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About RGI
RGI is a unique collaboration of NGOs and TSOs from across Europe engaging in an 'energy transition ecosystem-of-actors'. We promote fair, transparent, sustainable grid development to enable the growth of renewables to achieve full decarbonisation in line with the Paris Agreement.

More information:
https://renewables-grid.eu/

July 2022

RGI

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

Graphic design
Abstract Technology

RGI gratefully acknowledges the EU LIFE funding support:
Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the LIFE Programme. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

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FOREWORD

Dear readers,

The world has changed dramatically in the past few months. 2021 feels decades away. So, rather than summarise all the beautiful things we have done in the past - which you will find in this report - allow me to look into the future.

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, everyone across Europe, and likely in several other world regions, has become aware of the dire consequences of deep dependencies. European energy dependencies are not new, but they have been denied and neglected. Therefore, they have increased over time due to short-term considerations and vested interests. This rings true for the impacts of climate change as well. Good intentions are generally not enough to keep trouble away. By August 2022, Europe has already experienced severe prolonged droughts, extreme weather events, furious forest fires, and unprecedented flooding. In combination with the unfolding biodiversity crises, major impacts are already being felt in food production, further contributing to a broad socio-economic disruption.

We do have reasons to despair. Still, many remain in denial.

While the geopolitical situation is extremely fragile, I believe that these multiple parallel crises can also offer new opportunities and the possibility to look into the future with an optimisation mindset and a 'beyond-the-silos' attitude.

So, what is my recipe for 2022 and beyond?

Saving needs to become embedded in our DNA, in all we do, produce, and consume. The oil crisis in the 1970s led to massive efficiency innovations and gains. Now, the scarcity of resources, and the vulnerability of infrastructure, supply chains and products, will hopefully lead to a new 'Economy of Saving'. This is not easy, I am aware, as our economies are still totally geared toward consumerism. However, scarcity requires a new economic paradigm.

For the energy system, we need to do more with less. A massive expansion of renewable energy sources, in particular wind and solar, is needed - and electricity grids need to be urgently built. The only way to build such a large amount of infrastructure is through

integrated planning which fully considers the energy system as embedded in the natural and social environment.

Therefore, ingredient number two is environmental protection. Considered by many an expensive burden, environmental protection and nature restoration are an integral part of human wellbeing. Without a sound and healthy environment, food cannot be produced in the required quantities, ecosystems disappear with their sinking capabilities. We are losing our fight against climate change and extreme weather events are increasingly devastating. Therefore, environmental protection must become the red thread linking all our economic activities and behaviour. Protection and restoration of nature must be the bedrock of the 21st-century economic paradigm.

Community benefits. How many times I have mentioned my third ingredient! While we may not fully understand what community benefits may be in a fast-changing world, human basic needs remain essential: physiological needs, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation. I increasingly believe that benefits should help communities meet their basic needs in communities where food, water and energy are increasingly scarce or expensive. Additionally, new approaches to community benefits should contribute to developing a sense of belonging and removing the fear of change, thus finding roles for those individuals who feel they no longer fit into this world.

Project developers have a great opportunity to engage with local communities and work with them to shape the future together. This is what we have in mind in many of the activities we run at RGI. Finding new approaches, testing them, and proving that it is possible to tackle multiple challenges in parallel. By doing this we open the way to new and more positive outlooks for the future.

It is indeed a lot of work. It takes courage, passion, and grit. It is, though, the best work.

Antonella Battaglini,
CEO Renewables Grid Initiative

THE HIGHLIGHTS IN 2021

FEB

RGI joins the Electrification Alliance

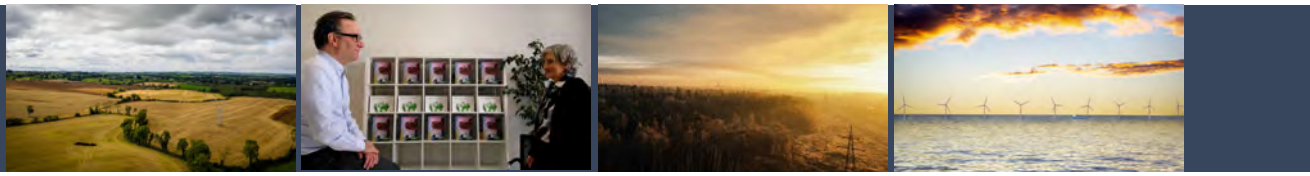
APR

OCEaN gains three new Members: SeaWind Ocean Technology, Germanwatch and National Grid Ventures

Best Practice Webinar takes a closer look at Green Electricity

MAY

RGI becomes REN21's newest Member – Two communities of energy actors join forces



MAR

Europacable, the association of Europe's leading wire and cable manufacturer, joins RGI as the first Supporting Member

RGI responds to the European Commission consultation on the revised TEN-E Regulation

RGI organises a workshop on 24/7 carbon-free energy by 2030

JUL

'Need for Grids' videos translated into German, Italian and French

The German Federal Association of Wind Farm Operators Offshore (BWO) & Wind Energy Ireland join OCEaN

OCEaN issues a Public Statement on the expansion of offshore renewable energy and simultaneous protection of marine ecosystems

RGI releases its position on the 'Fit for 55' package

Best Practice Webinar introduces the Site Wind Right map

SEP

RGI supports WWF's analysis of the local plans submitted for the Just Transition Fund (JTF) and the resulting recommendations to the EU Commission

NOV

The German WG of OCEaN issues six recommendations for a nature-friendly development of offshore wind energy

The German Network for Wind Energy (WAB e.V.) joins OCEaN

RGI organises an EU side event at COP26 analysing lessons for a net-zero carbon grid

OCT

New website launch for Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature (OCEaN)

