

PRESS RELEASE | Brussels, 11 September 2020

Heptasense from Portugal wins Elia Group innovation competition

- Heptasense analyses video footage to detect suspicious behaviour
- Jury was particularly enthusiastic about the relevance and applicability of the technology
- The Open Innovation Challenge is aimed at start-ups from all over the world
- This year, the competition – taking place for the fourth time – focused on digital solutions promoting more secure power-grid and data management
- Heptasense will receive €20,000 and the opportunity to develop its project within Elia Group.

BRUSSELS | Heptasense is the fourth winner of the Open Innovation Challenge, an initiative by the Belgian system operator Elia and its German sister company 50Hertz. The competition helps Elia Group to innovate in highly specific areas of its work as a system operator by engaging in joint projects with start-ups. This year's contest focused on the development of digital solutions promoting more secure grid and data management. From the 82 entrants, the jury chose Portuguese start-up Heptasense as the winner because its technology can quickly provide a solution to security challenges within Elia Group.

Heptasense: smart video analysis

Heptasense has developed a software package that processes and analyses images from multiple cameras and then sends out real-time warnings, thereby enhancing security. The Portuguese start-up is already working with various large companies such as Cisco and Lidl, and will now be teaming up with Elia Group, as the winner of the competition receives €20,000 to roll out their project within the business. This year's Open Innovation Challenge was the fourth to be held and focused specifically on grid and data security.

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Grid and data security: a major challenge

Our electricity system is evolving rapidly to meet the needs of the energy transition, and its day-to-day management is becoming increasingly complex as time goes on. We therefore need new technologies to improve the way we work. However, if we are to keep pace with the dizzying speed of innovation, we must forge strong partnerships in a number of clearly defined areas. For its fourth Open Innovation Challenge, Elia Group was looking for digital innovations to enhance security in the area of grid management (including site access control and theft detection) and data and IT systems (including fault detection, the reliability of information sources, and the protection of personal data).

Five finalists, five innovative solutions

From the 82 entrants, five finalists were shortlisted based on criteria including the feasibility, impact, relevance and innovative nature of their proposals. Heptasense scored particularly highly on impact and relevance. However, the other ideas could also potentially be further developed within Elia Group.

- UK start-up CyberOwl's project aims to improve cybersecurity: its solution involves performing security analyses to detect unacceptable and anomalous behaviour in decentralised assets and their communications.
- The product developed by France's KeoPass is an independent personal biometric identification tool, based on fingerprint recognition, that can be used for both physical access control (replacing keys and badges) and digital access control (replacing passwords).
- Physec, from Germany, has devised a system for monitoring the physical condition of certain objects. It uses cryptographic protocols and electromagnetic measurement techniques to assess the physical condition of the relevant object, ensuring that the hardware has not been tampered with.
- Finally, the software developed by US-based Swim.AI improves the collection, protection and analysis of data flows from decentralised peripherals (sensors, gateways and meters), using artificial intelligence to analyse information locally and in real time so that operators can be alerted in a more targeted way.

Due to the coronavirus measures, the event took place in front of a small audience and was broadcast live. The presentation of the winning idea can be viewed [here](#).

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About Elia Group

One of Europe's top five players

Elia Group is active in electricity transmission. We ensure that generation and consumption are balanced around the clock, supplying 30 million end users with electricity. With subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and north-east Germany (50Hertz), we operate 19,271 km of high-voltage connections. As such, our group is one of Europe's top 5. With a reliability level of 99.999%, we give society a robust power grid, which is important for socio-economic prosperity. We also aspire to be a catalyst for a successful energy transition towards a reliable, sustainable and affordable energy system.

We make the energy transition happen

By expanding international high-voltage connections and integrating ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy generation, Elia Group promotes both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of our society. At the same time, Elia Group is innovating its operational systems and developing market products so that new technologies and market parties can access our grid, thus making the energy transition happen.

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 respond to the rapidly changing energy mix, i.e. the increase in renewable energy, and constantly adapt our transmission grid. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget, with a maximum focus on safety. When we carry out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication with all affected parties very early on in the development process. We also offer our expertise to our sector and relevant authorities to build the energy system of the future.

International focus

In addition to its activities as a transmission system operator, Elia Group provides various consulting services to international customers through its subsidiary Elia Grid International (EGI). Elia is also part of the Nemo Link consortium that operates the first subsea electrical interconnector between Belgium and the UK.

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

More information: [elia.be](https://www.elia.be)

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