

Press release

The GreenSwitch project CEF ceremony as part of the 9th Energy Infrastructure Forum in Copenhagen

Copenhagen, June 12, 2023

Representatives of the GreenSwitch project consortium and the European Executive Agency for Climate, Infrastructure, and the Environment solemnly marked the signing of the grant agreement under the Connecting Europe Facility program in the presence of the European Commission's officials.

The project will receive more than 73 million euros of funds. The ceremony took place at the two-day Energy Infrastructure Forum in Copenhagen.

Energy Infrastructure Forum 2023 was officially opened today by the European Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson and the Danish Minister for Climate, Energy and Utilities Lars Løkke Rasmussen. The two speakers emphasized the importance of fast energy transition, with the commissioner particularly emphasizing the necessity of supporting projects such as GreenSwitch. This was further confirmed in the discussion on how to speed-up the roll out of EU's energy infrastructure where representatives of key organizations, ENTSO-E, ENTSO-G, ACER, and others, presented the starting points and measures of the European Commission to accelerate the green transition.

As part of the forum's introductory part, the ceremony marked the signing of the grant agreement to the GreenSwitch project under the Connecting Europe Facility.

Director of the Strategic Innovation Department at ELES, **Uroš Salobir**, expressed a great satisfaction with the European Commission's recognition of the GreenSwitch project as a project with significant contribution to solving challenges associated with the green transition and listing it as a project of common European interest. On this occasion, he also thanked the European Commission and the representatives of the CINEA agency for assistance and cooperation, the competent ministries of all three countries, and especially the Slovenian Ministry of Environment, Climate and Energy, for their support and all the project partners, who believed in the conceptual design and the many benefits that this joint project brings from the very beginning.

The ceremony was also attended by the representatives of the projects partnership and on this occasion emphasized its importance both at the level of individual companies as well as regions and countries.

"Recognition of the project at European scale represents for ELES, as the coordinator of the consortium, an extremely great motivation for the implementation of the project, as well as the planning of new projects and solutions necessary for the fast and successful green transition. As part of the project, ELES will install power flow control device, a system for evaluating the transmission capacity of high-voltage power lines and transformers, high-voltage connections for heavy-duty charging stations, and a system for extraction of heat from high-voltage transformers," pointed out **Aleksander Mervar**, CEO of ELES.

"For DSO Elektro Celje, the GreenSwitch project is a comprehensive project introducing various smart grid elements and solutions. Those elements will help us increase possibilities for RES integration and the security of power supply in medium voltage infrastructure. With the help of advanced telecommunication technology, we will establish observability in the network and, with different switching equipment, form the basis for system analysis and control with an advanced distribution management system. Advanced control of network elements will enable us to utilise the existing network infrastructure

more efficiently, representing the foundation for the optimal distribution network operation," said **Boris Kupec**, president of the management board.

"Being part of the GreenSwitch project presents a great opportunity for Elektro Gorenjska to enhance and modernise our current network. Planned activities are crucial in achieving our mission to provide sustainable energy and enable green transition. They will further contribute to making our network the most resilient, reliable, and observable in Slovenia, thus ensuring an excellent quality of power supply while integrating a higher number of renewables. An important part of the project is also the exchange of different experiences and cooperation between the partners in the future, as we are all connected to the same grid in the end," emphasized **Ivan Šmon**, president of the management board.

"Elektro Ljubljana believes in a carbon-neutral society and a green and sustainable future, and its participation in the GreenSwitch project will help to achieve this vision. The project will provide €8.5 million in co-funding for key investments in the primary grid, enabling the company to automate substations, digitise the system and integrate new technologies, thus improving the quality of the electricity supply for all users," highlighted **Urban Likozar**, president of the management board.

"HEP Distribution System Operator aims to meet all its EU and business goals by developing an advanced distribution grid. Its importance is growing significantly with the rise of electricity consumption and the increasing share of generation from renewable energy sources. The participation of our company in the GreenSwitch project is another proof that in the highly regulated field of distribution, we are strengthening our loyalty and creating preconditions for effective development practices and new business models through interactive activities towards our customers and participants at the electricity market. Through the GreenSwitch project, we have been directing resources towards energy transition to be ready to fulfil the demands of our customers, bearing in mind the achievement of green energy climate objectives by 2030", said **Ivan Periša**, the director of the Power System Control Sector.

"Like all transmission system operators in Europe, HOPS faces challenges in providing safe grid operation with high penetration of renewables. The installation of a new controllable device, a phase shifting transformer in substation Gračac, is planned in the GreenSwitch project as well as replacements of a conductor in OL Senj-Brinje with high-temperature low sag technology to increase the power transmission capacity for RES integration. The transmission system applications will be upgraded with new functions providing the dispatcher support for operating the network more efficiently and safely," highlighted **Igor Ivanković**, CEO of HOPS.

"This project is the first Connecting-Europe Facility project with Austrian distribution system participation," emphasised **Reinhard Draxler**, CEO of Kelag. "The cooperation with the Slovenian and Croatian partners is very valuable, as grid operators face similar challenges as we do," said Reinhard Draxler. "All grid customers will benefit directly and indirectly from the GreenSwitch project", explained **Michael Marketz**, Managing Director of Kärnten Netz. "It is in our interest that the electricity grids are upgraded to meet the customers' future requirements and expectations. This is the only way to switch from fossil to renewable electrical power generation," concluded Michael Marketz.

About the GreenSwitch project

In 2021, a consortium of companies from Austria (Kärnten Netz), Croatia (HEP-ODS, HOPS) and Slovenia (Elektro Celje, Elektro Gorenjska, Elektro Ljubljana, ELES) began preparing a project that will enable a faster green transition of the energy sector, better integration of renewable energy sources and more efficient use of the existing energy infrastructure. As a result, on November 19, 2021, the project was listed on the 5th PCI list in the field of smart grids. The project was, therefore, eligible to apply for funds through the EU funding instrument Connecting Europe Facility, and the consortium prepared the proposal. In the evaluation process, the European Commission assessed that GreenSwitch would

significantly contribute to solving the challenges associated with the green transition and granted the consortium 50% co-funding of the investment.

Key project activities:

- increasing controllability of the power grid,
- improving the management of power flows in the transmission grid,
- increasing cross-border capacities on the transmission and distribution grid,
- ensuring the best possible utilisation of the existing infrastructure,
- enabling the integration of new renewable sources into the grid,
- increasing the quality and reliability of electricity supply, and
- establishing cooperation with the transport and the heating and cooling sector.

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