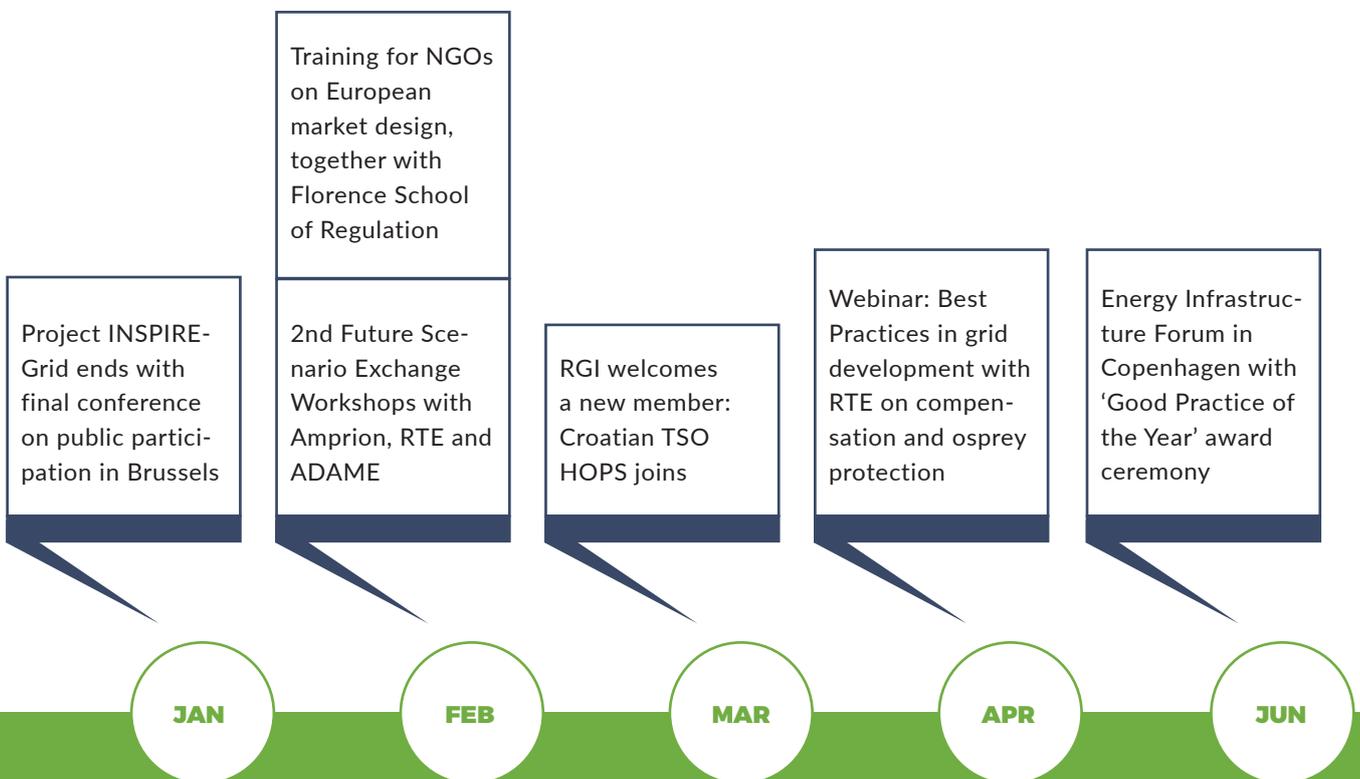
Let's build it together!