RGI launches the commissioned Study: 'A Review of Biodiversity Data Needs and Monitoring Protocols for the Offshore Wind Energy Sector in the Baltic Sea and North Sea'

RGI contributes to the 'Practical Guide on Grid Development' commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy

DEC

RGI launches a new Irish IRD Project together with Friends of the Earth Ireland and EirGrid, 'Our Energy Future'

RGI, together with IUCN and ENTSO-E, host the hybrid conference 'Optimising Energy and Empowering Nature' in Brussels

Winners of the 'Good Practice of the Year' award 2021 announced – COMPILE, Site Wind Right and SoLAR Allensbach

OFFSHORE ACTIVITIES

Moving together towards a pact between energy and nature for offshore deployment

By Cristina Simioli

In Europe and at the global level, offshore wind has been confirmed as a key energy source on the path to decarbonisation. The EU's target to reduce CO2 emissions by at least 55% by 2030 has brought about an upward revision of the RES target, which could entail a threefold increase as compared to today's offshore installed capacity. At global level, the Glasgow Climate Pact called on all Parties of the Paris Agreement to accelerate the deployment of clean energy systems but also underlined the importance of protecting, conserving, and restoring marine ecosystems.

RGI is convinced that the climate and biodiversity crises can and should be tackled in parallel by identifying solutions to maximize beneficial outcomes for both. For this reason, in 2020 we established the Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature (OCEaN) in the North and Baltic seas. This unique collaboration consisting of industry, TSOs and NGOs, aims at identifying concrete measures that can be deployed at scale to support the speedy expansion of offshore renewable and electricity grid infrastructure in line with nature conservation and restoration objectives.

In the first year of joint work, this diverse group of organisations got to know each other, sharing their perspectives, practices and the understanding of essential environmental concepts for offshore wind and grid. Workstreams on the assessment of national maritime spatial plans, identification of key knowledge gaps in environmental data and discussions on practices in offshore infrastructure development have been initiated. The coalition held topical internal exchanges on Marine Protected Areas, mitigation and compensation, data sharing, sensitivity mapping as well as on the engagement with other sea actors such as fisheries. This has been accompanied by a series of public webinars to share relevant studies and initiatives from across the globe with a larger community.

We concluded 2021 by passing from the initial 18 funding organisations to 24 in the Baltic and North seas and starting conversations about the establishment of an OCEaN in the Mediterranean Sea. We also obtained an important commitment from all the parties involved in both initiatives to further work together on the building blocks of a 'pact between energy and nature', which would reconcile the two in view of the significant offshore developments we have ahead of us.

RGI is the funder, convener, and moderator of OCEaN.

OCEaN's members are: TSOs 50Hertz, Amprion, Elia, RTE, and Ten- neT, NGOs BirdLife International, Climate Action Net- work Europe, Germanwatch, Naturschutzbund (NABU), Natuur&Milieu, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the North Sea Foundation (Stichting De Noordzee), the Wildlife Trusts, and Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) European Policy Office as well wind in- dustry actors Ørsted, Siemens Gamesa, Vattenfall and WindEurope, Wind Europe Ireland, and the German Net- work for Wind Energy - WAB e.V., Seawind.

NEED FOR GRIDS

PAC is back!

By Andrzej Ceglarz

PAC Paris Agreement Compatible Scenarios for Energy Infrastructure

A deep decarbonisation of our energy systems is urgently needed. The Paris Agreement Compatible (PAC) Scenario[1] showed this is possible and outlined the pathway of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and 100% renewables in Europe by 2040. There are, however, many open questions on how such a pathway can be realised as well as on the challenges and opportunities related to its implementation.

In 2021, RGI together with its partners, Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and REN21, joined forces to launch PAC 2.0. This project aims to explore multiple aspects related to the implementation of the PAC scenario. While each project partner concentrates on selected dimensions related to the PAC scenario's implementation (such as technical challenges, environmental impacts, or the socio-economic effects), all these workstreams complement each other and strengthen the synergies between the organisations.

Against this background, under the PAC project umbrella, RGI has started a closer collaboration with Hitachi Energy, who expressed interest in modelling the PAC scenario. The starting point of this collaboration was to investigate the infrastructural needs of an optimised European energy system compatible with the Paris Climate Agreement.

Establishing this collaboration brought both partners into uncharted waters, for example, by discussing numerous assumptions used for the modelling or inviting external stakeholders to exchange ideas and perspectives about requirements of the specific end use sectors.

1 This project is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action. More information: https://www.pac-scenarios.eu/

The first results of this work were presented at the Energy Modelling Platform for Europe (EMP-E) conference in October 2021 and shared at the COP 26 side event entitled 'Lessons for a net-zero carbon grid'.

We are excited to elevate this collaboration to the next level in the upcoming years!

CAN Europe — Climate Action Network Europe

EEB — European Environmental Bureau

REN21

Renewables Grid Initiative

SENTINEL & WHY

Energy System Modelling: Capturing Complexity to Design the Energy Transition of Tomorrow, Today

By Amanda Schibline

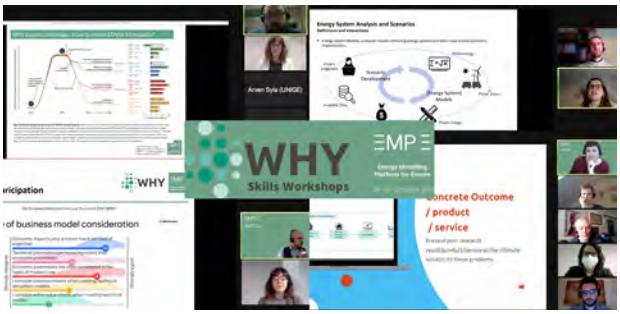
Energy models are used as a tool to help advise policy-makers, energy analysts, and planners on the implications of different energy futures. With evolving political climate and energy transition frameworks, the importance of energy models to reflect more aspects of complex energy systems has never been more important or more challenging. RGI continues our contribution to this process as a partner in two Horizon 2020 projects: SENTINEL[1] and WHY[2], and 2021 was a particularly active year.

