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Transelectrica, TAQA, Meridiam, E-INFRA and Fluor to Explore Feasibility of Underground Low Carbon Electricity Transmission Project in Romania

The Romanian Power Grid Company Transelectrica, Abu Dhabi National Energy Company PJSC (TAQA), Meridiam, E-INFRA and Fluor are pleased to announce a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a feasibility study of an HVDC infrastructure project in Romania.

With a shared commitment to energy security and clean energy, the companies intend to conduct a feasibility study to explore the technical, economic and legal prerequisites for a landmark project that would see the design, construction and development of an underground 850 km HVDC infrastructure with the capability to bring an additional 5 GW low carbon power capacity to Romanian communities and the European Union. This infrastructure would be placed along the route of the Tuzla - Podișor and the Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria (BRUA) gas pipelines, leveraging the existing corridor routes. The Ministry of Energy of Romania, in alignment with its vision for sustainable energy transition, has extended institutional support to the MoU activities. Furthermore, proactive engagement with the other relevant Romanian authorities is in progress to enable the requisite regulatory backing.

As the global demand for reliable, efficient, and long-distance electricity transmission solutions continues to rise, HVDC technology is emerging as a key enabler. HVDC systems offer numerous advantages, including lower electricity losses during transmission, enhanced grid stability, and the ability to smoothen the integration of renewable energy sources which are often located far from the existing infrastructure. With nations increasingly shifting towards cleaner and more sustainable energy systems, HVDC has become a strategic tool for modernising power grids and supporting the global transition to renewable energy. Additionally, the growth of international power exchange projects and the expansion of offshore wind farms are further driving the demand for HVDC technology.

The signatories of the MoU collectively bring their extensive experience and expertise to the table, underscoring their commitment to realising this ambitious target. The project has the

potential to reshape the energy landscape, fostering sustainability and green energy production for Romania and Europe.

Ștefăniță Munteanu, CEO of The Romanian Power Grid Company Transelectrica, said: "We believe this study that we agreed to conduct for incorporating such an innovative project as HVDC Project in the Romanian Transmission Network, must strictly comply with the technical demands for the network security and to the economic and legal provisions. Furthermore, it may create the prerequisites for a strategic position of Romania in the region. Our collaboration with TAQA, Meridiam, E-INFRA, and Fluor marks a primary step under the technical, economic and legal requirements towards advancing cleaner and more efficient electricity transmission solutions in Romania."

Jasim Husain Thabet, TAQA's Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, added: "We are pleased to be a part of this ambitious project, which is a strategic collaboration between the governments of Romania and UAE, setting the stage for a future powered by low carbon electricity in Romania. The HVDC infrastructure will provide an unprecedented degree of flexibility in crucial sectors of the national energy system, while simultaneously stimulating green energy production. As the HVDC market continues to evolve and innovate, it presents significant opportunities for businesses, utilities, and stakeholders across the energy sector, shaping the future of global electricity transmission and distribution. As a low carbon power and water champion, TAQA has firmly established its experience when it comes to critical infrastructure like HVDC, which enables both energy security and decarbonisation of energy systems."

Thierry Déau, Meridiam CEO & Founder, said: "We are happy to join forces with our partners in this strategic, ambitious and innovative project. This critical underground HVDC infrastructure aligns perfectly with Meridiam's mission of sustainable infrastructure development. This initiative will not only transform Romania's energy landscape, enabling energy security, but also contribute to a more sustainable future for Europe."

Teofil Muresan, CEO & Founder, E-INFRA, said: "It is truly an honour for us to work alongside these large and specialised electricity transmission infrastructure companies, and we are equally delighted that the technical solution analysed is the one proposed by E-INFRA."

"Fluor is proud to be part of the collaboration for this landmark development to expand low carbon energy security in Romania, the region and the European Union," added **Frank Dishongh, President of Nuclear Project Services for Fluor's Energy Solutions** business segment. "Fluor will bring its experience as a program manager of large complex projects, building on our commitment to drive innovation and sustainability in the energy sector by supporting this critically important HVDC project."

In the near future, Romania is expected to harness their substantial energy resources in the Black Sea region, making one of Europe's largest sources of sustainable energy accessible to the continent. The energy resources of the Black Sea region, coupled with strategic interconnections with the European Union, will position Romania as a potential energy hub.

During the last ten years, Transelectrica had as a main objective identification and realising projects of increasing electricity transmission capacity of the renewable energy generated in the Dobrogea region. In this respect, the Network Development Projects have as their primary purpose connecting Dobrogea to the entire interconnected network. Considering increasing targets on carbon neutrality to be reached in 2050 and the renewable energy sources share of 45% in the country's generation mix according to the EU strategies on Climate and Energy, the alternative current solutions are insufficient. In this regard, Transelectrica is considering adopting HVDC transmission solutions.

The feasibility study project is TAQA's second Electricity Transmission project outside the UAE and the third major HVDC project undertaken recently. Earlier this year, TAQA invested GBP25 million (AED113 million) into Xlinks First Limited to lay the world's longest HVDC subsea cables between the UK and Morocco to transport renewable power to the UK. In September 2022, TAQA and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) reached financial closing for a strategic project to provide 3.2GW of power to significantly decarbonise ADNOC's offshore production operations, through a first-of-its-kind HVDC sub-sea transmission network in the MENA region.

In addition, Meridiam will leverage its extensive experience as the lead developer of NeuConnect, the electricity interconnector project linking the UK to Germany through a 725 km – 1.4GW HVDC bi-directional submarine cable (2 x 525 kV). This £2.4bn/€2.8bn project, privately-financed, is a vital energy link between two of Europe's largest energy markets, and the first direct link between the UK and German energy markets. The project implementation will result in a net reduction in carbon emissions of 13Mt CO₂ over the 25 years, which is the equivalent of planting ca. 28 million tree or removing ca. 400,000 cars off the road per year. Sustainable infrastructure and clean energy projects are among the main projects in the E-INFRA portfolio, which pursues energy security and independence in the context of the existing vulnerability to the South-East frontier of the European Union, in line with European energy and climate change targets. Through its expertise, E-INFRA aims to actively participate in the realisation of significant energy projects by integrating different energy sectors and different systems operators.

About Meridiam

Meridiam was founded in 2005 by Thierry Déau, with the belief that the alignment of interests between the public and private sector can provide critical solutions to the collective needs of communities. Meridiam is an independent investment Benefit Corporation and an asset manager. The firm specializes

in the development, financing, and long-term management of sustainable public infrastructure in three core sectors: sustainable mobility, critical public services and innovative low carbon solutions. With offices in Addis Ababa, Amman, Dakar, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Libreville, Luxembourg, New York, Paris, Vienna and Washington, Meridiam manages US\$20 billion and more than 120 projects to date. Meridiam is certified ISO 9001: 2015, Advanced Sustainability Rating by VigeoEiris (Moody's), ISO 37001 Anti-Corruption certification by AFNOR and applies a proprietary methodology in relation to ESG and impact based on United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



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