Press release, 21 February 2019

IO.Energy (Internet of Energy): a cross-sectoral ecosystem aimed at optimising end users' comfort and energy bills

- Energy sector joins forces with academia and businesses to find sustainable solutions that fully leverage the effects and benefits of the energy transition;
- Electricity consumption needs to be better aligned with the growth in variable energy supply from renewables;
- Digitalisation and new technologies can create energy services that give consumers an active role in the energy system while optimising their comfort.

The system operators Elia, Fluvius, ORES, Sibelga and Resa have today launched IO.Energy, a unique and innovative Belgian project that will help to develop new services by exchanging data between all energy market players. IO.Energy (short for Internet of Energy) is being undertaken in collaboration with business, research institutes and public services. The focus is on end users, who will be able to tailor their generation and consumption to their current needs using a digital communication platform. For example, they could optimise their energy bills by avoiding consumption at peak times. This will also make the electricity system more efficient and sustainable.

With renewable energy on the rise, flexibility in generation and consumption is increasingly important since the supply of wind and solar power fluctuates constantly. Moreover, changes linked to the energy transition are making it harder for system operators to maintain a balance between supply and demand and to manage grid congestion.

Through a joint initiative, the system operators aim to turn these challenges into opportunities. This can only be achieved by working with a broad coalition of businesses and organisations that will help to meet consumers' expectations by developing and offering new services. In an era of digital transformation and technological innovation, end consumers will be given greater opportunities to exploit price incentives and control their own level of comfort.

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Multiple sectors all committed to greater sustainability

The IO.Energy project brings together a range of relevant partners, who will be given support and access to a shared knowledge platform. Around 20 parties have already signed a declaration of intent.

They include start-ups and scale-ups such as Thermovolt and N-SIDE, as well as big names like Engie Electrabel, Proximus, BNP Paribas Fortis, Fluxys, Besix and REstore. Between them, these players hold all the pieces of the jigsaw needed to create the electricity system of the future and offer new products and services.

More innovation, new opportunities

If IO.Energy is successful, new opportunities could eventually emerge for a broad range of stakeholders.

First and foremost, **consumers** will have access to new services as a result of data exchange. For example, they will be able to choose whether to store the energy they have generated in batteries or, given the right price incentive, sell it to a third party. A combination of digitalisation, automation and innovation will allow users to charge their electric car, turn on their washing machine or switch on their underfloor heating at the most opportune time (in terms of price, grid requirements, etc.).

The **free market** will be able to innovate and develop new energy products and services designed to enhance consumer comfort.

Meanwhile, **system operators** will have new possibilities enabling them to better operate the Belgian grid at its various voltage levels, making our energy system more efficient.

Next steps

The first IO.Energy work session took place immediately after the official project launch, which was attended by the Federal Minister for the Digital Agenda Philippe De Backer. Specific use cases will be developed and tested over the coming months. These could eventually result in new products and services, and other companies could join the project as it progresses.

System operators look forward to collaboration

The system operators are delighted with the high level of interest already shown and see considerable potential for better aligning the energy market with the energy transition.

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Chris Peeters, CEO of the Elia Group:

"As system operators, we have a responsibility towards society to anticipate tomorrow's changes today. In a renewable world with variable energy generation, electricity demand will need to be better aligned with supply. Thanks to digitalisation and the arrival of technologies such as photovoltaic panels, heat pumps and electric cars, end users can actively participate in the energy system and so optimise their consumption and energy costs. The ecosystem we are creating in Belgium is unique in Europe."

Walter Van den Bossche, Managing Director of Fluvius:

"We know that joining forces will be key to shaping the energy landscape of tomorrow. Consumers are rightly asking for new opportunities to manage their energy generation and consumption. That has the potential to benefit society at large, as reflected in the broad alliance of stakeholders involved in the IO.Energy project. This will be a very exciting and rewarding process for all of us."

Fernand Grifnée, CEO of ORES:

"We are entering a new world. The energy transition, decentralised generation and flexibility represent an exciting challenge for system operators. We want to take up that challenge in a structured way, with responsible ambitions, not committing excessive resources but testing out new services that will deliver real benefits to users. That's the thinking behind this common approach, which involves working with other stakeholders in the energy transition."

Marie-Pierre Fauconnier, *CEO of Sibelga:*

"IO.Energy is an innovative project that will help us to think about how we meet future needs in an urban network such as Brussels. It will allow businesses, then residential customers, to be stakeholders in the Smart City that Brussels aspires to become."

Luc Warichet, *Deputy Director General of RESA:*

"With this pilot project, the term "CONSOM-ACTOR" become reality as the energy consumers will be concretely involved. This ecosystem is open to the innovation and creativity of the various stakeholders in the energy sector of which RESA is a part. We are at the heart of the energy transition, especially via the data of customers connected to our network, which is why it is important to participate in this innovative initiative. "

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Interested?

The IO.Energy ecosystem is managed by Co.Station Belgium, which is keen for its community and partners to join this ground-breaking initiative. Interested parties can contact Beatrice de Mahieu on +32 (0)496 59 23 05, beatrice@co-station.com or via info@ioenergy.eu. For more information, visit ecosystem.ioenergy.eu.