



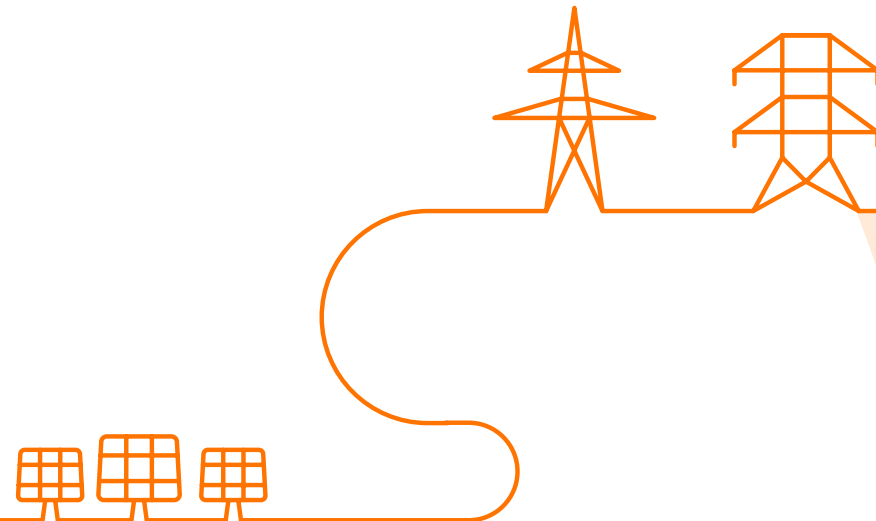
Integrated Vegetation Management Workshop

Poix-Saint-Hubert, 14th June 2023

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Agenda : IVM, socio-economic aspects

1. Elia Group “ActNow” sustainability program
2. The Life Elia-RTE project 2011 - 2017
3. Propagation
4. Communication



Elia (as all TSOs) in a rapidly evolving energy landscape

Society / politics



**Nuclear decrease
Renewable increase**



**Decentralised
production**



**New
infrastructures**



**Acceptation of
projects**

Market / technologies

**New technologies
(HVDC, ...)**



**New actors,
« prosumers »**



**Fragmentation of
energy landscape**



**evolution enter-
prise models**



**A Belgian and
European
energy policy**

Elia must / shall adapt and enlarge its network



Elia Group ActNow sustainability program

Broad than just the environment

- ✓ Public commitment, announced to our external stakeholders in 2021
- ✓ Progress followed in annual report and in discussions with investors
- ✓ Inclusion, governance, ethics and compliance also define vegetation management





Social

Shifting from a **constraint**
to an **opportunity**

Economy

Biodiversity



Life Elia-RTE 2011 – 2017, more than nature or biodiversity

- Provide information to target groups (other TSOs)
- Raise the general public's awareness (municipalities, schools, ...)
- Elia itself had to change its way of looking at vegetation, maintenance adapted its way of working :
 - Training: to recognise vegetation recognition, to decide when action is necessary or not
 - Methods: new management techniques (selective cutting, long term maintenance)
 - Elsewhere: beyond OHL - elimination of herbicide use in substations



These factors account for a more general knowledge of the principles of Elia and support the public acceptance

They contribute to the conviction that **Elia can ensure a sustainable energy transition, with care for the environment, biodiversity and local residents** nearby its installations

