



Elia Group's 2024 Open Innovation Challenge is focused on accelerating CAPEX delivery as it constructs the future grid

- This year's challenge is open to start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and more mature innovation partners
- Elia Group is seeking breakthrough innovations in the field of capital expenditure (CAPEX) delivery, with a focus on solutions related to the areas of project planning and design; project management; procurement and supply chains; and on- and offsite execution
- The winning team will be announced on 6 November 2024, will receive up to €50,000 to test their concept with Elia Group, and will have the visibility of their company raised

BRUSSELS - BERLIN | The annual Open Innovation Challenge (OIC) allows Elia Group to maintain close ties with a broad ecosystem of start-ups and SMEs from across the world. Its aim is to stimulate and accelerate innovation as society moves towards net zero. This year, the OIC is committed to breakthrough innovations in the field of CAPEX delivery, and is focused in particular on solutions related to project planning and design; project management; procurement and supply chains; and onsite and offsite execution. This underscores the Group's commitment to improving the efficiency, reliability and sustainability of its transmission infrastructure projects as it drives the decarbonisation of society.

Elia Group is preparing its on- and offshore infrastructure so that large volumes of renewable energy sources can be integrated into the system and so that it can support the electrification of society. This requires large amounts of CAPEX, or capital that we spend on building, maintaining and improving our assets. Our grid construction projects are large, complex, and take many years to complete.

Our OIC this year is therefore focused on finding innovative ways to accelerate the delivery of our projects. It is centred on four priority areas that are related to grid construction. Note that teams may still apply to take part in the OIC if their idea does not fit into one of these areas but is still aimed at accelerating the delivery of our projects.

The four priority areas are as follows:

1) *Planning and design*

Consistent and transparent planning and monitoring processes are crucial for our large-scale construction projects to succeed, since they span hundreds of kilometres and involve numerous partners. Documents play a vital role in their success. We are therefore interested in solutions related to public acceptance; the processing of technical requirements; resource demand; and technical project forecasting.

2) *Project management*



Elia Group's project and IT teams already work with industry-standard tools used for the management of large, complex projects. We are therefore interested in tools which would enhance collaboration and coordination; support the standardisation of projects; single source of truth platforms; and document management systems.

3) Procurement and supply chains

Since transmission capacity is being expanded across the globe, the tightly stretched manufacturing capacity of our suppliers is making it challenging to deliver our projects on time and within budget. We're keen to find new suppliers to work with, optimise factory programmes, and source new materials. We are therefore interested in solutions related to the procurement of market intelligence; the automation of purchase orders; the management of suppliers; and smart contract support.

4) Onsite and offsite execution

Onsite and offsite execution includes standardising the methods we adopt, the components we use, and the pre-design and assembly techniques we follow. Each of these are essential for the efficient execution of our projects. We are therefore interested in solutions related to the following areas: logistics; geographic information systems; and earthworks.

This year's challenge is being officially launched today, on 15 April, with the winning team being announced on 6 November in Berlin.

Teams interested in taking part in this year's challenge have two months during which to refine and submit their projects for consideration (the deadline for submissions is 31 May 2024). A number of the submissions received will then be shortlisted by the OIC judges. These teams will receive support from Elia Group experts to help them further refine their proposals. Up to five teams will then be invited to take part in the challenge final to pitch their improved solutions to the OIC judges. The winning team will be given the opportunity to undertake a proof of concept worth up to €50,000 with support from Elia Group staff (either based at Elia in Belgium or 50Hertz in Germany).

Interested in applying? The deadline for submissions is 31 May. To find out more about how to apply, and submit your idea for the OIC 2024, visit the Elia Group Innovation website: <https://innovation.eliagroup.eu/oic2024/>

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 19,460.5 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 socio-economic 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 its activities as a transmission system operator, Elia Group provides consulting services to international customers through its subsidiary Elia Grid International. In recent years, the Group has launched new non-regulated activities such as re.alto - the first European marketplace for the exchange of energy data via standardised energy APIs - and WindGrid, a subsidiary which will continue to expand the Group's overseas activities, contributing to the development of offshore electricity grids in Europe and beyond.

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

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