SENTINEL

The SENTINEL project's aim is to develop an energy system modelling platform that captures different technological, geographic, societal and environmental dimensions in energy systems. In 2021, this continued to grow into its next phase. Stakeholder input was received from each of SENTINEL's three case studies[3] and used to develop sets of questions that energy modelling teams should consider, in order to make adequate decisions about energy systems and policies needed for decarbonisation by 2050. We advanced our coordination with energy models, focussing on where models could collaborate and 'interlink'.

In addition, SENTINEL was chosen to organise the 2021 Energy Modelling Platform in Europe (EMP-E) Conference, that each year brings together Europe's modelling community in a forum of deep exchange of research and practice. The 2021 online theme was 'Re-Energising Sustainable Transitions in Europe - Energy System Modelling, Methods & Results to support the European Green Deal,' with spotlights on policy targets, sector linking, and an emphasis on collaborative, transparent, socially acceptable modelling. The overall reception of SENTINEL's coordination was positive.

The SENTINEL project will conclude in 2022, with insights, impacts, and usefulness of the project, as well as a visual SENTINEL platform to display the modelling results.



WHY

The WHY project aims to better describe the underlying layer of causality and motivation behind residential energy consumption by designing a modelling toolkit. In 2021, the five energy use cases[4] received stakeholder input to understand user needs and current limitations to residential energy consumption from these contexts. Stakeholder engagement activities were organised and facilitated to reach field experts, policymakers, and researchers to explore diverse needs, barriers, and potential interventions. Incorporating highly interactive components to stakeholder discussions was key. For the 2021 EMP-E Conference, WHY developed a tutorial-style skills workshop, which was highly praised as a hands-on way to welcome a broader learning community to the aspects of energy system modelling.

Looking to 2022, WHY's causal model for capturing behaviours and the toolkit will continue to develop and these technical results will be shared with technical stakeholders.

1 SENTINEL stands for 'Sustainable Energy Transitions Laboratory' and has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 837089.

2 WHY stands for "Climbing the causality ladder to understand and project the energy demand of the residential sector' and has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 891943.

3 National (Greek), regional (Nordic) and continental (European)

4 Microgrid (Gniebling), Cooperative (Goiener), Energy Communities, European Union, Global.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE &

Our Conference with IUCN and ENTSO-E on ‘Optimising Energy and Empowering Nature’

By Mara Radulescu

Optimising Energy and Empowering Nature

Despite the unexpected continuation of the pandemic throughout 2021, RGI maintained its hallmark in event organisation and was able to benefit from the ‘online-isation’ lessons learned back in 2020. Remaining truthful to our mission of bringing organisations together across sectors, actors, and borders, we brought forth new collaborations and experimented with new hybrid formats - which proved successful and engaged large audiences.

Our biggest event in 2021 was the hybrid conference ‘Optimising Energy and Empowering Nature’ co-organised with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and ENTSO-E. Held in December, it attracted nearly 300 participants and was widely covered on social media, reaching high engagement rates and new audiences.

With the results of COP26 in mind, the event brought together on stage nature conservation and energy infrastructure representatives to discuss sound solutions and best practices for a green energy sector that conserves nature while swiftly advancing towards a carbon-free world. Particularly championed were approaches of optimised planning and space allocation towards net zero. Keynote speeches were held by Bruno Oberle, Director General of IUCN, Hervé Laffaye, President, of ENTSO-E, and the European Commissioner for the Environment, Virginijus Sinkevičius. The conference concluded with a joint statement from the organisers underscoring the need for collaboration and radical alliances across sectors and highlighting the need for integrated planning to optimise increasingly scarce resources. Furthermore, we highlighted the diverse benefits of developing nature-based and community-based solutions to scale up successful projects in the long-term.

We are proud of the success and outreach of this joint conference and hope to further develop these collaborations while galvanising improvement in the policy framework and the propagation of best practices from both energy and nature.

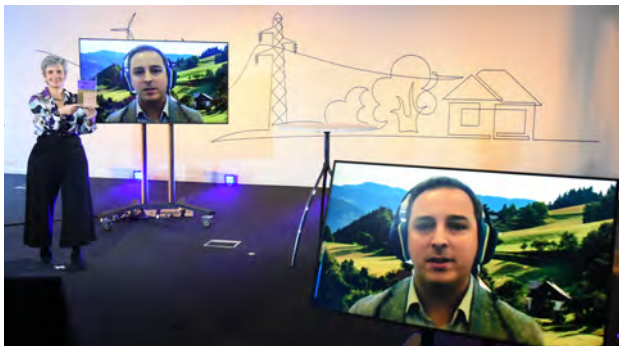
Good Practice of the Year Award 2021

To stress the importance of sharing best practices across regions and sectors even more, the above-mentioned conference featured a best practice video-fair and hosted RGI’s award ceremony for the ‘Good Practice of the Year’ award 2021 in a ‘double première’. The ceremony was imbedded into our annual conference for the first time and due to its hybrid format, two of the three winners were able to pick up their trophies in person on stage.

GOOD PRACTICE OF THE YEAR AWARD

The 8th Edition of the RGI 'Good Practice of the Year' Award

By Mara Radulescu



Innovative thinking and out-of-the-box solutions for grid development, nature and engagement blossomed in 2021, as the award competition saw a record number of submissions. Of the applicants, three outstanding awarded practices were crowned winners for addressing many of the most urgent challenges we face en route to a renewables-based energy system. The trophies were handed over to:

- The University of Ljubljana for leading a remarkable Horizon 2020 project that explains the intricacies of this system to a wider interested public and connects it to the complexity of European grid planning;
- The Nature Conservancy for effectively demonstrating the relevance of smart spatial decisions; and
- The SoLAR Allensbach consortium for providing and implementing creative solutions for system flexibility.