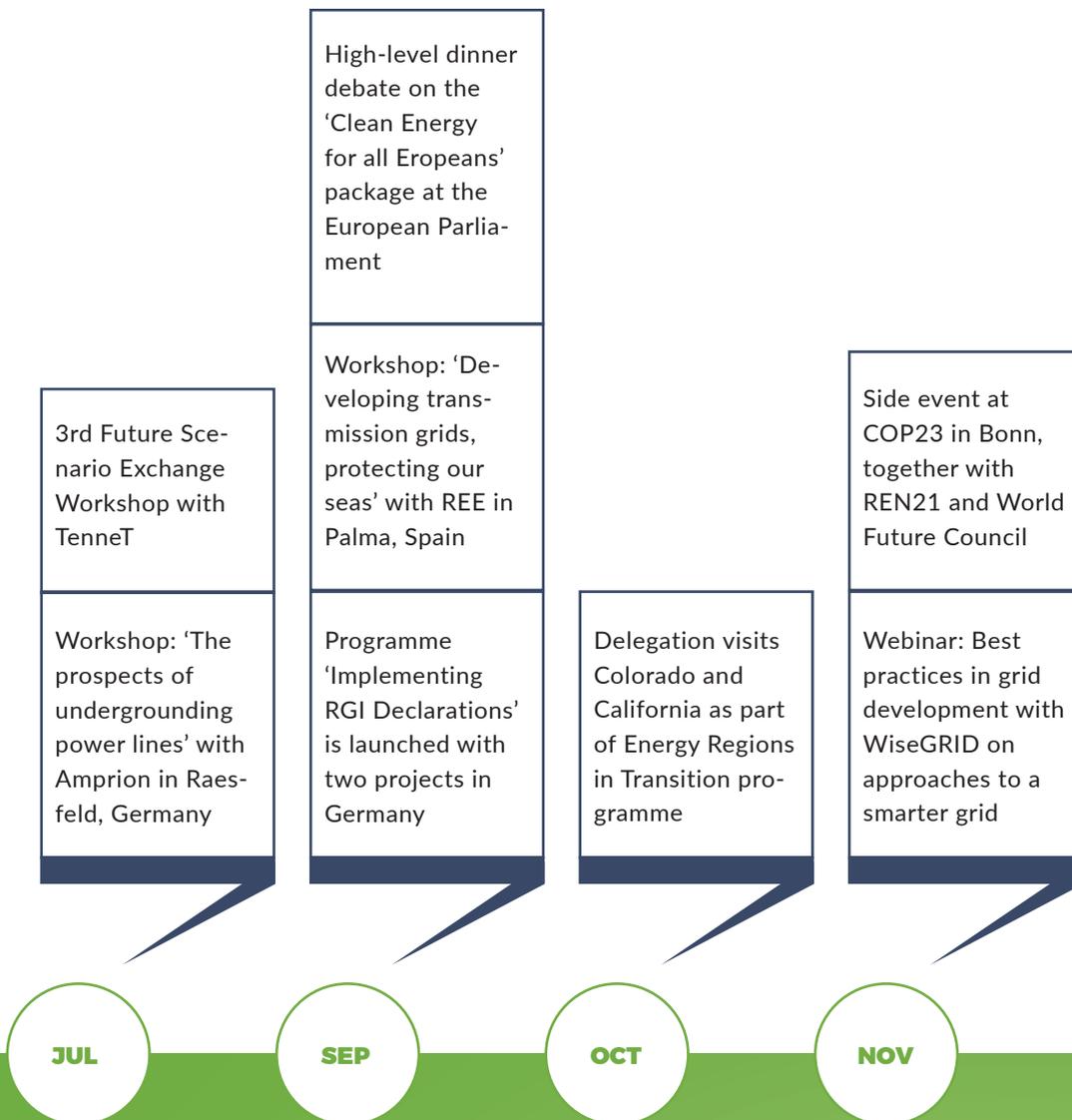
Of course, there is much more that cannot fit in a single page, but you will find a lot of information in this report.

Enjoy the read!

Antonella Battaglini,
CEO Renewables Grid Initiative

HIGHLIGHTS 2017





THE NEED FOR GRIDS

What kind of grids will we need in a renewables-based future?



By Andrew Carryer

Why do we need grids? Can I not just have a solar panel and a battery? Why not just put them all underground? How will my electric car change the system? How do you make grids friendlier to the environment? Searching for answers to tricky questions like these has defined an interesting year for me at RGI. Here is a brief recap of some of the work I have been running in 2017 to allow us to peer into the foggy energy future together.



What does a future based on renewables look like? And what do we need to make it happen?

Over 2017, as part of our “Need for Grids” work, RGI members and friends have twice delved into the world of scenario building and modelling. We have jointly tried to understand what a system based on renewables could look like, and what we may need to do to make it happen. The contributions to these workshops from 50Hertz, Swissgrid, TenneT, RTE, ADEME and Amprion stirred interesting discussions with participants from TSOs, NGOs, universities and think tanks. Such discussions help improve the knowledge of stakeholders on how the TSO plans for the future and improves transparency on which grids are needed and why. I believe that our NGO members’ inputs have impressed upon the TSOs the importance of being even more inclusive, open and visionary in the way they plan and strategise.