Propagating the principles throughout Europe

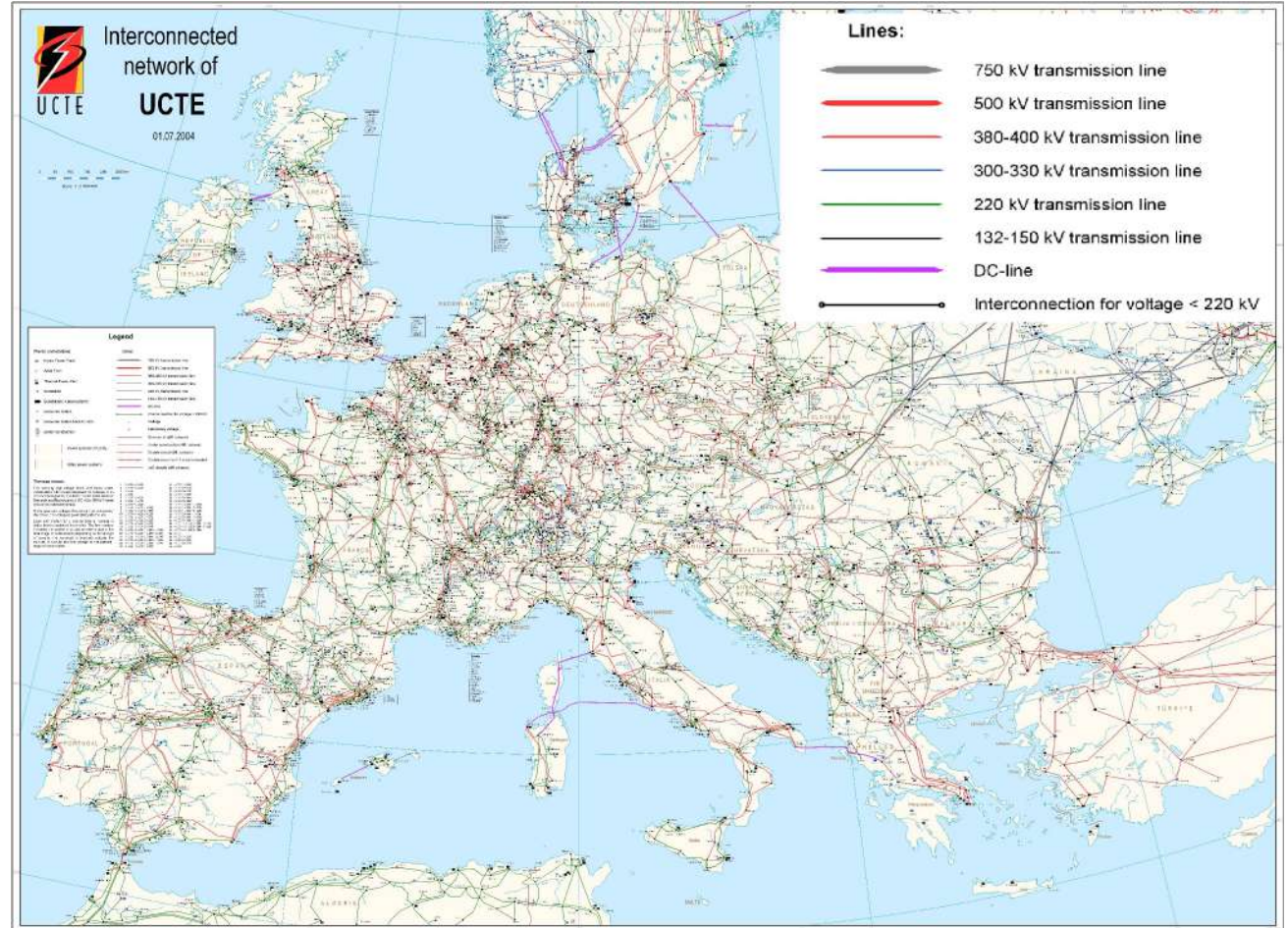
**300.000 km
of OHL**

An obligation in the Life Elia-RTE project :

- Contacting other TSOs (17 countries)
- Trying to understand each other's particularities (organisational, legal, ...)
- Even other linear infrastructures (gas, railways, highways, ...)

And continued after it :

- Presentations throughout the world (CIGRE, Chile, ...)
- This workshop



Propagating the principles regionally



Wallonia :

- DNF : nature and forest department, to provide authorisations and suggestions
- DEMNA : follow-up of Life Elia, providing biological and habitat expertise

Flanders : imposed “LIFE Elia” on an OHL project (doubling a line) : to create a heather landscape (117 ha, 18 km)

- ANB : nature department, ecological corridors to be integrated in official Nature Management Plans (“natuurbeheersplan”)
- INBO : follow-up, and useful expertise

Both regions : permitting procedures expect ecological corridor management to be part of any OHL project, as a valuable alternative for undergrounding

Partners in these efforts are also regional NGOs (Natuurpunt, Natagora)

Elia doesn't own the land: acts as intermediary between owners - local partners and administration to create a, sometimes “common”, ecological corridor



Propagating the principles locally

General public

- Improved relations with local administration and municipalities
- Management of corridors : more local economy (shepherd, mower, ...)
- The corridor becomes less a no man's land
 - Even a place worth visiting, where there is something to see
- More acceptance for the line in the long-term
- Nature conservation can rely on local partners



Safety distances

- Better awareness how vegetation can become a safety risk

Internal courses (indoor and outdoor) at Elia

- Improving vegetation competency
- Better relations with residents (understanding one's activities)

Landowners, land users

- The corridor becomes a plus for the adjacent forest
- Mowing meadows serves local cattle
- Wildlife profits from an ecological corridor



Recognition by society of this win-win approach

The project LIFE Elia-RTE won several prizes

- 2015 RGI Good practice of the year (EU)
- 2016 The Shift sustainable partnership award (B)
- 2016 Natura 2000 award (EU)



Socialising – all levels combined at the same time



The Walloon minister, the head of the EU DG Environment, the mayor, the project leader of Life Elia-RTE, directors of Elia and RTE, and ...



at the same time, a school visiting a pond and the observation point in a corridor crossing the forest, with the press



Les pays européens prennent exemple

Communication



LIFE Elia-RTE 2011 – 2017 : brochures, didactic panels, trainings, folders, presentations



And the website : www.life-elia.eu ; (ecological corridors 2018 – now) continues to use this website

Press coverage (2011 – now):

- 21 press articles,
- 18 documents going external



The last 6 years concentrating on efforts during projects, implicating many stakeholders that contributed (not counted in press coverage)



Thank you.