In a keynote address delivered to kick off the award ceremony, EU Commissioner for Environment, Virginijus Sinkevičius, said 'the Good Practice of the Year' award is an excellent initiative, and I give it my full support. I encourage you all to continue in these efforts, and to promote nature-based solutions for electricity grids and our energy system. Electricity powers our civilisation. But all civilisations depend on nature.' We are happy about the support and recognition of our yearly award and hope to continue shaping the grid debate by promoting best practices.

BEST PRACTICE EXCHANGE

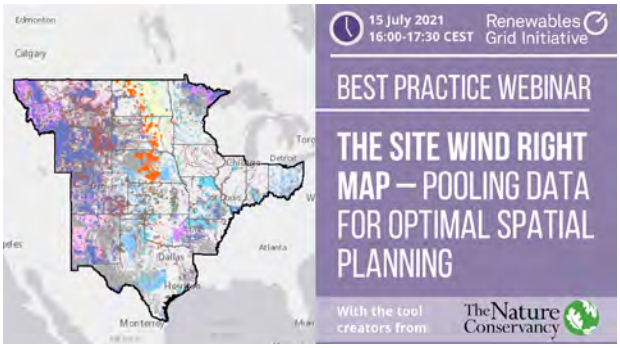
Creative thinking and new solutions for grids, nature and people – RGI's best practice exchange activities in 2021

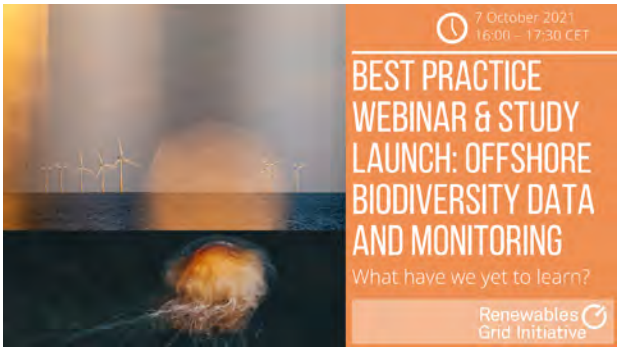
By Stephanie Bätjer

Exceptional ideas, creative thinking and new solutions for grids, nature and people are things that we not only try to promote via our 'Good Practice of the Year' award but that we share as part of all our activities. You will get to hear and learn about them no matter which way you engage with RGI.

But we also have a few activities specifically dedicated to deep diving into best practices on and connected to grid development in Europe and beyond – most notably our 'Good Practice of the Year' award (see page 13) and our Best Practice webinars. In these webinars we focus on specific best practice example that our participants get to explore by asking the brains behind those practices any question that is helpful for their own understanding of the development, implementation and transferability of said practice.

In 2021, we learned about Integrated Vegetation Management from Belgian TSO Elia, French TSO RTE and Consultancy EcoFirst ('Green Electricity Corridors – A lifeline for people and nature'), got to know US-NGO The Nature Conservancy's 'Site Wind Right' tool ('Introducing the Site Wind Right map – pooling data for optimal spatial planning'), and reviewed biodiversity data needs for the offshore wind energy sector with Dr. Peter J. Stephenson ('Offshore Biodiversity Data and Monitoring – What have we yet to learn?').





Partnering up with new actors, stimulating joint learning and sharing information on best practice implementation also dominate our other events, such as our 2021 workshop '24/7 Carbon-Free Energy – 365 Days a Year – by 2030' that we organised in collaboration with Google. Over 120 participants joined us to discuss Google's commitment to work 24/7 on carbon-free energy and hear perspectives from across the energy system on bringing these ambitious plans together with the realities of system planning. The workshop raised a myriad of interesting topics that we hope to dedicate future work to, including but not limited to questions around how a close cooperation between Google and grid operators can be established that gives clear visibility to what each side needs for active decarbonisation of the grid as well as how we can be sure to take society with us and make the implementation of big projects (like 24/7 carbon-free energy year round) socially and environmentally friendly.

Together with other partners from our ecosystem of actors, ABB and the Dutch Ministry for Infrastructure and Water Management, we also organised an EU Pavilion side event entitled 'Lessons for a zero carbon grid' at COP Glasgow 2021. Insights from energy modelling, practice, national and European governance were brought together to share lessons on how to realise the grid for a carbon-free future with an international audience.

To ensure that our RGI internal best practice exchange also continuously grows and flourishes, RGI has created the 'Senior Executive Discovery Club' in 2021, a round for RGI Members' Senior leaders that combines RGI's collective best practice expertise with the Senior Executives' knowledge and experience. In the long term, we aim to further explore the discussed ideas in dedicated working groups with experts and practitioners or 'Best Practice Labs'.

OUR ENERGY FUTURE

A new project for open dialogue on Ireland's energy transition

By Liam Innis

Ireland now has in place the strongest climate action programme the country has ever seen, including a commitment to increase the share of renewable electricity to up to 80% by 2030. This will involve a transformation of Ireland's grid infrastructure and require an energy transition which empowers citizens and supports open, equal and meaningful community participation.

To develop an inclusive vision of Ireland's energy future, there is a need to facilitate broad discussion of the nature and impact of the transition and to develop an improved understanding of the choices, concerns and obstacles that are faced.

