

Red Eléctrica begins an informative campaign prior to the public information process

## Processing begins on the draft bill for the electrical interconnection between Spain and France through the Bay of Biscay

- The draft bill considers the proposals presented by different stakeholders in the first phase of public participation.
- The new interconnection will favour the integration of renewable energy, will increase efficiency and competitiveness between electrical power systems and will strengthen the security of both countries' electrical power supply and the European electrical power system in order to achieve decarbonisation goals and the fight against climate change.

Bilbao, 27 April 2021

Red Eléctrica de España (REE) presents the draft bill and the environmental impact study for the electrical power interconnection between Spain and France through the Bay of Biscay, which shall be subjected to a public information campaign over the next few weeks so that any interested person, administration or institution can learn about the proposal and contribute any considerations they wish.

The processing of this new infrastructure is now taking in the main proposals put forward by different institutional and social agents from the territory during the public participation process carried out in 2017 and 2018.

Among the suggestions received, the draft bill and environmental impact study includes underground routing between the Gatika substation and the coast, the dismantling of evacuation lines at Lemoiz and the adoption of specific measures to make the conversion station blend in with the surrounding countryside, thus reducing its visual and noise impact.

In addition, and following a territorial and environmental diagnosis, proposals have been included relating to preventive and corrective measures, as well as an environmental surveillance plan. In the underwater section, the design prioritises minimising the impact on maritime uses, as is the case of the cables that Red Eléctrica recently laid in the Balearic Islands.

On the other hand, the development of this project will be favoured by the economic boost it will give to the region, fostering the participation of local industries and suppliers, who will be able to compete for tenders for the contracting of construction work and the maintenance of the interconnection.

Red Eléctrica is now also undertaking an informative campaign around the municipalities and with different stakeholders in order to explain the draft bill proposal.

Over the next few months a terrestrial, geotechnical and topographic study campaign is also to be started in order to expand on the details of the analyses that have already been performed and to complete environmental and technical work.



## Towards an energy union

The Spain to France link through the Bay of Biscay is the first ever underwater electrical power interconnection with our neighbours. This new infrastructure will increase the interconnection capacity with France from the current 2,800 MW to 5,000 MW, which will favour the integration of renewable energy, will increase the efficiency and competitiveness of the two electrical power systems and will strengthen both countries' supply security, moving forward the consolidation of the European electrical power system, a key element to achieving decarbonisation targets and the fight against climate change required by the energy transition. Spain currently has an interconnection level with the rest of the European electricity system of 5.6% with respect to installed generation power (2.2% on an Iberian Peninsula level), a figure that is a far cry from the target set for each country by the European Union, which is to reach 15% by 2030.

Due to its strategic nature, the new electrical power interconnection was declared a 'Project of Common Interest' (PCI) by the European Commission on 14 October 2013, part of the European Regulatory Framework on energy infrastructures.

Running for 400 kilometres between the Gatika substation (near to Bilbao) and the Cubnezais substation (near to Bordeaux), it will have a conversion substation at each end of the link which will transform the alternating current into direct current and back again to facilitate connection to each country's electricity transmission grid.

With a budget of approximately €1,750 million, the interconnection is composed of four cables, two for each link, in direct current and with a capacity of 2 x 1,000 megawatts. The length of the terrestrial section will be 13 km in Spain and 80 km in France. Between the Spanish and French coast, the link will run mainly underwater and will cover approximately 300 km, except for a small terrestrial and underground section in order to avoid the underwater canyon of Capbreton, in French waters, where marine-bed movements were detected, which implied a modification that affects 5% of the route, in order to ensure the safety of the infrastructure. This re-routing in France is being subjected to a public consultation campaign with the aim of selecting the best solution.

## Inelfe

The underwater electrical power interconnection between Spain and France through the Bay of Biscay is a project being developed by Spain and France's transmission companies and electricity system operators, Red Eléctrica de España and Réseau de Transport d'Électricité, with the support of Inelfe, an organisation constituted on 1 October 2008, in equal parts. Inelfe has already contributed to the construction of the first direct current electrical power interconnection between France and Spain, through the Pyrenees.

Inelfe publishes all updated information on the project for general public viewing at [www.inelfe.eu](http://www.inelfe.eu) and will welcome any suggestions sent by e-mail to [Golfodebizkaia@inelfe.eu](mailto:Golfodebizkaia@inelfe.eu).