

Media release
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10 leading transmission system operators launch joint initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

This greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction effort will tackle their own carbon footprint while also addressing much greater opportunities at system level, driven by electrification and the integration of renewable electricity sources (RES).

The joint initiative is supported by Amprion (DEU), APG (AUT), Elia Group (BE & DEU), Red Eléctrica (ES), RTE (FR), Swissgrid (CH), Tennet (NL & DEU) and Terna (IT).

By mid-2021 these transmission system operators (TSOs) will publish a paper on how to further reduce GHG emissions in the interest of European society.

A group of leading European TSOs plans to explain and further assess the role played by TSOs in decarbonising the energy system. The result of the joint initiative announced today will be a paper to be completed by mid-2021 and disseminated at a dedicated event. The paper will clarify:

- TSOs' plans and direct initiatives for continuing to reduce the carbon footprint of their own activities and controlling the carbon footprint of their value chains;
- how TSOs enable secure electrification and RES integration while contributing to the decarbonisation of the energy system as a whole, and how these contributions can be assessed and monitored under a common framework;
- The most efficient instruments to be implemented and/or supported by TSOs that should be fully activated in the public interest to enable the decarbonisation of the energy system.

TSOs can contribute massively to system-level GHG emission reduction

Electricity is one of the most cost-effective decarbonisation solutions in many sectors of the economy, thanks to its intrinsic efficiency and its direct link with renewable generation.

TSOs can contribute to GHG emission reduction in two ways: by reducing the direct GHG emissions of their own activities and, more significantly, by playing a key role in reducing emissions at energy system level, through RES integration, electrification of demand and cross-sectoral integration. The full potential of RES integration can only be realised if grid expansion is accelerated and RES are part of the energy market design. These are driving key transformations towards achieving Europe's long-term decarbonisation targets.

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Innovation – a critical factor in TSOs' active role

Being a key player in the energy transition poses a new challenge for European TSOs. They must implement innovative solutions to deal with electrification and RES integration, while at the same time reducing the carbon footprint of their own activities and controlling the carbon footprint of their value chain¹. As a result, there is a need for the timely development of an innovative grid infrastructure that incorporates innovative flexible tools in the public interest.

Joining forces for a common approach

Despite their major contribution to GHG emission reduction, TSOs' key role is not often fully recognised or well documented at European level.

Most of the focus and efforts are still within the bounds of TSOs' activities, for which the GHG emission inventory is standardised (GHG protocol). Increasing TSOs' ambitions for GHG targets, sustainability plans and the implementation of enabling instruments requires a joint approach and enhanced cooperation on how to classify and measure system-level GHG emission reduction.

Our collective thinking is the basis of an approach which we want to be as inclusive as possible in order to address very concretely the current challenges for reducing the carbon footprint, with all TSOs and with all the stakeholders and decision makers through an open dialogue.

For more information, visit media@swissgrid.ch or call +41 58 580 31 00.

Powering the future

Swissgrid is the national grid company. As the owner of Switzerland's extra-high-voltage grid, it is responsible for operating the grid safely and without discrimination and for maintaining, modernising and expanding the grid efficiently and with respect for the environment. Swissgrid has more than 500 highly qualified people from 22 countries at its sites in Aarau, Prilly, Castione, Landquart, Laufenburg, Ostermundigen and Uznach. 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 European exchange of electricity. The majority of Swissgrid's share capital is jointly held by various Swiss electricity companies.

¹ In accordance with Scope 1, 2 and 3 of the GHG emission protocol.