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## Ensiplan wins Elia's first Startup/Open Innovation Challenge with a 3D visualisation system

- **German-Italian startup awarded €20,000 to develop proposal**

**The winner of Elia's first Startup/Open Innovation Challenge is the German-Italian startup Ensiplan. Elia's aim in staging this international competition for fledgling companies is to develop innovative solutions that improve public acceptance of its electricity infrastructure. Ensiplan won over the jury with its 3D visualisation system.**

Ensiplan was named the winner out of a shortlist of five finalists. The proposed 3D visualisation system can be used during both the planning and authorisation phases. The visual presentation of high-voltage infrastructure in a virtual, but realistic setting gives engineers and local authorities a clearer impression of the impact of proposed projects.

Furthermore, the virtual images provide visual support for communications with local residents. Ensiplan already has project experience in Switzerland and Austria and will now also apply its 3D visualisation system to Belgium's high-voltage grid.

### **30 applications from 13 countries**

Ensiplan was selected from among 30 candidates to receive the €20,000 prize to realise its proposal in a joint project with Elia. The French startups Geokaps and Bulb in Town came second and third respectively, submitting projects on a platform for interactive communication and crowdfunding. They are now being further supported by Onepoint, an international leader in digital transformation that has strong ties with startups and was Elia's partner in the competition.

### **A new approach to increase public acceptance**

The Startup/Open Innovation Challenge fits in with Elia's new approach to public acceptance, focusing on a bottom-up approach and innovation in collaboration with external parties.

Despite their positive impact on economic development and general well-being, large-scale infrastructure projects often encounter resistance and sometimes struggle to gain the acceptance of local residents and local authorities. The issues raised – such as the location of a specific project, the impact on the landscape, disturbance during the construction phase – can have a negative impact on the further development and timing of those infrastructure projects.

Constantly seeking to improve this situation, Elia is now not banking solely on ideas and expertise of its own. External companies and startups can make valuable contributions too, with Elia buying their processes, inventions or licences.

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### **About Elia**

The Elia Group is organised around two electricity transmission system operators (TSOs): Elia Transmission in Belgium and - together with Industry Funds Management (IFM) - 50Hertz Transmission, one of the four German TSOs, active in the north and east of Germany.

With more than 1,900 employees and a transmission grid comprising some 18,300 km of high-voltage connections serving 30 million end users, the Elia Group is one of Europe's top five TSOs.

It efficiently, reliably and securely transmits electricity from generators to distribution system operators and major industrial consumers, while also importing and exporting electricity from and to neighbouring countries. The Group is a driving force behind the development of the European electricity market and the integration of energy generated from renewable sources.

In addition to its TSO activities in Belgium and Germany, the Elia Group offers businesses a range of consultancy and engineering services through its subsidiary Elia Grid International (EGI).

The Group operates under the legal entity Elia System Operator, a listed company whose core shareholder is the municipal holding company Publi-T.