How does TSO and DSO senior management see the future of the power system?

Understanding the personal perspectives of senior management is vital for understanding the strategic priorities of those who operate the system. A personally fascinating piece of work has been the interviews I have held with senior managers of TSOs and DSOs over the second half of the year. A total of 21 senior representatives from TSOs and DSOs (including 3 CEOs) were kind enough to give me an hour or two of their time to discuss topics ranging from the future of storage to issues of market design, the T/D relationship and the future of the TSO as an organisation. Tapping this collective pool of knowledge and experience from across Europe has shown me that there is real sincere momentum behind the efforts of the network to help decarbonise our economies. I am very much looking forward to sharing the insights we have gained from this process through a number of publications and events in 2018.



Looking ahead

Personally, I look to 2018 with excitement as I continue to learn and dig deeper into the world of energy and grids, whilst helping our members to collaborate effectively. Although we may not be able to provide one definitive answer to the questions we posed (if this even exists!), by finding points of common ground, we can contribute, brick by brick, to building a future power system built on renewables.

WEBLINKS

More information about our work on the need for grids is available on our website under “[Topics](#)”:

- Future scenario exchange workshop summaries
- Key messages we derived from this exchange
- Briefs of the studies presented during the workshops

IMPLEMENTING RGI DECLARATIONS

From European principles to local projects



By Antina Sander

In September 2017, we launched our new programme “Implementing RGI Declarations” (IRD). Under this banner, we bring the already successful European collaboration between NGOs and TSOs within RGI to a more national and local level. Five pioneering organisations from Germany - the NGOs NABU (BirdLife Germany), Germanwatch and the TSOs 50Hertz, Amprion and TenneT - work closely together to bring forward electricity grid projects that are needed for the further steady growth of renewable energy. The first two projects that were launched under this banner are the project ‘bird hotline’ with NABU and ‘Shaping the grid debate’ with Germanwatch. We sat down with the two NGO experts working on these projects – Eric Neuling for NABU and Eva Schmid for Germanwatch – and discussed their experiences so far:



Eric Neuling
Officer Bird Protection NABU



Eva Schmid
Senior Advisor Power Grids Germanwatch

Eric, you were part of the team that initiated the project ‘Bird hotline’ under RGI’s programme “Implementing RGI Declarations”. Can you explain why such a hotline was needed and what the added value of it is?

Eric: Birds can collide on all kinds of overhead power lines. On medium voltage power lines they can also die of electrocution. In the joint project with the German transmission system operators we want to address these risks for birds. There is no legal instrument for making transmission power lines more secure for birds, but Germany signed international conventions to protect for example migratory species as in the CMS treaty. There are more than 60,000 kilometres of transmission power lines in Germany and an estimated number of up to 2.8 million bird victims on these per year. TSOs have the opportunity to mitigate bird collisions through technical solutions like bird deflectors or considerate routing in the planning phase of new lines. In order to help them finding priority areas for considerate planning and retrofitting but also to gain more data on such incidents, RGI and NABU set up the bird hotline in October 2017. In places where bird collisions have occurred we will have a closer look and can propose measures to mitigate bird strikes.



Eva, your project aims at fostering a dialogue on grid development in Germany. What is the challenge this project aims at tackling?

Eva: The long-term power grid planning process in Germany has triggered a lot of active citizens' initiatives in recent years, especially after alternative corridors for three new DC power lines were published. Much of the protest that these citizens' initiatives voice is targeted against a power line in their immediate vicinity. This is a legitimate concern, but we can only play a limited role in such a debate. Yet, a growing number of organised citizens and initiatives seek a critical and constructive dialogue on how to continue with the energy transition in Germany at large. They feel that their voices are not being heard sufficiently in the public discourse on how to shape this transition. Hence, the aim of our project is to engage constructive, grid-critical actors in the public debate at national and regional level. In operational terms, this implies to listen to strong arguments, to work to enhance transparency in processes and decisions on power grids, improve public participation opportunities, foster trust between different actors in the policy arena based on solid facts as well as helping to establish an atmosphere of constructive dialogue.

You have both been working on your projects for some months now. What are lessons learned so far?

Eric: We want to reach voluntary bird watchers and professional mapping ornithologists to report findings of birds under power lines. But we also want to sensitise staff of electricity providers and distributors or railway companies about this issue and ask them to document and report possible findings back to us. It takes a little bit of time to establish a well-known platform like this, but we already have almost 20 validated cases since the launch in October 2017.