In late 2021, RGI officially launched a new IRD project – Implementing RGI Declarations – with our Irish Members, TSO EirGrid, and NGO Friends of the Earth: 'Our Energy Future'. Over three years, the consortium will carry out a range of activities, including workshops and events to facilitate inclusive discussions with communities, civil society organisations, and diverse other stakeholders. The project will support diverse and open dialogues on the challenges and opportunities associated with Ireland's energy transformation, from the development of grid infrastructure to the need for a decarbonised, secure, and affordable electricity, with a much higher share of community participation.

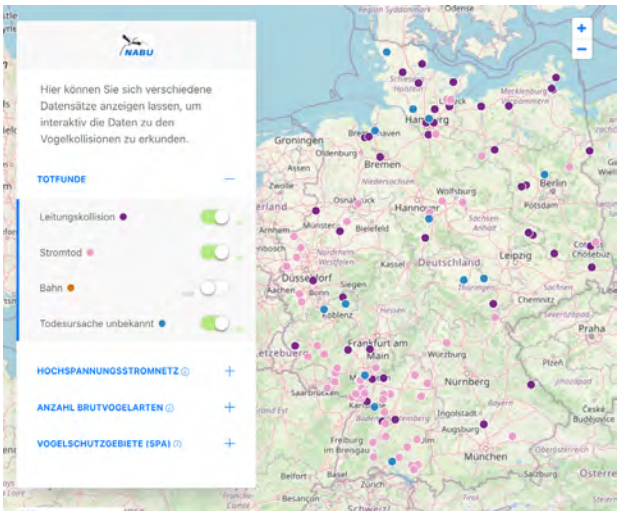
Our long experience in bringing together grid operators and civil society organisations has confirmed time after time that broad collaborations, which enable an exchange of perspectives to identify synergies and joint solutions, are vital for the energy transition to accelerate and succeed. With that in mind, we are delighted to begin this new endeavour with the diverse stakeholders who will become involved as the project develops. 'Our Energy Future' is partially funded by the Mercator Foundation (Stiftung Mercator).

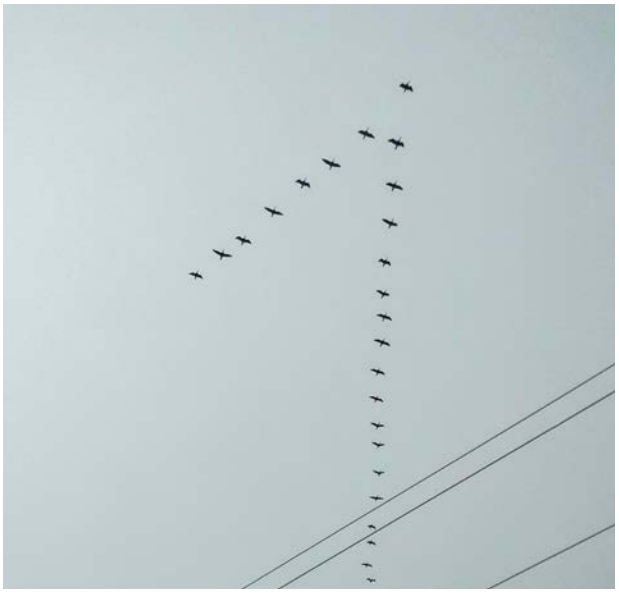
BIRD PORTAL

Collaborative ‘Bird Portal’ flying high after four years

By Liam Innis

Power lines can, just like all infrastructure, present obstacles for avian wildlife. Despite efforts in the planning and operation of electricity grids, birds continue to die from collisions or electrocution on unsecured lines and pylons. Exactly how many can only be estimated. In order to shed more light on this, back in 2017, RGI and German nature conservation NGO, NABU, launched an online platform, through which anyone can report the discovery of dead birds under power lines and pylons directly to NABU. The project is supported by all four German transmission system operators – 50Hertz, Amprion, TenneT and TransnetBW – and, following the joining of Bayernwerk in 2021 alongside NetzeBW and WestNetz, three distribution system operators.





Once sent off, incoming reports are checked and evaluated by NABU’s expert ornithologist, then forwarded to the responsible grid operators and published online in an interactive map. Thus, the collaboration aims to improve the information base for bird protection measures on new and existing power lines. By analysing the data collected through citizen science, critical line sections can be identified and mitigated, for example by placing bird protection markers on the lines, and future planning processes can be optimised by avoiding sensitive areas.

In addition to discussing the findings from the collected data, the project partners value the regular exchange on methodology, technology and communication of bird protection measures in the German power grid. A public event in the autumn of 2022 will bring this dynamic exchange to a larger stage and involve further actors in the discussion. Watch this space!

ADVOCACY

Shaping the energy transformation

By Alexandros Fakas Kakouris

2021 was an important year for climate and energy reforms; related objectives landed high on the political agenda and in the public debate in Europe and beyond. The EU Climate Law, which aims to make Europe the first climate neutral continent by 2050, brought in a legally binding obligation – a 55% GHG emissions reduction by 2030. To implement this ambition, the European Commission released a comprehensive set of legislative proposals, called the 'Fit for 55' package. In addition, the guiding legislation for trans-European energy infrastructure, the TEN-E Regulation, went through a revision in order to make it fit for a decarbonised future.

RGI has grasped this dynamic momentum and actively engaged in these processes together with our Members. Throughout the year, RGI has highlighted that prioritisation should be given to renewables-based direct electrification as it is the most efficient and cost-competitive way to decarbonise our economies. In our view, this would not only allow Europe to reap the full potential of RES, but also promote jobs and innovation, providing substantial gains towards an optimised and resilient energy system.

We reinforced the idea that RES deployment must be coupled with the sustainable roll-out of the electricity grid infrastructure, or else run the risk of jeopardising the possibility to reach more ambitious renewable and decarbonisation targets. Therefore, RGI supported the upgrade and expansion of the electricity grid, along

with the needed flexibility services and markets. In doing so, we also identified barriers to the deployment on land and at sea, and opportunities for synergies with environmental and social objectives.

