

# ANNUAL REPORT

Renewables   
Grid Initiative

# 2023



# FOREWORD

## DEAR READERS,

This report describes the many achievements RGI has delivered in 2023, but my mind is focused on the future and the work ahead. The world is becoming more and more polarised, the risk of conflict escalation is increasing, and the impacts of climate change are evident as devastating extreme events become regular news across Europe. Our ability to prevent and deal with these challenges is diminished by fear and short-term political games. However, we do have the tools to increase energy security, speed up decarbonisation, and protect nature – which is essential to our livelihoods and for fighting climate change.

So why are we lagging behind? I think there is a widespread belief we can go back to the ways of “yesterday”. This mindset prevents leaders and citizens from taking bold action and going in new directions. To push forward to the future we want, RGI is centering our activities on people- and nature-positive. Many of the crises we are facing cannot be solved without an accelerated energy transition and fast and robust nature restoration. Moreover, none of these crises can be solved without the support of people. We need to better understand and implement processes that truly deliver local benefits and community engagement to inspire people to look towards the future and move beyond unachievable past dreams.

We need unity, solidarity, collaboration and trust to move forward, and RGI and our extended ecosystem of actors continue to believe prioritising these values is both possible and rewarding. In this report, we show how we put these values into action in 2023.

RGI placed itself at the forefront of topics making headlines across the energy world in 2023, including addressing how to integrate space requirements in energy system planning. We have critically examined different decarbonisation scenarios, the role of green hydrogen, and brought attention to the importance of climate adaptation for the entire electricity system. RGI's technical work area was instrumental in tackling these elements holistically while addressing system optimisation for grid infrastructure in times of scarce resources (Pages 4 – 5). In the future, we would like to further explore how scarcity will shape and define energy system planning, decarbonisation pathways and investment commitments.

Deeply rooted in our identity, we strongly believe that the intrinsic link and interdependencies between the biodiversity, energy, and the climate crises require integrated planning and solutions that can contribute to addressing multiple challenges in parallel. I am therefore happy to share that the work of our Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature (OCEaN) and onshore nature team reached new heights in the last year, as we shared our solutions-oriented approaches to protecting and restoring ecosystems alongside energy infrastructure deployment at industry events such as WindEurope's Annual Conference, online through inspiring social media campaigns, and with civil society through tailored trainings (offshore: Pages 10 – 13, onshore: Pages 8 – 9).

None of the crises we are confronted with can be addressed without citizen support and engagement. Therefore, inclusive stakeholder engagement activities and education are renewable and electricity infrastructure deployment. To address this, RGI has kicked off Engage4Energy to collect invaluable engagement options and collaborated on the 'Pact for Engagement', reaffirming our commitment to early, regular and meaningful stakeholder engagement in electricity grid development (see Pages 7 and 17). Together with IUCN, we have also launched GINGR to develop a framework for assessing, monitoring and reporting contributions towards nature and people positive energy infrastructure. I hope that our Members and broad ecosystem of actors will join us in this effort to quantify contributions, build trust and streamline practices globally.

RGI's ongoing advocacy efforts are built on our vision for a people- and nature-positive energy transition, but also how its achievement requires policymakers to address remaining bottlenecks, policy gaps, and inefficiencies regarding electricity grid development. We therefore welcomed high-level political recognition of these challenges in 2023, most prominently with the European Union's Action Plan for Grids. These promising strides must be followed by commitments to deliver and continued leadership from all political levels and industry alike to keep us on track to meeting our renewables and electrification targets (see our advocacy highlights on Page 17).

Equally, we are convinced that sharing inspiring best practices on how to build a resilient European electricity grid which supports citizens and biodiversity is essential to reach the future we want. 2023 was the perfect year to highlight this as it marked 10 years of the 'Good Practice of the Year Award'. With a fresh coat of paint and a revamped name – it will from now on be known as the RGI Grid Awards – we came together with our Members and valued partners to showcase innovative practices in nature protection, technology and community engagement and present a special 'All-star Award' (see all winners on Page 14).

Within the following pages, we invite you to discover the work of RGI Secretariat across our three dimensions: Grids & Energy Systems (Pages 4 – 7), Energy & Nature (Pages 8 – 13), and Energy & Society (Pages 14 – 19). We present the various projects, events, and advocacy efforts which defined our 2023 work, all undertaken with an eye towards our long-term goal of achieving a renewables grid for both people and the planet.

