

Media release

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Consultation on the Transmission Lines Sectoral Plan Airolo – Lavorgo (PSE 106) and the Transmission Lines Sectoral Plan All’Acqua – Vallemaggia – Magadino (PSE 109) and the Study on the Reorganisation of the High-Voltage Grids

The Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE), in partnership with the Canton of Ticino, Swissgrid (SG), Azienda elettrica ticinese (Electric Company of Ticino - AET) and the Swiss Federal Railways (FFS) held two public meetings on 1 June in Ambri and 2 June in Caveragno. Their purpose was to present two procedures: PSE 106 Airolo – Lavorgo and PSE 109 All’Acqua – Vallemaggia – Magadino, both of which are under public consultation from 26 May to 31 July 2015. During these two informative evenings, Swissgrid and its partners also explained the basics of the «Study on the Reorganisation of the High-Voltage Grids», on which the two PSE procedures are based.

Why the Transmission Lines Need to be Upgraded

The plan to upgrade the power line between Airolo and Lavorgo from 220 kV to 380 kV, promoted by SG, is strategically important for the completion of a national and international 380 kV grid. The new line forms part of the important East-West axis between Chamoson (in the Canton of Valais) and Lavorgo, creating an outlet for hydroelectric energy produced in Valais and improving energy security in Ticino. Furthermore, it will increase North-South transmission capacity thanks to the future connection planned via the San Giacomo Pass and the connection to the Mettlen – Lavorgo – Musignano axis.

The power line currently operational between Airolo and Lavorgo has a voltage of 220 kV and only one set of three conductors. It was built in 1933, and therefore in the medium-term requires significant maintenance work. In order to comply with the legal regulations concerning the construction of high-voltage power cables and their impact on inhabitants and the land crossed, the route of the line would have to be altered to allow it to be upgraded to 380 kV.

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A 132 kV FFS line has been incorporated into the new 380 kV stretch. This will make it possible to create superabundance for all of Ticino, in addition to the single FFS double-circuit line currently in place. It will also provide a connection and power supply to the future substations at Pollegio and Vezia, thus ensuring the security of the supply for the Alptransit Gottardo line.

Study on the Reorganisation of the High-Voltage Grids of Leventina and Vallemaggia

During the last public consultation into PSE 106 Airolo – Lavorgo, which was held in February and March 2012, various objections were raised by the municipalities and the Canton of Ticino. In November 2013 the Canton of Ticino, SG, AET and FFS, with the cooperation of the SFOE, decided to consider which options were best suited to the specific nature of the region and to focus on the whole of Upper Ticino, instead of being limited to Leventina, as had previously been the case. They therefore launched a joint «Study on the Reorganisation of the High-Voltage Grids of Ticino». The first stage considered the zone designated as the «Upper Ticino - Western Part» section, which includes Vallemaggia, Locarnese up to Magadino, Val Bedretto and Upper Leventina up to Lavorgo

The «Reorganisation Solution»

The study led to the SFOE and the procedure's supervisory group unanimously choosing the «Transmission Line Reorganisation Solution, or the Leventina +14 Variant» from approximately seventy options. It comprises two PSEs: no.109 All'Acqua – Vallemaggia – Magadino (new).

As well as increasing the currently insufficient transmission (or evacuation) capacity for energy produced at Vallemaggia, the «Reorganisation Solution» is also beneficial to precious landscapes, in particular thanks to the dismantling of the 220 kV Peccia – Lavorgo, Peccia – Handeck and Robiei – Innertkirchen lines. This offers major advantages to the landscape in Alpe Zaria (an area on the Federal Inventory of Mire Landscapes of Particular Beauty and National Importance), Campolungo (on the Federal Inventory of Landscapes and Natural Monuments of National Importance), the Cristallina area, Lower Vallemaggia and Valle Bedretto.

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Thanks to the dismantling of various lines that are now obsolete, moving from a total of 190 km to 130 km of lines, the «Reorganisation Solution» will have a reduced impact on inhabitants, on protected areas of national and regional importance and on the valuable landscape of Upper Ticino, whilst providing increased transmission capacity and better evacuation of the energy produced in Vallemaggia. In addition the solution proposed unburdens various residential and business zones, in particular between Cevio and Avegno, in Cardada and in the Riazzino area.

Both procedures, which are divided for procedural reasons into two separate but intrinsically linked projects, were simultaneously put up for consultation and will be proposed to the Federal Council together.

Further information: media@swissgrid.ch or phone +41 58 580 24 00.

Powering the future – Swissgrid is the National Grid Company. As the owner of the Swiss extra-high-voltage grid, it is responsible for operating the grid safely and without discrimination, and for maintaining, modernising and expanding the Swiss extra-high-voltage grid efficiently and with respect for the environment. Swissgrid employs over 430 highly skilled persons from 22 countries at its sites in Frick, Laufenburg, Uznach, Landquart, Ostermundigen, Prilly and Castione. As a member of the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E), it is also responsible for grid planning, system management and market design in the cross-border exchange of electricity in Europe. Multiple Swiss electricity companies jointly hold the entire share capital of Swissgrid.