Last but not least, a crucial precondition for a sustainable decarbonisation of our economies is the recognition that the energy transition does not take place in isolation. The unquestionable interlinkages between the human and natural environment necessitate parallel crises to be tackled jointly. In line with our holistic approach, tackling technical, environmental and societal aspects, RGI has continued to advocate for transparent, fair and inclusive consultation processes that can ensure better protection of nature and provide tangible benefits to local communities.

Find out more about our positions here.

Virginijus Sinkevičius – EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans, and Fisheries

SOCIAL MEDIA

A year of collaboration and growth

By Mara Radulescu

Along with our monthly newsletters, social media continued to be RGI's main channel for disseminating our work and key messages in 2021. Our online activities continued to be impacted by the global pandemic, but the lessons learned back in 2020 allowed us to detect new opportunities even quicker and to continue the growth trend in followers and overall engagement numbers. Between January and December 2021, LinkedIn following increased by nearly 50%, Instagram by 25% and Twitter by 16%. Some of the highlights are illustrated above.

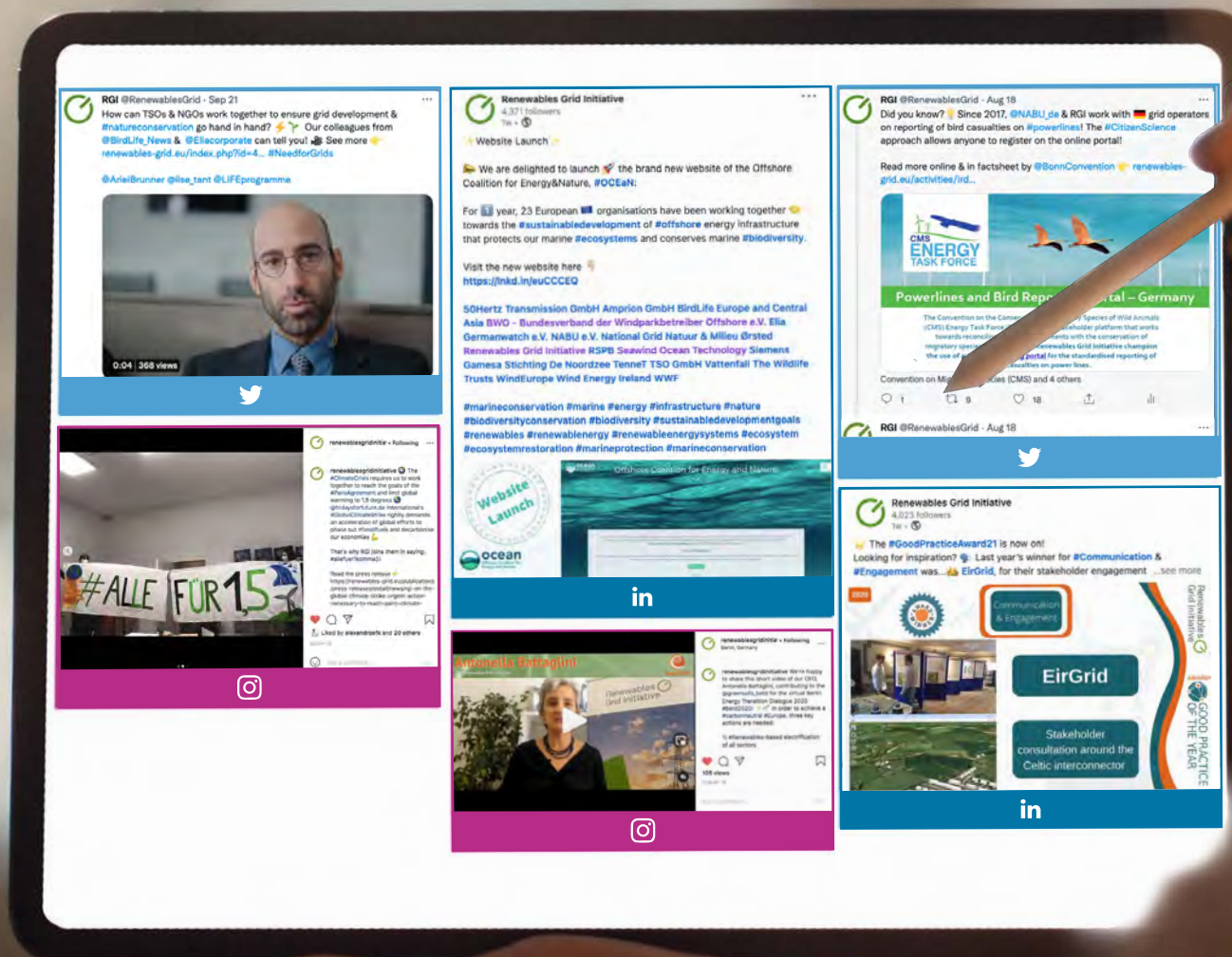
2021 was without a doubt a year of strong collaboration with our Members and partners for a more effective and widespread online engagement. Nearly 30 joint social media actions showed us that we are stronger together and that our beliefs and messages towards the energy transition have a greater impact when we unite our voices.

To give you just one example, in July and August, the collaborative communications campaign to relaunch the translated versions of the 'Need for Grids' videos in French, German and Italian achieved a very high engagement among Members, with some posts reaching up to 17,000 impressions.

Our 'best practice' mandate remained a top priority throughout our communication strategy, but we also achieved a further diversification of our social media portfolio and materials reaching from good news and knowledge nuggets to graphic visualisations of complex content pieces to more video content and event coverage. We will continue exploring new audiences, new ways of interaction and further creative methods for social media engagement in 2022.