”

*Remember that infrastructure is always built in nature and next to someone. We therefore need to build it well!*



**ANTONELLA BATTAGLINI**  
CEO Renewables Grid Initiative



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# GRIDS & ENERGY SYSTEMS

## UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING DECARBONISED ENERGY SYSTEMS

In 2023, RGI continued to explore how to plan, design and implement a fully decarbonised and resilient European energy system in our working dimension **Grids & Energy Systems**. We facilitated multidirectional learning on the opportunities and challenges for successfully delivering EU energy and climate targets. For that purpose, from a technological standpoint and with a system optimisation mindset, we explored how to enable the development and expansion of variable renewable generation and electricity grids. At the same time, we emphasised the need to tackle the intertwined climate, energy and biodiversity crises by including relevant stakeholders in energy modelling and decision-making.

Our core activities on the implementation of **decarbonised and optimised energy systems** were expert workshops and exchanges on energy modelling and system planning.

As a part of the **H2020 WHY project**<sup>1</sup> and the **Paris Agreement Compatible (PAC) Scenario project**, in June 2023 we organised the workshop 'The Future is Flexibility' which brought together stakeholders from industry, policymaking, TSOs, DSOs, NGOs and regulators.

We invited a similar set of stakeholders to our other workshops 'Role of green hydrogen in future decarbonised and optimised European energy systems' (July 2023) and 'Industry in Transition' (November 2023). We also contributed to a webinar outlining the role of electricity grids in delivering Carbon-Free Energy 24 hours, 7 days a week (24/7 CFE). These exchanges increased participant knowledge on energy system decarbonisation and allowed us to present our perspectives to an expert audience, as in case of our [discussion paper on green hydrogen](#).

<sup>1</sup>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

126

Participants joined RGI's expert exchanges

## ADDRESSING RESOURCE SCARCITY ON THE PATH TO DECARBONISATION

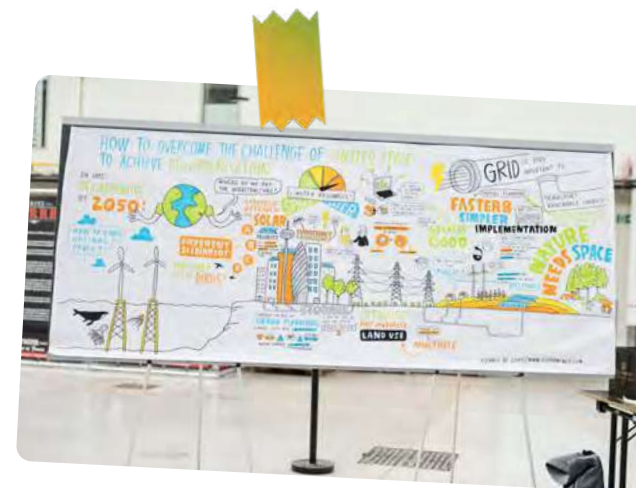
The deployment of infrastructure needed to implement the decarbonised energy systems of the future will require a massive use of different resources, many which are becoming increasingly scarce. In 2023, we highlighted the need for a holistic approach to system planning that specifically addresses scarcity.

In this context, the **Energy & Space workstream** was established to address the data gap concerning water and spatial requirements for different decarbonisation scenarios.

The results of the comparative analysis of these decarbonisation pathways was published in a [summary report](#), which together with an [interactive open-source tool](#), was launched at a [public workshop](#) in Brussels.

Acknowledging the competition over space – both on land and at sea – between different societal and economic activities, the lessons learned from this workstream underscored the critical importance of holistic and multi-level planning. Existing tools which provide information on the system level, need to be combined with those allowing for optimised spatial planning on the ground. In addition, we require approaches and solutions which promote the implementation of energy infrastructure that co-exists with nature and society, such as multi-use initiatives. Knowledge and data sharing, transparency and exchanges with multiple stakeholders are necessary to enable these changes.

These [lessons](#) have been shared with policymakers, RES and grids infrastructure developers, researchers and NGOs and we will continue exchanges on this topic in 2024!





98

Engage4Energy  
case studies

## CLIMATE-PROOFING THE ELECTRICITY GRID

The impacts of climate change remain insufficiently represented in infrastructure system planning, and as climate change progresses and extreme events become more frequent, grid operators and other energy actors must grapple with these challenges. Through several 2023 workstreams, RGI convened exchanges among energy system actors, climate-energy research bodies, and European authorities to jointly define challenges and develop solutions towards a **decarbonised and climate-resilient energy system**.



