

INTERVIEW WITH EVA ZIMMERMANN, PROJECT MANAGER FOR PLANT INSTALLATION

MS ZIMMERMANN, A KEY GRID STRENGTHENING MEASURE IS INCREASING THE VOLTAGE LEVEL FROM 220 KV TO 380 KV. WHAT CONSTRUCTION MEASURES DOES THIS INVOLVE FOR YOU AND YOUR GRID CONSTRUCTION COLLEAGUES?

For one thing, we have to convert the 220-kilovolt substations to 380 kilovolts and also change the 220-kV overhead lines to 380kV. In the case of the overhead lines, we have the option of installing further traverses on existing power pylons, if they are designed for it, and then laying further power circuits on them. Another option is to take down the existing 220-kV masts and reinstall them at an elevated height. The higher voltage level of 380 Kilovolt requires a greater distance between the cables and the ground. We call this replacement construction.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH CONSTRUCTION MEASURE TO ACTUALLY TAKE THEN TO STRENGTHEN THE GRID?

We generally have a two-step approval process for this. The first step is a regional planning or federal planning procedure. The second step is a planning consent procedure. The first procedure is managed by the German Federal Network Agency and the second by the Regional Council. In both cases, a comprehensive public consultation process is involved, with for instance our information markets.

At the end of the process, a planning consent is issued, with the authorising agency specifying how and where TransnetBW may carry out the grid strengthening work.

THE SPACE-RELATED CONDITIONS FOR GRID STRENGTHENING DIFFER MARKEDLY FROM REGION TO REGION WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU AND YOUR GRID CONSTRUCTION TEAM FACE?

We have to deal with many different interest groups. Each of those interest groups has concerns about how we plan to carry out the grid strengthening work. For instance, they want work to be as far away as possible from residential buildings, particularly if they are the residents themselves and no overhead cables above leisure or sports grounds. Another concern with grid strengthening is to complete the work as much as possible without any negative impact on the natural world and surrounding environment. The planning consent, for instance, may specify building restrictions during vegetation or breeding periods.

We have the task of weighing up all the concerns and underlying legal conditions and finding the most acceptable solution to everyone, so it can be approved by the planning consent authority. maintaining contact with municipal authorities and picking up on information and tip-offs, which we can then take into account in our planning.