Follow us:

Twitter: @RenewablesGrid
Instagram: renewables_grid_initiative
LinkedIn: Renewables Grid Initiative



Over 300 000 LinkedIn post impresssions

Over 650 000 tweet impressions on Twitter

2293 new followers on LinkedIn

Over 2000 likes on our Twitter posts

OUR MEMBERS

Our Members as of 2022

This year, RGI was delighted to welcome the Portuguese TSO REN to join the family and accompany the NGO, ZERO, as our other Portuguese Member.

In Portugal, REN - Redes Energéticas Nacionais operates the main transmission infrastructure and undertakes the overall management of the national electricity and gas systems.

REN is strongly committed to sustainable development, and so is consistently investing in promoting knowledge and in research and development, strengthening the relationship with all stakeholders and between the academic world and industry in order to anticipate the solutions to major technological and environmental challenges, nationally and internationally. Therefore, it also actively takes part in the construction of the European energy market and the future of transnational infrastructure.

João Faria Conceição, Chief Operational Officer at REN

> Continuing the path started in the recent past, Portugal will strongly expand renewable energy sources during the next decade, with Portuguese National Energy and Climate Plan defining a target of 9 GW of solar installed capacity in 2030 (from 2 GW in 2020).
>
> REN is at the core of decarbonization in Portugal, enabling almost 13 GW renewables expansion in the last 15 years, while maintaining security of supply as priority in a context of coal phase out. We will continuously develop a safe and reliable energy backbone in the next years, doubling down on electrification between 2021 to 2024 and lead the decarbonization of the grids through hydrogen enablement.
>
> Joining RGI will give us an opportunity to share our own experiences and learning with other European TSO's and NGO's, building a common knowledge on biodiversity protection whilst building and maintaining electricity networks and jointly find new solutions to avoid, mitigate, compensate and communicate the impacts that grid infrastructure may have.

Supporting Member

SECRETARIAT

Humans of RGI as of 2022

By Sophie Cassel

Antonella Battaglini – CEO
In 2021 I learned that denial still shapes policies, decisions, investments and behaviour. We continue to deny the need and scale for change, thus keeping humanity on a collision path. Is this the decade of greenwashing?

Stephanie Bätjer – Programme Manager – Communication
In 2021, I learned more about virtual event production than I had hoped would be necessary! Still, I am happy about these new skills and believe we should still utilise them smartly going forward - but I do hope they will become less inescapable relatively soon

Dení Bellamy – Coordinator – Offshore Energy and Nature
In 2021, I learned that adaptation and resilience will increasingly play a crucial role in all aspects of our lives, from our personal capacity to cope with abrupt changes, to the global measures responding to the impacts of climate change.

Sophie Cassel – Junior Manager
In 2021, my first year at RGI, my knowledge of the energy transition shifted from a general understanding of the need for a RES-based system, to a deepened understanding of the many complex and intersecting elements needed to implement such a system.

Andrzej Ceglarz – Programme Manager – Socio-Energy Systems
In 2021, I learned how to better use the 'out-of-the-box' ideas and integrate them in various activities related to energy modelling.

Alexandros Fakas Kakouris – Assistant Project Manager
In 2021, I learned that we have to 'relearn' how to deal with scarcity. The urgency and magnitude of the transition requires a holistic approach, with nature and citizens at its core.

Himakshi Gurnani – Manager – Finance
In 2021, I learned that optimum utilisation of natural resources is also a way of contributing towards climate protection. A step that each one of us can take by being mindful in the utilisation of energy resources.

Léa Hayez – Junior Manager – Energy Systems
This year I learned that there is much room for improvement in the integration of social factors and climate impacts into energy systems modelling, and that bridges between these complex fields are needed.

Liam Innis – Manager – Energy Ecosystems
In 2021, I learned that besides impacts, all energy infrastructure can bring new, innovative opportunities for biodiversity and benefits for local communities. Within a nature-based energy transition, creativity and flexibility are key assets!

Sylvia Kessler – Office Admministrator
In 2021, I learned not to take everything for granted and be thankful for life, because things can change in a blink of an eye. That is why our work and our efforts at RGI, to accelerate energy transition and make ourselves independent from others, is so important.

Madlie Le Bihan – Project Manager – Offshore Energy and Nature
In 2021, I learned more about the challenges that need to be tackled to ensure biodiversity recovery in our oceans while deploying renewable energies.

SECRETARIAT

Humans of RGI as of 2022

By Sophie Cassel

Roland Lleshi – Project Manager – Offshore Energy and Nature
This year I learned that increasing renewables while protecting biodiversity requires collaboration among different groups. Creating a genuine connection at the personal level while respecting differences in finding common ground is the right path to move forward.

Eston MacKeague – Junior Manager – Communication
This year I learned the value of regularly meeting with counterparts in other organisations to discuss common challenges and share solutions with one another, especially with respect to responding to rapid developments in the energy transition.

Ana Milanović Rusan – Junior Project Manager – Offshore Energy and Nature
This year, I learned that while it is often very difficult to find common ground between various stakeholders that are relevant for achieving decarbonization of our energy system, there are still numerous inspiring examples where different, and sometimes opposing, sides decided to cooperate and achieved great results.

Charlotte Mueller – Junior Manager – Communication
This year I learned that consistent collaboration with diverse stakeholders is the only way we will achieve our energy transition goals.

Damiano Ottavi – Project Manager – Energy Systems
In 2021 I learned the importance of a joint effort from all relevant actors of the energy and environmental sector, but a sustainable future can be achieved only if each of us gives a contribution, no matter how small.

Manon Quetstroey – Junior Project Manager – Energy and Nature
In 2021 I learned the impacts of grid infrastructures on biodiversity and the mitigation strategies applied across Europe to reduce the risk.