DestinE pushes the limits of computing and climate science, offers assessments of climate vulnerabilities, and supports in developing adaptation measures at global and local scales. Through co-design activities, RGI facilitated exchanges within a community of climate-energy modellers to develop innovative and cross-sectoral solutions and promote the integration of new knowledge into current operational workflows.

Throughout the year, we also contributed to discussions on how to incorporate **climate adaption and resilience measures** in electricity infrastructure planning. More specifically, in October 2023, RGI organised an expert workshop with representatives of TSOs, regulators, policymakers, modellers, system planners and researchers to explore how climate adaptation and resilience aspects should be represented in the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) methodology of the Ten-Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP) process.

Our work dedicated to climate change impacts on electricity infrastructure **was acknowledged by the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change**, who underlined RGI's role in enabling institutional learning and new knowledge production on climate adaptation and resilience within the European grid planning process.

In 2023, RGI became a lead for user engagement in the **Destination Earth (DestinE) – Use Case Energy Systems<sup>2</sup>**. DestinE, a flagship initiative of the European Commission towards the Green Deal and Digital Strategy, is developing a highly accurate model of Earth.

<sup>2</sup>Destination Earth is a European Union funded initiative and is implemented by ECMWF, ESA, and EUMETSAT

18

Grid operators RGI engaged  
with on approaches to  
climate-proofing the grid

## EMBEDDING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN EVERY STAGE OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION

In 2023, our activities continued reflecting the necessity for early, regular and meaningful **stakeholder engagement processes** across all stages of electricity infrastructure development: from energy policy debates and energy scenario building to infrastructure deployment. Interacting with various stakeholders can deliver valuable technical input for each of these stages, increase legitimacy and transparency, improve the final outcome of undertaken activities, and provide a long-term perspective for infrastructure planning.

The work of the Horizon Europe project **JustWind4All<sup>3</sup>** intensified in 2023 with the ambition to support the acceleration of on- and offshore wind through just and effective governance. As the convener of the project's Wind Forum, RGI began to build the foundation for a stakeholder network from regional and EU contexts with a common interest in just wind development. In 2023, we organised five stakeholder events as part of the **Wind Forum**, such as **an expert workshop in Catalunya**.

We also kicked off the **Engage4Energy** project, implemented under the IEA's UsersTCP network and co-led with the Institute of European Energy and Climate Policy (IEECP). This project aimed to fill gaps in research and practice concerning effective engagement in energy projects, such as electricity grids, wind and solar.

Finally, in 2023 we contributed to key processes and consultations of the Ten-Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP), such as the Scenarios Input Parameters and the scope of studies and stakeholder engagement plan for the TYNDP 2024 cycle. We also became a member of the Stakeholder Reference Group, mandated by ACER's Scenarios Guidelines Framework, which provides expert advice to the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E) and the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Gas (ENTSO-G) and assists with the development of the TYNDP scenarios.



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Stakeholders engaged in  
JustWind4All's Wind Forum

<sup>3</sup>JustWind4All is funded by the European Union under the Grant Agreement no. 101083936



# ONSHORE ENERGY & NATURE

## PROMOTING NATURE-POSITIVE PLANNING AND OPERATION OF ONSHORE ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE

As the severity and frequency of extreme weather events intensifies, so too does the urgency to address the climate change and biodiversity crises. In this regard, it is crucial that we take swift action to both decarbonise our energy systems and restore natural habitats. This, in turn, requires a rapid expansion of renewable energy sources (RES) and grid infrastructure, which must go hand-in-hand with a steadfast commitment to nature protection and ecosystem restoration, in line with European policy priorities.

Recognising Europe's policy priorities to tackle the twin crises, RGI continues to promote solutions that highlight **nature-positive planning and operation of electricity infrastructure**. In 2023, we highlighted a plethora of best practices in our 'Energy and Nature' webinar series, attracting a total of 450 attendees. The topics included [nature restoration alongside solar power projects](#), [wildfire prevention through grid-based vegetation management](#), [bat protection around onshore wind farms](#), and [innovative uses of uniting electricity infrastructure with community agriculture](#).

In June, RGI hosted an **Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)** workshop for European grid operators in Belgium.

The workshop brought together 28 representatives from 14 organisations to explore IVM best practices and exchange insights between experts. It sparked extensive discussions, leading to a summary report, [Implementing Integrated Vegetation Management across Europe](#), and a successful social media campaign highlighting the workshop participant's innovative IVM practices, such as livestock grazing under power lines. Building on this momentum, RGI formed an IVM working group representing TSOs, DSOs, and NGOs from across Europe. This group meets quarterly and will continue to do so in 2024 to tackle barriers, share solutions, and prioritise actions to ensure an effective implementation of IVM.