Eva: It is astonishingly difficult for people to change their perspective on issues at stake. However, if people do - and at best in a joint setting with others of opposing views - it is extremely rewarding. I believe that en route to a societally driven energy transition many more formats that allow actors to meet other stakeholders respectfully are necessary. Another lesson learned is how buzzwords seemingly create consensus - which quickly falls apart once one bothers to ask different stakeholders for their definition. "Sector coupling", "digitalisation", and even "grid planning" are good examples of such words. Which grid is meant precisely - the transmission or the distribution grid? You'd be surprised how many different answers you can get.



What are your hopes for the future on RGI's IRD programme? Any needs and ideas for future projects?

Eva: I would love to see similar projects as the one we have developed in Germany in all other European countries. Empowering and engaging citizens will be key for achieving climate mitigation targets since renewable energy solutions are modular, distributed and visible for all citizens. In contrast to that, fossil energy solutions are large-scale and centralised and their impacts are only visible to few citizens in Europe. Immediate negative externalities are to date outsourced to other countries, for example Colombia, from which Germany imports a large share of its hard coal demand. Through climate change, a vast range of future externalities are incurred by burning fossil fuels today. A renewable energy transition in Germany and Europe means also to re-import some of the externalities of our energy consumption. However, these externalities can generally be managed and distributed in a fair manner if procedures are transparent and participatory: Dialogue is only empowering under the condition that strong

arguments bear a realistic chance to influence the process.

Eric: NABU's vision is that areas populated by birds which are very sensitive to power line collision and electrocution can get rid of dangerous lines. Grid development planning requires an obligatory look on spatial issues, such as nature protection sites and should use technical opportunities, such as underground cabling to minimise negative impacts on nature. Retrofitting with deflectors is necessary in dangerous existing routes. On the other hand, we have to answer a few open questions like how can bird deflectors be visible in the dark or what advantages or risks have different pylon designs for birds. Projects that aim at addressing these questions could fit into the IRD programme in the future.



WEBLINKS

More information about our programme “Implementing RGI Declarations” can be found on our website under “[Activities](#)”.

Both Germanwatch and NABU provide information about their projects in German:

- <https://germanwatch.org/de/debatte-stromnetze-gestalten>
- <https://www.nabu.de/tiere-und-pflanzen/voegel/gefaehrdungen/stromtod/23194.html>

RGI EVENTS

5 reasons why we are still keen on organising events



By Theresa Schneider

You know what marked the beginning of RGI in 2009? It was a roundtable discussion in Brussels, after which a first Memorandum of Understanding was developed and signed by four organisations. Nine years and a few dozen events later, bringing different people together to meet, discuss, and exchange ideas is still one of our core activities and there are many reasons why:



1. You need to experience RGI to understand RGI

On a warm summer day in July last year, we brought experts to the small town of Raesfeld in Western Germany to discuss the current status of underground cabling. After a networking dinner outside the beautiful meeting venue – a small castle surrounded by water and forests – our contact person from Germanwatch approached me. It was the first time that she participated in an RGI event. She told me excitedly: ‘Now I finally know what RGI is all about. All your explanations finally make sense, you really have to experience it yourself to understand it.’ What had happened? She had heard stories about cable projects in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, had engaged in discussions with TSO representatives and cable manufacturers and challenged views of some engineers about stakeholder engagement and public participation. Bringing people with different nationality, professional background, age and experience together is what RGI is all about.

2. Unusual personal relationships emerge

After the final conference of the EU-supported project INSPIRE-Grid last January, some of the speakers, participants and consortium members went to a nearby pub to continue discussions that had started already during the event day and subsequent networking dinner, over a beer. Some of the people had worked in the project together for more than three years and were still amazed by the different ways you can approach the same matter. After months of exchanging emails and regular phone calls only personal chats would finally help us to understand that grid operators have very different expectations of the outcomes of such an international project than e.g. social scientists. And the engineers had a hard time understanding how you can analyse stakeholder interviews in a way that actually brings new scientific insights until social researchers explained the methodology over a coffee the following day. I encountered many similar conversations at RGI events throughout the years where I thought ‘these people would normally never talk to each other and the fact that they finally do will help them so much in their daily work.’



