

PRESS RELEASE | Brussels, 10 June 2022

Sentrisense wins the Open Innovation Challenge with sensors that monitor the health of overhead lines using AI

BRUXELLES - BERLIN | Sentrisense, a start-up from Poland, has won Elia Group's sixth Open Innovation Challenge (OIC). This year's Challenge focused on sustainability, meaning it formed part of the many initiatives organised by the Group which have its ActNow programme in mind. The OIC is organised on an annual basis by the Group's Belgian and German subsidiaries (Elia and 50Hertz respectively). Through collaborations with start-ups, the Group aims to foster a culture of innovation across its activities and workplaces. During the competition final, which was held in Brussels today, the judges chose Sentrisense as the winning team, explaining that its proposal holds many immediate advantages for transmission system operators and can be easily scaled up: the continuous monitoring of overhead lines via sensors and constant analysis of the associated data allow the lifespans of these lines to be extended.

This year's OIC focused on the topic of sustainability. In February earlier this year, start-ups from across the world were invited to submit their proposals under one of four categories: efficiency; circularity; resilience; and 'outside the box'. Possible avenues for exploration included encouraging the use of sustainable technologies and products, protecting biodiversity around our infrastructure, and protecting communities from climate change disasters.

From 45 applicants to three finalists and one winner

45 start-ups from Kenya to the USA applied to take part in this year's challenge. Three of these made it through each of the competition's rounds and were invited to the final, which was held in Brussels earlier today. Sentrisense came out on top: the judges selected their proposal as the clear winner. Their technology makes the maintenance of high-voltage lines cheaper, more efficient and more sustainable. Sentrisense was awarded a cheque for €20,000 and will spend the next year refining its idea with support from Elia Group.

Whilst Sentrisense was selected as the winner of this year's competition, Elia Group will further explore the projects developed by other competing teams and the two runners-up (see below); additional partnerships and collaborations with them could well emerge in future, therefore.

For further information, please contact:

Corporate Communication

Jean Fassiaux (FR) | M +32 474 46 87 82 | jean.fassiaux@elia.be

Marie-Laure Vanwanseele (NL) | M +32 499 86 51 58 | marielaure.vanwanseele@elia.be

Marleen Vanhecke (EN) | M +32 486 49 01 09 | marleen.vanhecke@elia.be

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LiveEO (Germany)

LiveEO develops AI-driven satellite monitoring solutions which aim to make the operation of linear infrastructure (such as electricity grids and railway lines) safer and more reliable, whilst reducing costs and CO₂ emissions. Using their technology, clients are able to generate an instant overview of their infrastructure, leading staff both on the ground and in the office to gain valuable insights into changes and possible threats related to the assets they are responsible for. For the OIC this year, LiveEO developed a use case which focused on ecological Right-of-Way (ROW) management. Vegetation which is located under and alongside electricity lines can cause many outages and ROW management is often costly or resource-intensive, meaning that vegetation inspections do not occur very frequently. LiveEO's proposal centred on satellite-powered ROW management, allowing infrastructure owners to undertake continuous extensive monitoring of their assets and so take regular action to counter potential hazards in a more cost-efficient way whilst limiting negative impacts on the environment.

Octave (Belgium)

Octave provides smart and circular energy storage solutions from used electric vehicle (EV) batteries. The company has developed breakthrough, patent-pending technology which guarantees the safety, performance and lifetime of the battery energy storage system. As part of their use case for the OIC, Octave developed a proof of concept which involved second-life batteries being installed across the Group's sites that are equipped with EV chargers and photovoltaic installations. Octave's solution therefore decreases the carbon footprint of EV batteries and contributes to the circular economy by transforming waste into a viable product.

Sentrisense (Poland)

Sentrisense provides predictive maintenance technology for power lines, which are subject to threats related to ageing, corrosion, ice deposits and bush fires. The technology is able to detect potential issues along lines before they occur by collecting data related to vibrations, inclinations and changes in position and analysing it using artificial intelligence software. Forecasting possible issues in such a way means that expensive maintenance work after issues have actually occurred can be avoided. As part of their proposal for the Challenge, Sentrisense focused on benchmarking power line health by measuring their mechanical movement, so providing asset managers with early fault detection and helping to maximise the lifetime of each asset.

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About Elia Group

One of Europe's top five TSOs

Elia Group is a key player in electricity transmission. We ensure that production and consumption are balanced around the clock, supplying 30 million end users with electricity. Through our subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and the north and east of Germany (50Hertz), we operate 19,192 km of high-voltage connections, meaning that we are one of Europe's top 5 transmission system operators. With a reliability level of 99.99%, we provide society with a robust power grid, which is important for socioeconomic prosperity. We also aspire to be a catalyst for a successful energy transition, helping to establish a reliable, sustainable and affordable energy system.

We are making the energy transition happen

By expanding international high-voltage connections and incorporating ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy into our grid, we are promoting both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of society. We also continuously optimise our operational systems and develop new market products so that new technologies and market parties can access our grid, thus further facilitating the energy transition.

In the interest of society

As a key player in the energy system, Elia Group is committed to working in the interest of society. We are responding to the rapid increase in renewable energy by constantly adapting our transmission grid. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget, with a maximum focus on safety. In carrying out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication channels between all relevant parties very early on in the development process. We also offer our expertise to different players across the sector in order to build the energy system of the future.

International focus

In addition to our activities as a transmission system operator, we provide various consulting services to international customers through our third subsidiary, Elia Grid International (EGI). Elia (in Belgium) is also part of the Nemo Link consortium, which operates the first subsea electrical interconnector between Belgium and the UK.

The legal entity Elia Group is a listed company whose core shareholder is the municipal holding company Publi-T.

More information: [eliagroup.eu](https://www.eliagroup.eu)

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