450

Attendees for Energy & Nature webinar series

Building on its commitment to environmental stewardship, RGI increased its advocacy for a more bird-friendly grid in 2023, and celebrated the launch of the LIFE project, [SafeLines4Birds](#), in March. The project will run until 2028 and has four main objectives: to reduce bird mortality due to collision, electrocution, and disturbances during breeding seasons, as well as to enhance and share knowledge across Europe and beyond.

RGI coordinates the SafeLines4Birds activities related to communication, outreach and knowledge dissemination. In this context, RGI hosted a workshop titled '[Connecting Biodiversity](#)', which brought together more than 20 environmental NGOs from 12 European countries to discuss the status-quo of bird protection and explore strategies to mitigate the risk for bird populations along power lines.



14+  
Organisations present at IVM  
workshop in Belgium

The event focused on exchanging knowledge between EU Member States and identifying concrete steps we can take towards a truly bird-friendly grid in Europe.

Outside of the SafeLines4Birds project, we co-organised two separate webinars together with key stakeholders from the grid industry and civil society of Ukraine and Greece. The events focused on bird protection around grid infrastructure and how this topic can be approached in a way that also ensures a more reliable electricity supply. NGOs and grid operators from various EU Member States shared their experiences regarding mitigation measures, planning strategies, and policy – demonstrating the importance of collaboration between all actors. We look forward to furthering this work in 2024!



Photo credits: Elia



# OFFSHORE ENERGY & NATURE

## MAKING STRIDES TO ACCELERATE NATURE-FRIENDLY OFFSHORE WIND AND GRIDS

2023 was a landmark year for RGI's work in the offshore environment. [The Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature \(OCEaN\)](#), in which RGI plays the role of convenor and moderator, continued to grow and make waves in high-level policy forums. 2023 also witnessed the official launch of a second coalition focusing on the Mediterranean basin and adjacent Atlantic waters: Med OCEaN. As of today, OCEaN and Med OCEaN represent over 40 organisations committed to accelerating the deployment of offshore wind energy and grid infrastructure hand-in-hand with the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems.

The inclusion of non-price criteria in **offshore wind auctions** is an approach where projects are awarded not solely based on price but also on considerations that can contribute, among others, to environmental protection. In 2023, OCEaN launched two statements advocating for the uptake of ecological criteria to minimise environmental impacts and contribute to the enhancement of marine ecosystems.

These recommendations were presented at a European Parliament event and at the North Seas Energy Cooperation ministerial meeting.

Effective **Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)** can ensure infrastructure is planned efficiently and built in the least impactful areas for nature. In 2023, we therefore continued to disseminate OCEaN's [recommendations to improve MSP](#) – including in a dedicated event at the European Commission (EC)'s Maritime Days in Brest, France.

1000+

Public event participants,  
in-person and online

Our work on this topic led to invitations for RGI to contribute to the Planners' Forum of VASAB, the inter-governmental cooperation of the Baltic Sea Region on spatial planning, and the EC's Member States Expert Group on MSP. Furthermore, to explore challenges and opportunities for offshore wind co-location with Marine Protected Areas and other activities at sea, in 2023 RGI commissioned a [discussion paper](#) diving into the vital need to ensure that offshore wind and grid development aligns harmoniously with nature, communities, and other marine activities.

To ensure the energy transition at sea doesn't cause further harm to marine ecosystems, OCEaN Members discuss and collaborate on ways to best promote **mitigation measures**, **nature-inclusive designs** and **biodiversity net-gain**. OCEaN Members are working to compile a table of mitigation measures for offshore wind and grid infrastructure in the North and Baltic Seas which will be released in 2024.