Mara Radulescu – Manager – Communication
In 2021, I learned that collaboration and knowledge sharing across sectors and actors are key. Nature-based solutions and multifunctionality of infrastructure must be considered at all stages of grid planning to benefit the environment and biodiversity.

Antina Sander – Deputy CEO
In 2021, I learned what it means to become a mother. And how much I appreciate the thought that once my child is old enough, I will be proud to explain to him what I earn my living with and how this tries to protect the world he was born into.

Amanda Schnibben – Junior Manager – Socio Energy System
In 2021, I learned the great importance of community-driven commitment for a resilient and just energy transition. Intersectionality of the energy transition can also show that a clean, renewable energy future positively impacts issues, like affordability and security.

Cristina Simioli – Programme Manager – Offshore Energy and Nature
In 2021, I learned that a close-knit team is the key to achieve great results at work but also to overcome challenging times as those we experienced with the pandemic.

Trouble – Senior Director – Networking and Wellbeing
In 2021, I learned that more colleagues means new animal friends and an overall happier work atmosphere.

MEET OUR BOARD

Steering RGI forward as of 2022

By Mara Radulescu

Jasón Besga – Red Eléctrica de España – Head of the Institutional Relations and European Affairs Dep.

Jasón currently heads the EU and International Affairs Department of Red Eléctrica where he started as head of the Brussels Office. Before joining Red Eléctrica, Jasón held different positions at Kreab Gavin Anderson, a strategic management and public affairs consultancy, where he advised clients on EU affairs including on implementation and compliance matters concerning EU legislation in policy areas such as environment, energy and climate. He studied Economics and Business Administration at the Universidad de Navarra (Pamplona, Spain)

Ariel Brunner – BirdLife Europe and Central Asia – Acting Interim Director and Senior Head of Policy

Based in Brussels, Ariel Brunner is Acting Interim Director & Senior Head of Policy with the environmental NGO BirdLife Europe & Central Asia. He coordinates work on a wide range of policies ranging from nature and biodiversity conservation, to budget, energy, fisheries and agriculture. Over the last decade he has been very active in debates over the sustainability of renewable energy and in particular of bioenergy where he has been one of the pioneers in criticising EU support for biofuels. He has been involved in numerous studies, policy developments and political processes linked to the EU Renewable Energy Directives, the sustainability criteria for biofuels, the Indirect Land Use Change controversy etc.

Alan Croes – TenneT – Corporate Asset Owner

Alan currently heads the Corporate Asset Owner Department of TenneT after several roles in System Operation, Interconnectors, Asset Management, onshore and offshore. Before joining TenneT, Alan has been active in different roles in local and regional distribution companies. Energy scenario studies, sector coupling, grid planning, spatial planning, system operation, and multi criteria asset related investment decisions are his main areas of expertise. He studied electrical engineering at the Technical University of Eindhoven (Netherlands) and holds a Master of Business in Energy System from Delft (Netherlands).

Bernard De Clercq – Group Head EU Affairs at Elia Group

Born in Ghent on 11 March 1984 and fluent in Dutch, English, French and German, Bernard De Clercq is an expert in European electricity policy. He holds a degree in applied economical sciences and a master in international relations and diplomacy and has fulfilled temporary assignments for the European Commission and the Belgian federal ministry of foreign affairs, in the period of the Belgian European presidency in 2010. At Elia Group, Bernard has worked in the department Public and Regulatory affairs of Elia Belgium, and has since 1 January 2021 taken the responsibility of the Group European Affairs department.

Francisco Ferreira – President of ZERO

Francisco Ferreira is an Associate Professor with the Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering of the NOVA School of Science and Technology (FCT NOVA) and a researcher in CENSE – Center for Environmental and Sustainability Research. He holds a degree in Environmental Engineering from FCT NOVA, a master's degree from Virginia Tech, USA and a PhD from NOVA Lisboa. He has been developing work in the areas of air pollution, climate change, and sustainable development. He was President of Quercus, a national environmental non-governmental organisation (NGO) from 1996 to 2001 and Vice-President between 2007 and 2011. He was a member of the National Water Council and of the National Council for Environment and Sustainable Development. He has been President of ZERO – Association for the Sustainability of the Earth System, a national environmental NGO, since 2016.

Edoardo Zanchini – Legambiente – Vice-President

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

MEET OUR BOARD

Steering RGI forward

By Mara Radulescu

Thank you!

At the end of 2021, Dr. Eva Schmid (Germanwatch) and Ilse Tant (TenneT) left the RGI Board after many years of valuable collaboration. We would like to thank them for the important impulses brought over the years, as well as for their good humour and spirit. We wish you all the best in the future, Eva and Ilse!

Eva Schmid – Germanwatch – Team Leader German and European Climate Policy
Eva Schmid works on bringing forward the fact-based discourse on how to achieve a systemic energy transition in Germany and Europe with a particular focus on the needed power grid architecture. Eva Schmid joined Germanwatch in 2017 as a Senior Advisor for Power Grids and Low Carbon Policy. She has been a member of the ENTSO-E Advisory council since 2017. Eva Schmid completed her PhD thesis on the exploration of German mitigation scenarios.

Ilse Tant – Elia Group – Chief Community Relations Officer
Ilse Tant is Chief Community Relations Officer at Elia Group. She began her career in 1997, as a lawyer at Stibbe, a Benelux practice specialising in international trade law. In 2002, she joined Elia as Senior Legal Advisor. She then went on to serve as Senior Regulatory Business Analyst (2007-2009), before being appointed a Senior Manager responsible for Permits, Environment and Property (2009-2013) where she managed several large infrastructure projects. In January 2014 Ilse Tant was appointed Chief Corporate Officer, responsible for several corporate departments.