3. New ideas are born

The 'European Grid Declaration on Nature Conservation' was a huge step in the development of RGI as a platform for collaboration. Do you know where the initial idea was born? At a workshop in Glasgow in 2011, at which participants discussed the environmental impacts of power lines. Similarly, many participants of the aforementioned workshop in Raesfeld last year volunteered during the event to join a task force that would work on technical and environmental guidelines for underground cables. This task force will start its work in 2018.

Something similar happened at an expert workshop we organised in September 2017 in Palma, Spain. We discussed environmental impacts of subsea cables with a focus on seagrass and the very special *Posidonia Oceanica* and everyone agreed the manifold knowledge assembled in the room together with even more information 'flying around' in the offices of grid operators, NGOs, public authorities or research institutes should be systematically collected and made available. RGI will build its activities on subsea cables in 2018 upon this idea and will hire a project manager to support the team.



4. Personal stories matter

'We have the exact same problem' or, even better 'You know, we had the exact same problem, but we solved it by implementing a new strategy' are two of my most favourite sentences at RGI events. I heard it last year during our communication mini-workshop when we shared stories about how to improve communication on sensitive topics, such as electric and magnetic fields. You can read about new and innovative ideas a hundred times, but still only grasp the essence or understand why this idea is so special if your peer at another NGO or grid operator shares their story face to face. Enabling these personal interactions has therefore always been our main goal when organising events.

5. 'Hear hear': events help us to spread RGI messages

Brussels is known for its many lobbyists and activists – getting your own message through to the right people can be difficult. Simply publishing a position paper (as do a thousand other organisations) is certainly not very effective. What comes on top is that many decision-makers don't understand the particularity of our organisation – the fact that we bring together such opposite actors as grid operators and environmental groups – without us explaining it in person. At a high-level dinner, we organised in September last year together with REE, we had the opportunity to actually share our perspective with three Members of Parliament (MEP). In an interview, which we published in our newsletter afterwards, MEP Blanco made very clear how well he understood our organisation and position. Our involvement at the annual Energy Infrastructure Forum in Copenhagen also helps us to draw attention to our core projects. With the help of our 'Good Practice of the Year' award ceremony we show that the exchange of best practices matters and makes a difference for the implementation of energy policy.



WEBLINKS

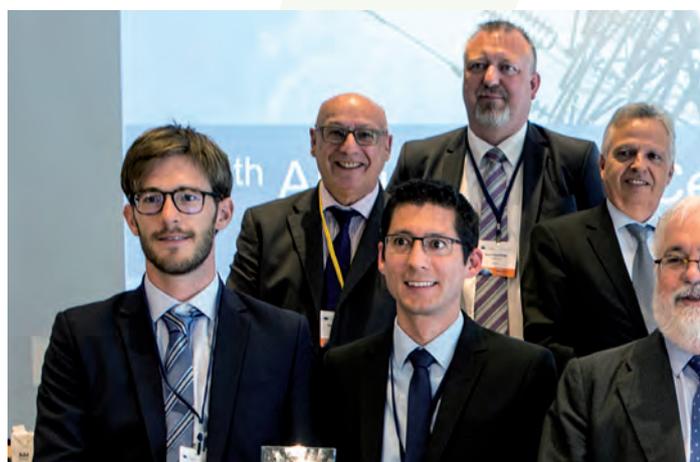
You can find all material about past and future events on our website under “[Activities](#)”. Make sure to subscribe to our newsletter (www.renewables-grid.eu/newsletter) to receive all RGI event invitations.

'GOOD PRACTICE OF THE YEAR' AWARD

Big dreams that open new doors



By Urszula Papajak



One of the most important lessons I learnt this year while working on the 'Good Practice of the Year' award is that the main obstacle to sustainable grid development lies not in the absence of analysis or available data, but in the lack of dialogue and exchange of good practices. The story of one 2017 award winner inspired me because it shows that knowledge sharing opens new, exciting doors.

Innovative techniques for the recovery of Posidonia Oceanica

Posidonia Oceanica is the most widespread seagrass species in the Mediterranean Sea. Scientists have found that the grass is even better at transforming CO₂ into oxygen than the rainforest, therefore supporting the fight against climate change. Like many other species crucial to our ecosystems, this seagrass is currently in danger.