40+

Members of OCEaN and  
Med OCEaN

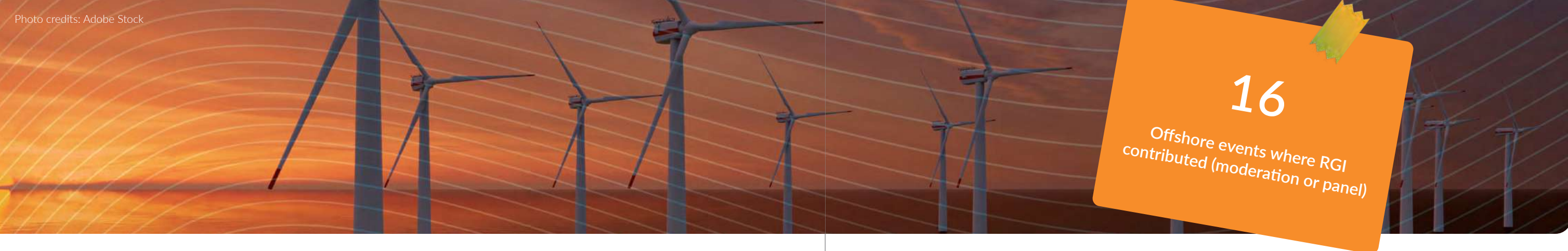
In 2023, we continued to showcase innovative solutions with our [webinar series on Nature Inclusive Design](#) in offshore wind energy and related electricity grids. In two sessions, we spotlighted how these solutions can enhance nature at sea in the Netherlands and Spain and reached over 600 viewers.



## WELCOMING A NEW COALITION: MED OCEAN

In order to tackle the complexity of offshore wind and grid infrastructure developments in the Mediterranean, we officially launched **OCEaN in the Mediterranean and adjacent Atlantic waters** in September 2023 with 16 founding Members from France, Spain, Italy and Portugal. In November, Med OCEaN's first publication provided [recommendations on Maritime Spatial Planning](#) to Member States in the region.





# REACHING NEW AUDIENCES FOR A SUSTAINABLE OFFSHORE ENERGY TRANSITION

## ADVOCATING FOR NATURE-FRIENDLY WIND AND GRIDS

Policymakers continued to acknowledge the vital work that RGI pursues with OCEaN Members and our unique multi-stakeholder perspective on offshore wind, grid and nature. In April, RGI CEO Antonella Battaglini was invited to represent OCEaN at the North Sea Summit in Ostend, Brussels and in November, RGI served as an NGO ambassador and contributed to the topic of ecology at the North Sea Energy Cooperation ministerial meeting in the Hague. We also continued to cement connections with DG MARE, EMODnet, the Blue Economy Forum, and a variety of EU funded projects.

## SHARING LESSONS WITH GLOBAL PARTNERS

In October, RGI led an international delegation of 27 funders and civil society organisations on a journey across Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark. The one-week **study tour** helped participants understand the challenges and lessons learned in Europe concerning offshore wind, grid developments, and their intersection with nature protection and engagement with local communities. Participants visited offshore wind parks and ports and engaged with leading experts working together towards a nature-friendly energy transition in Europe's seas.

# OCEAN TAKES COPENHAGEN BY STORM AT WINDEUROPE'S ANNUAL EVENT

From April 24-26, The RGI Offshore team was present in Copenhagen, Denmark, as part of an exciting new opportunity: showcasing the work of the Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature (OCEaN) at WindEurope's Annual Event. OCEaN was front and centre at this industry-led event, with an exhibition stand, presentations on energy and nature, a networking dinner, and a dedicated side event.

Our activities elevated the quality of discussions throughout the three-day event, bringing in a much-needed NGO perspective, and showcasing that offshore wind can and must be planned side-by-side with nature protection and restoration.

Throughout the three days, OCEaN's **exhibition stand** provided a vital space for exchange with some of the 9000+ participants in attendance from across Europe's wind industry. The 'Learning Corner' on our stand walls showcased innovative solutions, including fish hotels on grid infrastructure, artificial reefs near turbines, and restoration of oyster beds.

Complementing this, we welcomed over 100 attendees to three lively **presentations at the stands of our Members**. Presentations on nature-inclusive design in turbine foundations, successful stakeholder engagement for offshore grid planning, and NGO collaborations to test artificial reefs at offshore wind parks provided inspiration at the heart of the busy exhibition halls. Many of these measures are included in OCEaN's [Energy & Nature Database](#) and gave participants the chance to concretely understand how to protect, enhance and restore marine ecosystems in concert with offshore infrastructure.



On 26 April, in cooperation with OCEaN Members and WindEurope, RGI also organised a workshop that provided participants with the opportunity to be part of a **holistic discussion on how to integrate nature into offshore wind and grid infrastructure** from the perspective of the wind industry, transmission system operators and NGOs. The event zoomed into the relevance of integrating sustainability, environmental protection and nature enhancement measures as part of the selection criteria to award offshore wind projects, which provided a key moment to launch [OCEaN's Statement on ecological criteria in offshore wind farm auctions](#).

