



nPlan wins the Open Innovation Challenge with a tool focusing on derisking projects

BERLIN | nPlan, a start-up from the UK, has won Elia Group's seventh Open Innovation Challenge (OIC). This year's Challenge focused on accelerating CAPEX delivery. The OIC is organised by the Group's Belgian and German subsidiaries (Elia and 50Hertz respectively). Through collaborations with start-ups and entrepreneurs, the Group aims to foster a culture of innovation across its activities and workplaces. During the competition final, which was held in Berlin, the judges chose nPlan as the winning team, due to its many immediate advantages for transmission system operators and can be easily scaled up.

This year's OIC focused on the topic of CAPEX delivery. In March, earlier this year, start-ups from across the world were invited to submit their proposals under one of these topics: planning, design, project management and supply chain.

From 800 scoutings, to 95 applicants to five finalists and one winner

95 start-ups from Congo to the USA applied to take part in this year's challenge. Five of these made it through each of the competition's rounds and were invited to the final, which was held in Berlin. nPlan came out on top: the judges selected their proposal as the clear winner. Their technology uses a database of 750,000 projects to look into the future and tackle project risks before they become issues. nPlan was awarded a cheque for €50,000 to roll out their project within Elia Group.

"This year brought an exceptionally strong cohort of entries. We started by scouting 800 companies, we considered 95 applications, and our experts worked with 10 companies over the last 4 months. Only the top 5 made it to the final. The proposed solutions were all different, but what they have in common is that they have built compelling products that address important project delivery challenges in our sector."

Marco Nix, sponsor of the OIC

"It was a difficult decision for the jury to make. Ultimately, the feasibility and the concrete possibilities for implementation were the deciding factors. All the candidates had very interesting and good ideas. I am convinced that we can continue to work with several of them. The dynamic nature of a startup can be refreshing. So in all this competition helps us to create an ecosystem and help us in our ambitions."

Catherine Vandendorre, CEO ad interim Elia Group



Whilst nPlan was selected as the winner of this year's competition, Elia Group will further explore the projects of other finalists as well; additional partnerships and collaborations with them could well emerge in future. The other finalist were:

- Avaly from Germany, with a solution that helps projects gain local support through their 360° acceptance navigator.
- Continuum Industries' (UK) Optioneer accelerates and derisks line and cable routing planning, shortening project design significantly.
- Neanex (Belgium) presented Fundamend, which creates a digital twin of the asset and project to connect, enhance, and structure all project's different data.
- EHAB (UK) uses accurate forecasting to help companies to avoid the weather-related delays which affect 45% of projects.

About Elia Group

One of Europe's top five TSOs

Elia Group is a key player in electricity transmission. We ensure that production and consumption are balanced around the clock, supplying 30 million end users with electricity. Through our subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and the north and east of Germany (50Hertz), we operate 19,460.5 km of high-voltage connections, meaning that we are one of Europe's top 5 transmission system operators. With a reliability level of 99.99%, we provide society with a robust power grid, which is important for socioeconomic prosperity. We also aspire to be a catalyst for a successful energy transition, helping to establish a reliable, sustainable and affordable energy system.

We are making the energy transition happen

By expanding international high-voltage connections and incorporating ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy into our grid, we are promoting both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of society. We also continuously optimise our operational systems and develop new market products so that new technologies and market parties can access our grid, thus further facilitating the energy transition.

In the interest of society

As a key player in the energy system, Elia Group is committed to working in the interest of society. We are responding to the rapid increase in renewable energy by constantly adapting our transmission grid. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget, with a maximum focus on safety. In carrying out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication channels between all relevant parties very early on in the development process. We also offer our expertise to different players across the sector in order to build the energy system of the future.

International focus

In addition to its activities as a transmission system operator, Elia Group provides consulting services to international customers through its subsidiary Elia Grid International. In recent years, the Group has launched new non-regulated activities such as re.alto - the first European marketplace for the exchange of energy data via standardised energy APIs - and WindGrid, a subsidiary which will continue to expand the Group's overseas activities, contributing to the development of offshore electricity grids in Europe and beyond.

The legal entity Elia Group is a listed company whose core shareholder is the municipal holding company Publi-T.

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