Wind farms and submarine cables often contribute to its degradation, leading to a 1% to 5% annual estimated rate of loss globally. Bearing in mind that recent assessments predict that in the coming decade 40% of grid development will be submarine, the future of this grass might be looking pretty grim. On top of everything else, Posidonia Oceanica is one of the slowest growing species of seagrasses and has a limited capacity to recover from disturbance!

Take all the above into consideration and the restoration project might feel rather daunting. That's why many don't even try.

Big dreams and new paths

This Spanish team, however, has decided to dream big and at the end they succeeded. They developed and applied a methodological guide to restoring large-scale degraded areas and ensuring the non-invasive recovery of Posidonia Oceanica.

Not only did they do that. Last year they also applied for and won the 'Good Practice of the Year' award—the prize awarded by the Renewables Grid Initiative to those who dare to think outside the box. And, they didn't stop there. The team also hosted a workshop bringing together scholars, environmentalists, technicians and representatives of local governments to Palma to discuss different approaches in protecting our seas.



'Good Practice of the Year' continues to award pioneers

Why is this story so inspiring? Because it proves that dialogue opens new doors while building upon and expanding already existing knowledge.

Although a great honour in itself, the award usually serves as a starting point on a longer learning journey. The winners of the 2018 edition will be presented at the Energy Infrastructure Forum end of May in Copenhagen.



WEBLINKS

Do you want to learn more about the award and successful applications from previous years? On our website, under "[Activities](#)", you will find:

- Brochures with short descriptions of our award jury's favourite cases
- Information about the award procedure and criteria
- Information about the award jury

SOCIAL MEDIA SNAPSHOTS

RGI @RenewablesGrid · 1. Nov. 2017
 This year's Good Practice of the Year Award call for submissions is now open! For more info: renewables-grid.eu/activities/goo... Good luck! #GPotY18

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS
'GOOD PRACTICE OF THE YEAR' AWARD
 1 NOVEMBER 2017 - 16 FEBRUARY 2018

7 7

RGI @RenewablesGrid · 22. Nov. 2017
 Many thanks to everyone who participated in yesterday's Participatory Leadership workshop facilitated by @UrsulaHillbrand at the RGI's office #participation #workshop #involvement

WELCOME & FRANKING
 CHECKING-IN
 WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY LEADERSHIP?
 PATHWAYS TO CO-CREATION
 PAUSE
 PROCESS DESIGN
 CONVERSATIONS IN TRIVUS
 CONCLUSION

1 5

RGI @RenewablesGrid · 27. Sep. 2017
 Thank you everyone for 2 great days in Palma! We enjoyed interesting discussions and shared experiences at WS on #seagrass #posidonia #grids

Red Eléctrica España, ENTSO-E, TernaSpA und 7 weitere

1 4

RGI @RenewablesGrid · 31. Jan. 2017
 Project #INSPIREGrid ends today. Results on stakeholder engagement in grid development projects are available here: renewables-grid.eu/publications/p...

EASME, Energy4Europe, ENTSO-E und 6 weitere

3 4

RGI @RenewablesGrid · 2. Okt. 2017
 'Mobile Citizen's Office' Practice won #2017GoodPracticeoftheYearAward. We're looking forward to receiving this year's applications #GPotY18

2017 Winner
Mobile Citizen's Office
 By 50 Hertz

50Hertz

4 2

RGI @RenewablesGrid · 26. Sep. 2017
 Electricity grid companies reassure: further expansion of #renewables is feasible renewables-grid.eu/publications/p... #PCI #CleanEnergyEU #EnergyUnion

Red Eléctrica España, Dominique Ristori, ENTSO-E und 7 weitere

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WEBLINKS

Check our recent postings on our social media channels:

- Instagram https://www.instagram.com/renewables_grid_initiative/
- Twitter <https://twitter.com/RenewablesGrid>
- linkedin <https://www.linkedin.com/company/renewables-grid-initiative>

ADVOCACY

We are better together: strong messages in Brussels



One of the highlights of our 2017 advocacy work was a high-level dinner we organised together with Red Eléctrica at the European Parliament in Brussels. MEPs José Blanco López, Krišjānis Kariņš and Claude Turmes, the rapporteurs on the European Commission's legislative proposals for renewables, market design and governance contributed as well as representatives of our Members and the European Commission's Director-General for Energy, Dominique Ristori. Participants discussed the implications of these proposals for the successful integration of an increasing share of renewables in the electrical system. After the event, we sat down with MEP Blanco López to discuss his main takeaways of the discussion. You can find excerpts of the interview below.

