

Subject: FEBEG comments on the public consultation on the guidelines for defining and implementing a substantial modernization
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Please find hereafter the comments of FEBEG on the public consultation on Elia's proposal of guidelines for defining and implementing a substantial modernization¹.
The comments and suggestions of FEBEG are not confidential.

Preliminary remarks

FEBEG welcomes this consultation and would like to thank Elia explicitly for the proposed definition of spare parts in the context of substantial modernization. This definition allows a balanced and pragmatic approach ensuring compliancy with the legal obligations while not putting undue obligations and restrictions on the producers in case of a spare part replacement. It avoids that producers have to go through the relatively long procedure of modernization and to first invest in compliance with the requirements for new installations in the Federal Grid Code as the resulting unavailability of the installation would have a huge financial impact on the generators. Therefore, the proposed pragmatic and workable approach for 'spare parts' is much welcomed and appreciated.
However, a lot of questions regarding the procedure to be followed when modernizing an asset remains open.

General questions and remarks

Clarification on the process

At this stage we would welcome details on when and how can we expect Elia to start the process to be followed in case of a substantial modernisation. There is a fear that the proposed methodology could turn out to be a big administrative burden if, as could be understood from the proposed methodology, Elia would be involved every time an intervention takes place on a certain asset. Obviously, it cannot be the case that all interventions need to be evaluated by Elia (and CREG and SPF-DG Energy) resulting in a process that is complicated, costly and time consuming.

Additionally, substantial modernisations are in practice possible without a detailed study ("étude de détail"), which raises a series of questions: what are the criteria used to evaluate if there is indeed a detailed study required and what happens in absence of such detailed study? Who is responsible to start the detailed study, and under what circumstances? Who will evaluate the need to start the detailed study procedure? What are the consequences when the required detailed study would not been submitted? Who will monitor and notify the grid user? What are the penalties? Will there be a transition period to regularize the situation if the grid user has acted in good faith?

Related to the above remark, do we understand correctly that there will be a process of "reporting obligation" towards Elia in case of replacement of a part? From the current proposal it is not clear what such an obligation would entail, nor how this reporting will be organised.

Overall, if there is no impact on the parameters as measured on the connection point, there should, by definition, be no need to go through the procedure of substantial modernisation.

¹ https://www.elia.be/en/public-consultation/20200513_public-consultation-on-elia-proposal-of-guidelines-for-defining

We would welcome a confirmation of this understanding and its practical implications. For example, since the text mentions that “De conformiteit van de bestaande installatie met de nieuwe voorschriften wordt gemeten op het aansluitpunt”, following this basic principle, if the general control system of the plant (DCS system) is upgraded and it doesn’t impact the “aansluitpunt” then this should not be considered as a substantial modernisation.

Considering how this can be addressed in practice, one can look at the example of an existing plant. If the current/historical “aansluitpunt” is not conform to the new FTRv2019, will Elia, at the demand of the operator/owner, provide a list of characteristics/parameters which are or will be measured/evaluated on this “aansluitpunt”? This would allow for example, that when the plant owner/operator foresees a modernisation project they can evaluate themselves if this specific project can be adapted/changed/optimised in order to align with the FTR v2019. Projects which do not impact the listed characteristics/parameters at “aansluitpunt” are thus not to be communicated with Elia (in line with the principle “*De conformiteit van de bestaande installatie met de nieuwe voorschriften wordt gemeten op het aansluitpunt*”)

Remarks related to replacements

If a part is replaced with a “identical or similar” spare part, this does not require a detailed study (“etude de detail”) and cannot be considered as a modernisation.

Overall, throughout the document, it should be clarified that the procedure only applies in case of an improvement / renewal (vernieuwing) and not in case of a simple replacement (vervanging). On top of that, the reason of the replacement of a part with an ‘identical or similar part’ is not relevant (inspection, maintenance, outage, ...). Such replacement should thus not be linked with or limited to a ‘forced outage’ as on page 7.

Similarly, throughout the document “identical” should be followed by “or very similar” as described in the definition of spare parts “dat identiek is of zeer vergelijkbare technische kenmerken heeft”. The FTR of 2019 indeed mentions “identiek” but this is confusing as the definition of spare parts also mentions “identiek” and adds “zeer vergelijkbaar”. FEBEG recommends to solve the current confusing situation by simply referring to “reserveonderdeel” in the FTR (without identiek) and use the definition as proposed by Elia.

3° le renouvellement d’un ou plusieurs éléments techniques essentiels d’une installation de l’utilisateur du réseau visée à l’article 4.1 respectivement du code de réseau européen RfG, du code de réseau européen DCC et du code de réseau européen HVDC, ou d’un parc non-synchrone de stockage. Le placement de pièces de rechange à l’identique par l’utilisateur de transport dans ses installations n’est pas considéré comme le renouvellement d’un ou plusieurs éléments techniques essentiels de ces installations.

3° de vernieuwing van één of meerdere essentiële technische elementen van een installatie van de netgebruiker bedoeld in artikel 4.1 van respectievelijk de Europese netwerkcode RfG, DCC en HVDC of een asynchroon opslagpark. Het plaatsen van identieke reserveonderdelen door de vervoergebruiker in zijn installaties wordt niet beschouwd als de vernieuwing van een of meer essentiële technische elementen van die installaties.

Elements to be clarified

1. What can be considered as “functional block”
2. What is an “essential technical element”?
3. Does a definition for “forced stop” or “gedwongen uitval” exist?
4. Does a definition for “emergency” or “noodgeval” exist?
5. What if a rotor is replaced in Y1 and stator in Y3 ... will there be an overview (log) at Elia side to follow up such cases? Will this result in a substantial modernisation in Y3?
6. Point 4.1: How is the 10% rule verified? Who controls this? Does the asset owner need to prove that he is applying this rule?
7. “De eisen van het nieuw geldend Technisch Reglement waaraan moet worden voldaan, hebben alleen betrekking op de prestaties van de installatie die worden beïnvloed door de wijzigingen van de installatie” → Who will verify this ?? Is there a procedure of audit foreseen? Who need to prove this?

8. TABLE on page 10: Do we understand that we only need to inform ELIA if indeed these parameters are impacted, put differently, there is no need to inform ELIA otherwise?
9. Example 8 : Wind turbines + Solar panels : what if a wind developer installs a windfarm of 20MW and after 2 years of wind energy production the owner of the company where the wind turbines are installed , adds a solar panel farm of 5MW : will the windfarm owner be held susceptible to the grid code change if any ?
This will have an effect on the business plan of the windfarm project and cannot be predicted at project initiation.

Large installations type C & D, COGEN and other type B, Renewables / Type A

When an installation, due to a minor modification goes from type B to type C, the whole procedure should be followed, should there not be a margin to prevent a sudden “shock” in case an increase with, for example, 1 MW results in a “substantial modernisation” ??