

RGI Statement on the “Consultation on the list of proposed Projects of Common Interest in energy infrastructure”

June 2017

The Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) is a unique alliance of electricity transmission system operators (TSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from across Europe. RGI promotes the transparent and environmentally sound grid and system developments that are required to accommodate the further steady growth of electricity from renewable energy sources. RGI Members jointly address the challenges of the energy transition with NGOs promoting energy and climate political objectives and TSOs leading in implementing the political objectives set by European and national authorities.

RGI welcomes the publication of the new PCI list currently under consultation.

RGI is not in a position to respond formally to the consultation on every single listed project, but would like to express some general statements.

RGI welcomes the efforts by the Commission to select PCIs that are in line with the energy and climate objectives Europe has committed to. It is very important that projects that contribute to, and/or are coherent with delivering the objectives agreed upon in the Paris Agreement are included in the final PCI list. This is essential to improve the reputation of the PCI-label across the European Union and its perception amongst European citizens where the projects are to be realised.

In this context it is essential that efforts to make the selection process transparent and increasingly accessible to stakeholders are continued and reinforced.

European citizens, and in particular interested stakeholders, need to understand and be able to actively engage in the process in order to trust it. This will provide the basis for improving rates of acceptance on the ground during the deployment phase.

RGI recommends that the CBA methodology developed by ENTSO-E and used to select the PCIs is further improved by setting clear criteria, defining if they deliver sufficient benefits for Europe with regards to supporting the energy transition. Moreover, the PCI selection process needs to become compatible with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, we therefore invite the Commission to ensure that such compatibility is achieved.

It is also clear that the development of a robust transmission backbone for Europe is a policy decision that supports the further integration of renewables. However, there will not necessarily always be a convincing CBA result for each individual project “component” of this backbone. The benefits of the total package need thus to be considered, as well as those of the individual projects.

RGI wishes to further highlight that it would be beneficial for increasing acceptance, and eventual success of individual projects, that the cumulative or ‘in combination’ impacts of projects on the draft PCI are assessed, and that this is considered when finalising the list. This will help ensure that the final list contains the most sustainable combination of projects, thus increasing the likelihood of swiftly delivering a successful citizen-supported energy transition in Europe.

Additionally, the work that the Commission is leading on the Electricity Interconnection Target should be coherent and aligned with the PCI selection process and criteria.

The contribution to the interconnection targets agreed at EU level should be considered as relevant criteria for projects to be included in the PCI list. This is because a sufficient level of interconnection is a prerequisite to accommodate large volumes of electricity from renewable energy sources

Finally, RGI recommends that projects between European Members and neighbouring countries, including the Energy Community and North African countries, are also considered and selected in line with European energy and climate policies as well as a robust and transparent CBA methodology, comprised of an open and transparent range of criteria.

About RGI

The Renewables Grid Initiative 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. RGI members originate from a variety of European countries, consisting of TSOs from Belgium (Elia), Croatia (HOPS), France (RTE), Germany (50Hertz, Amprion and TenneT), Ireland (EirGrid), Italy (Terna), the Netherlands (TenneT), Switzerland (Swissgrid) and Norway (Statnett), Spain (Red Eléctrica de España); and NGOs such as WWF International, BirdLife Europe, Germanwatch, Fundación Renovables, Legambiente, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe and Natuur&Milieu. RGI was launched in July 2009.