

The new Plan for Cantabria facilitates the arrival of the high-speed train in Santander

The Network Development Plan with a 2026 horizon has been approved to drive a greener future for Spain

- The Network Development Plan 2021-2026 is a key instrument for developing the electricity infrastructure needed to continue guaranteeing the security of supply in addition to promoting the energy transition process nationwide to ensure that renewable energy will account for 67% of the national electricity generation mix by 2026.
- The drafting of the Plan has followed a rigorous Strategic Environmental Assessment procedure to ensure it is sustainable and environmentally friendly.
- The projects included in the Plan will contribute to achieving significant efficiencies and savings for the system as a whole, more than 1.6 billion euros per year. In addition, the investments will help boost Spain's recovery from the crisis.
- The Plan for Cantabria will enable the high-speed train to reach Santander, improve security of supply and allow the connection of energy storage and further drive the integration of renewable energy in the region.

Santander, 22 March 2022

The Network Development Plan 2021-2026, which is binding for Red Eléctrica, has been given the green light after having been approved today by the Spanish Government following its presentation in the Spanish Congress of Deputies. With an investment of 6,964 million euros, this new Plan is a strategic instrument through which the necessary infrastructure will be developed so that Spain may continue to enjoy an electricity supply with high levels of quality and will allow further progress to be made in the decarbonisation of its energy model and in its fight against climate change.

In this regard, the actions included within the Plan will size and prepare the transmission grid in the coming years to be able to connect and integrate a higher share of renewable energy generation in line with the pace set by Spain's National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) and make it available to consumers. Thanks to the development of this infrastructure, it is estimated that in 2026 renewable energy will reach a share of 67% in the national electricity generation mix and will enable CO₂ eq emissions to be reduced by 66% compared to those recorded in 2019 (the year before the pandemic), provided that the NECP forecasts and the full implementation of this Plan are met. Similarly, the projects included in the Plan, will contribute to achieving significant efficiencies and savings for the system as a whole, more than 1.6 billion euros per year. In addition, the investments will help boost Spain's recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

The planning process followed a rigorous Strategic Environmental Assessment procedure to ensure it is sustainable and environmentally friendly. It should be noted that the Plan took into account the environmental and territorial conditioning factors and has prioritised these aspects in the final design. Furthermore, the Network Development Plan 2021-2026 includes making greater use of the existing transmission grid, thus avoiding those areas that are most environmentally sensitive and reducing those actions that may have an impact on the territory. In fact, only 13% of all renewable generation expected to be connected by 2026 will require new transmission substations.



The Network Development Plan 2021-2026 for Cantabria includes actions that will improve rail transport between the region and the centre of the peninsula by facilitating the arrival of the high-speed rail line in Santander. In addition, it foresees the construction of new infrastructure that will enable the connection of renewable energy storage facilities and generation and it will also strengthen the security of supply in the capital and its surrounding areas. As a whole, these projects will make a significant contribution to the economic, industrial and social progress of the region.

Electricity supply for the Palencia-Santander rail network

One of the projects included in the new Network Development Plan for Cantabria is the electricity supply for the future high-speed rail line that will connect Palencia with Santander. This new section of the projected high-speed rail network will be implemented through the enlargement of two existing 400 kV facilities, with the incorporation of new substation bays in the Aguayo substation, located in the region, and in the Herrera substation, in Castilla y León. All these actions will involve an investment of 2.3 million euros.

This new high-speed railway line will connect Santander and the centre of the peninsula and will contribute to achieving the goal related to the electrification of the transport system, which is essential for the decarbonisation of the economy, pursuant to the path set by Spain's National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) with a 2030 horizon.

Connecting energy storage facilities to the grid and strengthening the electricity supply

The 400kV Aguayo substation will also be enlarged and strengthened in order to be able to connect new renewable generation and energy storage facilities that already have access permits granted. This project will be strategic for Cantabria because it will boost its green transition process and will further enhance the evolution of its generation mix towards a more sustainable one.

The Network Development Plan 2021-2026 also includes projects that will provide support for the electricity distribution network in the region, including the enlargement of the 220 kV substations at Cacicedo and Mataporquera, as well as the completion of the 220 kV Astillero-Cacicedo axis. This will improve the security of supply in the city of Santander and the capacity to meet future growth in demand, as well as facilitate the evacuation of renewable energy into the electricity distribution grid, mainly wind power in the southern part of Cantabria.

The following are also actions included in the plan: install control elements at the 400 kV Solórzano substation, renovate installations at the 220 kV Mataporquera and the 400/220 kV Aguayo substations and increase the power capacity of the 220 kV Cillamayor-Mataporquera line. These actions will strengthen supply, cover certain operational needs, resolve technical constraints and increase the integration of new renewable generation.

Beyond 2026

In addition to the actions defined in the 2021-2026 Plan, the plan also includes some projects for a horizon beyond 2026. Such projects will not be started in this Plan period but may advance in certain administrative permitting procedures or those related to technical and environmental studies. This is the case of the actions aimed at improving the grid meshing between Santander and Torrelavega with the construction of a new 220 kV line between Cacicedo and Puente San Miguel, which will contribute to strengthening security of supply in the area of Santander.

A Plan conceived by all for society as a whole

This Network Development Plan is the result of the responsible and collective efforts of all stakeholders. The public administrations and the different agents of civil society have participated in its preparation, working together with a common goal: to build, together, a useful and valuable transmission grid for everyone. For the first time, the consultation process has been open to all citizens, companies and public administrations, whose high level of participation has demonstrated the enormous interest of society as a whole in the energy transition process.



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