On 25 September, RGI organised a high-level dinner debate on the 'Clean Energy for all Europeans' package at the European Parliament. What were your first impressions after the discussion?

I am grateful to RGI for organising this dinner debate. It was a very enriching one since we had the opportunity to openly exchange opinions and views with my colleagues, Krišjānis Kariņš and Claude Turmes, rapporteurs on dossiers who are closely

interconnected with the Renewable Energy Directive, as well as representatives from TSOs, NGOs and industry associations. I believe that it was a good opportunity to put forward both the agreements and divergences of the rapporteurs. Particularly in relation to the extent to which the new rules for the energy system in general and the electric in particular should be based on the market. On the other hand, it was a good opportunity to gather the sector's perspectives and its vision regarding the energy package.



During the dinner, you mentioned that clear signals to the market are needed in order to offer security to investors. Could you elaborate?

The wholesale market is not offering an adequate price signal conducive to investment. A new market design is needed to integrate an electric mix that will be dominated by renewable energy. This new paradigm needs short- and long-term price signals that can provide security to the necessary future investments in clean energy. A market design developed twenty-five years ago and based on an energy mix with significant variable costs may not be the most effective way to mark the price when more and more this mix is going to be dominated by sources whose variable cost is zero. It is not time for patching things up but for establishing solid foundations. The long-term stability for investments and the increase in transparency are key vectors for a successful transition to the future market model.

Why should we be more ambitious about the targets we set?

Regarding the overall European level of ambition in RES, the proposed (pre-COP21) 27% target for 2030 offers little more than the business as usual scenario, which is expected to be 24.3%, based on somewhat pessimistic technology cost estimates which may be outdated. I do not believe that a target set barely above the business as usual scenario will incentivise the necessary investment in renewable technologies nor help the Union meet its decarbonisation goals for 2030 and beyond, taking into account the aim to limit global temperature rise to 1.5° above pre-industrial levels.



I have proposed a binding Union target for the overall share of energy from renewable sources in gross final consumption of energy of 35% by 2030, thus maximising the potential for employment and energy security and independence, as well as greater decarbonisation of the economy.

WEBLINKS

All our political position papers are available on our website under “[Publications](#)”.

MEET OUR BOARD

Take a look at our governance structure



By **Matilde Doni**

Matilde Doni compiled some information about our Board and talked to Bente Haaland from Statnett about her experience as a new Board Member in 2017:



Christoph Bals

Christoph is Policy Director and one of the founding members of Germanwatch, an environmental and development NGO. Since Germanwatch's creation in 1991, he has been active in the politics of climate and development. Christoph is also a board member of the Munich Climate Insurance Initiative (MCII) which is pushing for insurance for the people of developing countries against climate risks. He studied theology, economics and philosophy.



Daniel Perez

Daniel is the Director of Sustainability and Innovation at Red Eléctrica de España (REE) and worked in several positions at the company since joining them in 1996. Prior to his REE career, Daniel worked in Processes Engineering for CEPSA, BP OIL and ENDESA. He is a graduate of Industrial Engineering with a specialisation in Industrial Organisation and Management and PMD (IESE Business School).



Olivier Feix

Olivier is currently the Head of Nature Protection and Permitting at 50Hertz. Before joining the company in 2007, he was an international analyst for Österreichische Elektrizitätswerke AG. He has worked in Heidelberg, Berlin and Brussels for the Union for the Co-ordination of Transmission of Electricity. He attended the Linz and Hagen universities to study mechatronics, business administration and economics.



Stephan Singer

Stephan is CAN International's Senior Advisor on Renewable Energy working on clean energy policy that is based on 100% renewables and aims to foster the 1.5 C objective. Before joining CAN, Stephan worked for WWF for 23 years. His last role, starting in 2009, was 'Director Global Energy Policy'. He has a Ph.D. in soil physics on carbon and nitrogen dynamics in impoverished Indian soils.



Edoardo Zanchini

Edoardo leads the energy, transport and urban planning national office for the Italian environmental NGO Legambiente. He has been published in many books and journals on issues related to energy and sustainability, and has taught urban planning and urban ecology at the Universities of Rome and Pescara. Edoardo holds a PhD in urban planning, a postgraduate specialisation and a master's degree in architecture from La Sapienza, University of Rome.