Overall, our activities in Copenhagen boosted visibility on RGI's vital offshore work and showcased the relevance of OCEaN as a key platform to present solutions, find compromises, discuss paths forward – shaping and enabling our work to reach new heights in 2023 and beyond.





# ENERGY & SOCIETY

## CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SUSTAINABLE, INNOVATIVE, AND COLLABORATIVE GRID DEVELOPMENT

Championing collaborative efforts which promote the energy transition in an innovative and sustainable manner was at the forefront of our minds as we navigated the past year. With ongoing crises in the spheres of energy, climate and biodiversity we recognised the need to increase our efforts to share positive and creative work from our network. RGI is well-known for applauding **innovative grid good practices** in the areas of stakeholder engagement, nature-friendly infrastructure deployment and ground-breaking technology – and as 2023 marked 10 years since the birth of our ‘Good Practice of the Year Award’, we planned a unique celebration.

At the European Commission’s Fourth PCI Energy Days in Brussels, RGI’s 2023 award got a fresh coat of paint and will from now on be known as the **RGI Grid Awards: Good Practice of the Year**. Closing the first day, the RGI Grid Awards showcased much-needed solutions for sustainable grid deployment. For the first time in its ten-year history, we held a public vote among participating past winners for the **10th Anniversary All-Star** award. The **restoration of Posidonia Oceanica**, a seagrass species that provides essential functions to the Mediterranean ecosystem and acts as a natural carbon sink, by Redeia – parent company of the Spanish transmission system operator Red Eléctrica – was the voters clear favourite and took home the All-Star trophy.

With over 20 outstanding practice submissions, the race for our classic trophies was tight, with the following emerging as winning practices which clearly excelled in improving the relationship between the grid, biodiversity, and communities:

### Communication & Engagement Award

‘**Building resilient communities and healthcare through renewables**’ by EcoSwell, for bottom-up approaches to designing bespoke systems and training end users for sustainable long-term use, including a solar-PV based uninterrupted power supply system in a central Medical Centre in Peru which allowed staff to safeguard vaccines.

### Environmental Protection Award

‘**Ecological corridor management in overhead line corridors**’ by E.ON, for their collaborative and successful commitment to implementing ecological vegetation management in their high-voltage corridors over the past decade.

### Technological Innovation & System Integration Award

‘**Increasing the Rate of Change Frequency limit to +/- 1 Hz/s**’ implemented by EirGrid and SONI, for doubling the maximum allowable rate of change of frequency on the grid from 0.5 to 1 Hertz per second, lowering the level of system inertia required to operate the system securely and therefore reducing the curtailment of renewables in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

RGI is grateful for the longstanding support and recognition of our award and look forward to continuing to help shape the European grid in a sustainable and creative way for the next 10 years!

250+

Submissions to our  
award over 10 years

## ENERGISING OUR TRANSITION: GRID EXCHANGES TO CONNECT EUROPE AND INSPIRE ACTION

In addition to the RGI Grid Awards, we are dedicated to promoting meaningful exchanges and sharing outstanding practices shaping the renewable energy transition with tailored online and in-person events. These events give our network and the public the valuable opportunity to ask burning questions, challenge assumptions and learn more about specific initiatives and topics. In 2023, the crowning representation of this was our comprehensive exploration of the European energy system, electricity grids, and biodiversity protection in the ‘**Connecting Energies**’ training series.

We invited members of European civil society organisations to this enlightening three-part training series to explore the **intricate relationship between electricity grids, the energy transition, and biodiversity**. The first online training session explored the unique role electricity grids play in the energy transition. We kicked off with a general overview of how energy systems are evolving while we add large amounts of renewables, in particular variable wind and solar, including the fast-growing offshore wind. We then dove into operational requirements for a well-functioning electricity system and shared examples of related technical solutions that are already being deployed. This event was also featured as part of Climate Week NYC under the title: ‘Grids for Climate: Connecting Renewables to Achieve Our Climate Goals’. Building upon the foundation laid in the first session, our second webinar delved deeper into the European Commission’s role in selecting and co-financing grid expansion.

Participants gained insights into how these policy frameworks create a European grid that delivers on the promises of the Paris Agreement, illustrated by two of the projects on the ground.

The final session of the training took place in Berlin, Germany, and explored the crucial relationship between electrical infrastructure and biodiversity, with a particular emphasis on bird conservation. Biodiversity experts shared their knowledge and insights into the potential impacts of electricity infrastructure on bird populations, as well as solution strategies, barriers to implementation, and good practices to bring us further. Members of European civil society organisations were invited to participate in discussions to identify common challenges, principles and key actions to be elaborated in a shared outcome document.

