

The Renewables Grid Initiative

RGI is a unique collaboration of NGOs and TSOs from across Europe. We promote transparent, environmentally sensitive grid development to enable the further steady growth of renewable energy and the energy transition.

Members:

RGI Members originate from a variety of European countries, consisting of TSOs from Belgium (Elia), Croatia (HOPS) France (RTE), Germany (Amprion, 50Hertz, TenneT and TransnetBW), Ireland (EirGrid), Italy (Terna), the Netherlands (TenneT), Spain (Red Eléctrica) and Switzerland (Swissgrid); and NGOs such as BirdLife Europe, Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, Friends of the Earth Ireland (Ireland), Fundación Renovables (Spain), Germanwatch (Germany), Legambiente (Italy), NABU (Germany), Natuur&Milieu (Netherlands), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (UK), Transport & Environment, WWF International and ZERO (Portugal).

RGI was launched in July 2009.

Legal entity:

RGI is a non-profit association registered under German law. All Members have equal voting rights, the Members' Assembly (MA) is the highest decision-making body. Six Members compose the Board, which is the decision-making body in between MA's: three TSOs and three NGOs. The RGI Secretariat, based in Berlin, manages and coordinates all RGI activities.

Activities:

Best practice work/'Good Practice of the Year' award: Launched in 2012, the objective of RGI's best practice work is to promote the sharing of and learning from innovative and laudable practices in the realm of grid development across different stakeholder groups. After a series of interviews and workshops, the "European Grid Report", reflecting challenges, good examples and lessons learned in grid development, was published in December 2012. Given the constantly refined processes in grid projects, the work on best practices is updated regularly.

In 2014, RGI created the 'Good Practice of the Year' award. The award is annually given out by RGI upon recommendation of a jury of experts and is honouring outstanding practices in grid development. The winning practice should be innovative and an improvement to the existing practices in its category (categories are "Technology & Design", "Communication & Participation" and "Environmental Protection"). The intention of the award is not only to further disseminate the many good practices out there, but also to inspire future action and innovative thinking.

Events: RGI's events bring together stakeholders from different sectors, including civil society, industry, academia and politics, to promote the dialogue and exchange of knowledge between these groups. Once a year, RGI organises its annual European Grid Conference and two public workshops on different current topics, such as public participation, underground cables, Projects of Common Interest, offshore grids or environmental protection.

Energy Regions in Transition: "Energy Regions in Transition" is a regular exchange of energy-related best practices and experiences between different regions of the world. In 2015, RGI brought a delegation of European energy leaders to California. The delegates visited San Francisco, the Silicon Valley and Sacramento for a whole week full of high-level discussions, educational tours and site visits. In 2016, a similar tour was organised with stops in New York City,



San Francisco and Sacramento and in early 2018 a group of senior executives visited Beijing, China.

BESTGRID: With nine partners, comprised of European NGOs and TSOs and a research institute, the EU-funded BESTGRID project was coordinated by RGI and worked towards developing the current European electricity grid for the integration of a growing share of electricity from renewable sources. Launched in April 2013, BESTGRID was made up of five pilot projects located in Belgium, Germany and the UK. During the project, TSOs and NGOs worked together to improve local public acceptance for grid development processes. Objectives of the project were to enhance transparency and public participation, to speed up permitting procedures by proactively addressing or even surpassing environmental protection standards, and to encourage the implementation of constructive public engagement in permitting procedures for European “projects of common interest.” BESTGRID has come to a close in October 2015. For more information, visit <http://www.bestgrid.eu>.

Implementing RGI Declarations: ‘Implementing RGI Declarations - IRD’ is a framework under which TSOs and NGOs collaborate at national level to support the continuous and ecologically sound development of the grid infrastructure needed for a successful energy transition. RGI’s statutes and the European Grid Declaration point towards an enhanced collaboration of TSOs and NGOs ‘on the ground’. Under the umbrella of IRD, these common ambitions are implemented either in concrete grid development projects or on existing infrastructure by means of a collaboration coordinated by RGI. NGOs actively bring in their specific knowledge with regards to nature protection and stakeholder engagement whereby TSOs receive helpful expertise in designing grid development projects. RGI provides comprehensive project management and is additionally in charge of the projects’ documentation and the dissemination of results.

Funding

RGI is currently financed by five different means: fees from Member organisations; operational grant of the European Commission's LIFE funding scheme and funding from the Mercator Foundation; and money for projects and events.

Selected publications

All publications are available on the RGI website
www.renewables-grid.eu/publications

European Grid Declaration: Under the guidance of RGI, a coalition of Europe’s 29 largest environmental NGOs and grid operators pledged to work in partnership to ensure that the goals of grid modernisation and environmental protection can be achieved side by side. In November 2011 the ‘European Grid Declaration on Electricity Network Development and Nature Conservation’ was publicly signed. One year later, the second part, the European Grid Declaration on Transparency and Public Participation’ was published.

The Power of Collaboration - A short introduction to the work of RGI: A flyer introducing RGI’s guiding principles and its main pillars of work

Annual Report: The annual report summarises RGI’s most important activities and main achievements of the previous year.

European Grid Perspectives: Results of interviews with 22 system operator senior executives on most pressing topics facing the power sector

Animation: Explains why a SuperSmart grid is needed to fully integrate electricity produced from renewable energy sources while maintaining system security.

Contact

Stephanie Bätjer, stephanie@renewables-grid.eu