Interview with one of our Board member Bente Monica Haaland



Bente Monica Haaland

Bente is Executive Vice President at Statnett, responsible for Corporate Strategy and Communication. Over the last few years, she has been working on defining the „next generation power grid“, promoting the further automation and digitalisation of the power system as a means to enable consumers to play a more active role in the energy transformation. She holds a master's degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Aberdeen and a Master of Management degree from BI Norwegian Business school.

Matilde: The power of collaboration represents one of RGI's core values. Was there a moment last year when you cherished it the most?

Bente: I joined an RGI training session on 'Participatory Leadership' last year, which demonstrated the core value of collaboration in complex processes.

Matilde: Is the emphasis on collaboration something that you have also seen reflected in your work at Statnett?

Bente: Collaboration is a key ingredient in all the work we do concerning internal and external stakeholders. In order to move forward, you need to understand the other part's perspective.

Matilde: Which of the RGI's 2017 activities were you most excited about?

Bente: I prefer the meetings where we are face-to-face, so I was most excited about the two days meetings with the combination of 'Participatory leadership', Board meeting and the Members' Assembly. Also, the RGI high-level dinner on the 'Clean Energy Package' in the EU Parliament in September was inspiring. This year, I am looking forward to hosting a workshop on grid tariffs in Norway.

Unfortunately, Daniel Perez had to end his term in our Board at the end of 2017. Jasón Besga from Red Eléctrica was elected to replace him in early 2018. We thank Daniel for his great contribution to RGI's success and look forward to cooperating with Jasón.

WEBLINKS

More information about our Governance structure and Board Members is available on our website under "[About](#)".

WHO WE ARE

The RGI Secretariat in 2017



Antonella Battaglini

Our CEO is formally responsible for the proper implementation of all decisions taken by the Members' Assembly. In reality, she represents RGI at numerous occasions around the world, is the number one mediator between our Members and takes all final decisions regarding our strategy and finances.



Stephanie Bätjer

Project Manager at RGI, is part of the communication team, responsible for the successful implementation of the 'Good Practice of the Year' award, and part of the teams that organise our 'Energy Regions in Transition' tours. Since September 2017, Stephanie is on a sabbatical to travel the world and Urszula has taken over her tasks.



Andrew Carryer

Junior Project Manager at RGI, is working on 'the need for grids' and organising the regular exchanges on future scenarios among our Members. Moreover, Andrew has contributed to our environmental work and will continue to do more on green corridor management and bird protection in 2018.



Matilde Doni

joined RGI in April 2017 as Personal Assistant to our CEO. Besides her core activities of supporting Antonella on her everyday business, Matilde supports the team in organising events and the 'Energy Regions in Transition' programme.



Sylvia Kessler

is our Office Administrator. As such, she is supporting the team in all administrative matters, supporting our accounting and – most importantly, is the good soul of the team who takes good care of all team members and our office building.



Nikola Lesinski

has been RGI's Finance Manager since 2013. He took care of our financial matters, including our annual budget and the financial reporting to different funders.



Urszula Papajak

joined us in July 2017 as Junior Project Manager. She took over Stephanie's tasks in steering the 'Good Practice of the Year' award and supporting the 'Energy Regions in Transition' tours. Moreover, she is part of the communication team.



Antina Sander

is RGI's Deputy Executive Director. She is responsible for the instigation and coordination of national TSO-NGO collaboration projects ('Implementing RGI Declarations') and for providing feedback to EU grid development processes. She is also involved in RGI's strategic and organisational planning and the development of new activities.



Theresa Schneider

Senior Project Manager at RGI, is responsible for all communication activities and RGI events. Moreover, she is part of the 'Energy Regions in Transition' team.

We thank our interns Floriane Camban and Jaspreet Dhani, as well as our secondee from 50Hertz, Marie Schimmelmann for their great support in 2017. A big thank you also to Nikola Lesinski, our former Finance Manager, who left RGI for a new challenge at the European Commission in November.

Last year, our dear colleague **Kristina Steenbock** passed away. We were profoundly saddened at her death and will miss her greatly. Kristina has supported RGI and our work from the very beginning. Without her, RGI would not have been possible.

OUR MEMBERS

RGI is a membership organisation with 19 Members from across Europe. They include the following grid operators and NGOs:

TSOs



NGOs





Imprint

The Renewables Grid Initiative e.V.
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