20+

Environmental NGOs at  
Connecting Biodiversity  
workshop







## A SPOTLIGHT ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE AT RGI AND ENTSO-E'S ONLINE CONFERENCE

The effects of climate change on the energy system have become more prominent over the years. Increasing the likelihood and severity of extreme weather events, climate change poses a serious threat to electricity infrastructure. Recognising this challenge, on 14 March 2023, RGI and the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E) co-hosted an online conference to dive deep into what **resilient energy infrastructure** means and how to implement it.

Entitled '[Adaptation and Resilience: Ensuring the energy transition is built on resilient infrastructure](#)', the conference kicked off with two keynotes to define what a resilient grid is, and what the expected impacts of climate change on energy infrastructure are. The conference also showcased best practices to develop resilience within grid deployment through presentations from ENTSO-E, Terna and E.ON.

Throughout the day, panel discussions addressed how to plan and model a more resilient energy system, with panellists incorporating views from transmission system operators, civil society, policymakers and industry.

With over 500 participants joining the event, the debate was enhanced with insightful questions from the public.

Bringing together key stakeholders from the energy sector, the conference addressed pressing questions. Experts throughout the programme looked into whether our current infrastructure is resilient enough to withstand extreme weather events, but also how we can adapt it to mitigate the **impacts of climate change**. And importantly, how these factors will shape future energy infrastructure planning.

Through discussions and collaborative exchanges, the conference provided valuable insights and strategies for navigating the complexities of climate change in energy infrastructure development. It helped identify necessary changes and chart a course toward more resilient and adaptive energy systems.

The event not only raised awareness but also fostered a sense of collective responsibility and urgency among participants to address the evolving challenges posed by climate change. As we look to the future, the insights gained from this conference will play a crucial role in shaping practices that ensure a robust and sustainable energy transition.



500+

Attendees for our Adaptation and Resilience conference

## STEERING A SUCCESSFUL PATH TO 2030: HOW OUR ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO THIS VISION

With a system optimisation mindset, underpinned by a forward-looking perspective, we engaged with relevant stakeholders and policymakers to contribute to policy needs and **bridge policy gaps**, in a manner that effectively addresses the multiple current crises. Central to RGI's advocacy work was a holistic approach, encompassing the necessity for timely expansion and modernisation of the electricity grid, alongside variable renewable energy generation, while applying **nature and people positive** mindsets.

Encouragingly, our future-oriented and system-level approach was reflected in 2023 policymaking, with the most prominent example being the EU Action Plan for Grids, a long-awaited plan that aims to tackle bottlenecks in electricity grid development. In this context, we signed the Pact for Engagement together with representatives from ENTSO-E, the EU DSO Entity and ACER, reaffirming our commitment to early, regular and meaningful stakeholder engagement in electricity grid development.

Leveraging RGI's structure and the multifaceted knowledge gained across our activities, we worked on actively **shaping key policy developments** in the EU, such as EU electricity market design reform, the review of the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, and the debate on the EU 2040 climate target.

Uniting with broader coalitions of businesses, NGOs, and industry actors, we supported, amongst others, the urgency to restore degraded ecosystems through the adoption of the EU Nature Restoration Law and to propose principles towards accelerated deployment of renewable energy and electricity grid infrastructure. Moreover, in the frame of the Electrification Alliance we shared key considerations for the upcoming EU tenure that would prioritise direct electrification as the most cost and resource-efficient pathway to decarbonisation.

Acknowledging that policy development alone will not suffice, we underscored the necessity for increased ambition to be coupled with effective implementation.







## GOING GLOBAL: PROMOTING A JUST AND ECO-FRIENDLY INTERNATIONAL ENERGY TRANSITION

There is global opportunity for the energy transition to be coupled with biodiversity protection and social justice. In 2023, we continued to bring our unique insights on the just transition and nature-friendly electricity infrastructure to the global stage.

During the UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai (COP28), we partnered with the Global Renewables Alliance, the Powering Past Coal Alliance, and the Pembina Institute for an event that emphasised the urgency of addressing challenges hindering timely and environmentally beneficial grid deployment. The event launched the Green Grids Initiative's Electricity Transition Playbook, advocating for partnerships to expand grids sustainably.

