Life Elia – RTE and further on Creating biodiversity under overhead lines

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TSOs at the Heart of the Electricity System

**Producers**
Electricity is produced from conventional and renewable energies.

**Transmission System Operators (TSOs)**
Ensure that electricity arrives from the producer to the consumer via the distribution system operators.

**Consumers**
Use the electricity fed by the producer into the power transmission grids.
High-voltage lines in forests and N2000 areas ... security of supply and safety!

Combine this with biodiversity using a multi-partner approach.
Life Elia - RTE – the project (www.life-elia.eu)

**LIFE + Biodiversity**
* in and out of Natura 2000
* innovative
* European dimension

**Budget**: 2,5 M€, went to 3,2 M€
* EU (36 %), 1,1 M€
* Région wallonne (B, 25 %), 0,8 M€
* Elia (B, 24 %), 0,4 0,9 M€
* RTE (F, 15 %), 0,2 0,4 M€

**Period**: 9/2011 – 12/2017
**Team**: 6, went to 7 (5,2 FTE)

28 sites in Belgium
7 sites in France
Life Elia-RTE – 7 types of actions

1. Forest edges
   – From U to V section
   – planting or “restoring” (cheaper)

2. Orchards
   – Local wild species (apple, pear)

3. Natural habitats EU Directive
   – Peat (code 71XX) – retain water
   – Moor or heath (code 40XX) – remove soil
   – Poor meadow (62XX and 65XX) – mow

4. Meadows (without fence)
5. Grasslands (with fence)
   – Farming: sheep, cows, horses

6. Reducing invasive species
   – less then expected

7. Ponds
   – wet areas
   – “quick win”
Life Elia - RTE – 7 phases

(TSO’s often do not own the land !) (last cut-down not included in project)

a. Cartography (vegetation)

b. Agreements with local stakeholders

c. Implementation: tender, realization, control

d. Management plan: objectives, maintenance

e. Management

f. Biological indicators

g. Valorisation in communication
What does Life contribute in terms of Public Acceptance?

Life Elia-RTE helps Elia to reinforce its mission, namely ensuring a sustainable energy transition, with care for the environment, biodiversity and local residents.

Elia connects and works together with regional and federal stakeholders: this project is carried out by and for them.
Let’s zoom out…on 300,000 km of HT lines!

Still a lot to do on a European scale

The project contacted other TSOs (17 countries reacted positively)
Every TSO has its particularities (organisation, legislation, ...)
DG Energy

more energy must come from renewables

DG Environment

Natura 2000 Biodiversity network to be strengthened

LIFE Elia – RTE
Electrical security and biodiversity

New overhead lines
Renew existing lines

Protected areas to cross
Elia’s own “Life2” : what, why

- Realize 425 hectares according to the current Life-Elia principles
- React positively to propositions to participate in other stretches (were put on hold in Life Elia)
- Continue in Wallonia, start in Flanders
- For five years: 1/2018 – 12/2022

Arguments on which the decision was based

- **Positive image**: PA, relations with authorities, local communities, acceptability of overhead lines (and future projects)
- Improved **security of overhead lines** (reduced risk due to lower vegetation)
- Internal training of patrollers, improved **competencies** in relation to vegetation, becoming **proud** to be on the job
- ROI: 3 to 13 years (with WACC of 5 %)


(After-Life: 0,4 M€; mandatory)
New realizations under lines: 0,7 M€
Expertise (cartography, conventoning, mgmt): 1,4 M€
Follow-up of bio-indicators: 0,2 M€
Communication: 0,1 M€
(Stepping stones under towers: 0,2 M€)