

PRESS RELEASE**ELMED: MASE AUTHORISES THE ITALY-TUNISIA
INTERCONNECTION**

The project, expected to involve a total investment of approximately € 850 million, will provide an additional tool for optimising the use of energy resources between Europe and North Africa

€ 307 million out of the total investment have been earmarked by the European Commission through the “Connecting Europe Facility”

Elmed, realized by Terna and STEG, will be the first electric interconnection project between Europe and North Africa

Rome, 15 May 2024 – With decree of 10 May, the Italian Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security (MASE) authorised Elmed, the electric interconnection between Italy and Tunisia to be built by Terna and STEG, the Tunisian grid operator.

Expected to involve a total investment of approximately € 850 million, the power line will run for a total length of around 220 km, most of which is submarine cable. The 600 MW direct current connection will reach a maximum depth of approximately 800 metres along the Strait of Sicily.

“The authorisation of the new interconnection between Italy and Tunisia,” said Minister Gilberto Pichetto Fratin, “is not only an important achievement within the challenging energy transition targets set in the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan, but it will allow Italy, by virtue of its strategic geographic position, to strengthen its role as an electricity hub in Europe and the Mediterranean, becoming an international key player”.

“Interconnected and technologically advanced grids form the basis of a secure and sustainable electricity system. Elmed is one of the most significant projects in Terna’s 2024-2028 Business Plan, and the authorisation received from the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security is an important step towards its completion. Once operational, the infrastructure will offer a notable contribution to the decarbonisation of the system. In this sense, interconnections represent a necessary tool for increasing Italy’s energy independence and for diversifying energy procurement sources. Today, Africa represents a land of opportunity: investments, infrastructure, and exchange of expertise are the key factors for solid and long-lasting collaborations,” said Giuseppina Di Foggia, Chief Executive Officer and General Manager of Terna.

“The definitive authorisation for the new power line connecting Italy and Tunisia is a great result in the energy transition process, which sees Italy at the forefront. An achievement in which Sicily has played a leading role and will represent a great strategic opportunity for the new challenges that bring Europe and Africa closer together. Thanks to its geographic position and environmental characteristics, the Island is in the running to become a major national energy hub, with considerable consequences in terms of economic development”, commented Renato Schifani, President of the Sicily Region.

As for the Italian side of the project authorised by MASE, the underground cable will run 18 km from the landing point in Castelvetro (TP) to the conversion station to be built in Partanna (TP), close to the existing substation. In Tunisia, the substation will be built in Mlaabi, in the Cape Bon peninsula.

The authorised interconnection is one of the Mattei Plan projects. The Italy-Tunisia electric bridge is strategic infrastructure for the Italian electricity system in relation to the energy transition targets set by the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (NIECP), since it seeks to improve the integration of the markets in the European Union and the countries of North Africa. Moreover, Elmed guarantees greater development of renewable sources and better security of energy procurement.

Out of the total investment for the project, € 307 million have been allocated by the European Commission through the Connecting Europe Facility (“CEF”) funding programme, intended for the development of key projects that aim to enhance EU energy infrastructure. It is the first time that the European Union has funded a project in which one of the countries involved is not a Member State.