COP28 was also the stage for the launch of a new partnership between RGI and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Together, we are bringing the importance of nature protection alongside renewables and grid infrastructure to a global audience.

We announced the joint development of a grid academy which will bridge knowledge gaps in electricity infrastructure planning and renewable integration. Through both online coursework and onsite trainings, this project will democratise knowledge and cultivate a community of experts in sustainable energy development.

IUCN and RGI took further advantage of the global audience at COP28 to launch **GINGR – the Global Initiative for Nature, Grids and Renewables**. This new, ambitious initiative aims to harmonise energy, climate, and biodiversity goals globally. GINGR will bring experts from relevant sectors together to develop monitoring and reporting frameworks for tracking biodiversity gain along renewables and grid infrastructure projects. Several government, industry, and civil society leaders expressed strong support for GINGR at the COP28 launch event.



5

Working groups to be established to achieve GINGR's goals



24%  
Increase in LinkedIn  
followers

50+

Collaborations with  
partners on social media



# OUR MEMBERS

as of June 2024



SUPPORTING MEMBERS



# OUR BOARD



**BERNARD DE CLERCQ**  
Group Head EU Affairs  
Elia Group



**ALAN CROES**  
Head of Energy System  
Planning  
TenneT



**JASÓN BESGA**  
Head of Institutional &  
International Affairs  
Red Eléctrica



**ARIEL BRUNNER**  
Regional Director  
BirdLife Europe & Central Asia




**FRANCISCO FERREIRA**  
President  
ZERO




# OUR SECRETARIAT


as of June 2024




**ANTONELLA BATTAGLINI**  
Chief Executive Officer




**SYLVIA KESSLER**  
Office Manager




**HIMAKSHI GURNANI**  
Manager Finance




**MARIE DELAIR**  
Manager Fundraising




**ANNA MALDRYK**  
Personal Assistant to the CEO




**SABRINA RAHMAN**  
Assistant Finance




**VAKHTANGI GABELASHVIL**  
Manager Finance




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**DR. IRA SHEFER**  
Manager Energy Systems



**MARTA LOVISOLO**  
Senior Manager



**TROUBLE**  
Senior Director Networking and Wellbeing



# OUR FORMER CHAMPIONS



**LÉA HAYEZ**  
Manager  
Energy Systems

RGI would like to express our appreciation for Léa Hayez, who joined our team as a Junior Manager in 2022 and left as Manager Energy Systems in early 2024. Léa was responsible for the Paris Agreement Compatible (PAC) Scenarios for Energy Infrastructure project and led RGI's workstream dedicated to climate resilience and adaptation. We are grateful for Léa's outstanding work, diligence, providing constructive solutions and ensuring a good team-spirit.

We wish Léa every happiness and success in new beginnings and exciting adventures ahead.

We would like to thank Damiano Ottavi, who joined RGI as Manager Energy Systems in 2022. Damiano led the RGI's Energy&Space workstream, being responsible for coordinating activities related to comparative analysis of spatial requirements of different decarbonisation scenarios.

We extend our thanks for Damiano's commitment and hard work in implementing his tasks and we wish him all the best in all his future endeavours.



**DAMIANO OTTAVI**  
Manager  
Energy Systems



**ROLAND LLESHI**  
Manager  
Offshore Energy and Nature

RGI would like to express our appreciation for Roland Lleshi, who joined our team as an Intern in 2021 and left as a Project Manager in 2023. Roland contributed to the development of the Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature in the North and Baltic seas and to the establishment of the Mediterranean branch. He led the work on topics such as environmental impacts, mitigation and compensation and biodiversity data for offshore wind and grid. He also provided valuable research support to RGI's onshore activities on conflicts and solutions for grids and wildlife.

We wish Roland continued prosperity in all his future endeavors.

RGI is grateful for the contribution of Iryna Kukuruza, who joined RGI in 2023 as a Junior Manager for the communications team. Iryna was instrumental in elevating our design work, from delivering stunning brochures and website design to spearheading our 2022 annual report. She brought her positivity and creativity to every project and quickly became a key team member whose insightful input was always valued.

Thank you again to Iryna for her outstanding contributions to RGI and we wish her all the best on her next adventures in Canada!



**IRYNA KUKURUZA**  
Junior Manager  
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## ABOUT RGI

The Renewables Grid Initiative is a unique group of transmission system operators (TSOs) and environmental and climate NGOs collaborating on a nature-friendly renewables grid for the energy transition. Our aim is to speed up the transition towards a renewables-based energy system.

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