

20 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE COMMITTING TO A DATA CENTER SITE IN FRANCE

Before signing a land option, accepting a PTF or committing finance. A question without a documented answer is a risk to price, not a detail.

GRID CONNECTION

- ☐ **1. Which connection document exists, and who holds it?**
An exploratory study, an accepted PTF and a signed connection agreement commit very different things. Only the last two put the project in the queue.
- ☐ **2. What capacity, by when, and in which steps?**
Full power often arrives in tranches. The revenue plan must follow the capacity steps, not the building schedule.
- ☐ **3. Which grid works does full capacity depend on?**
Substation, line, upstream reinforcement: these works have their own timelines and their own permits.
- ☐ **4. Is the project holding its place in the queue?**
Queue positions are reviewed every year against proof of progress, and RTE is preparing a move to "first ready, first served", expected from 2027.
- ☐ **5. HTA or HTB, and what capacity at the target substation?**
Above roughly 40 MW, the connection is generally RTE's. Being close to a large line says nothing about available capacity.

LAND

- ☐ **6. What land control: promise, option or ownership?**
Duration, conditions precedent and price must hold through the whole connection and permitting process.
- ☐ **7. Can the PTF follow the project if it is sold?**
Since June 2024 a PTF can only be transferred within the same group: buying a project often means buying the company that holds it.
- ☐ **8. Are zoning and soil conditions compatible?**
Local plan, easements, possible brownfield pollution: all hidden delays.

PERMITS

- ☐ **9. Which permitting regime applies?**
Building permit, environmental authorisation for generators, public inquiry: each step has its own timeline.
- ☐ **10. Which environmental constraints on the site and the connection route?**
Natura 2000, watercourses, natural risks, nearby Seveso sites can lengthen review or require studies.
- ☐ **11. Is the permitting timeline realistic, including RTE's own works?**
Grid operator works have separate permits that can push back the full-power date.

EQUIPMENT

- ☐ **12. Are the transformers ordered, or at least reserved?**
Lead times run from about 20 to over 60 months depending on the maker. Waiting for final design often costs a year.
- ☐ **13. What lead times for switchgear, generators and UPS?**
HV and MV switchgear commonly takes 18 to 36 months.
- ☐ **14. Which standards and availability level are targeted?**
NF C 13-100 and 13-200 for high voltage, EN 50600 or Tier depending on clients: to be set before ordering.

LOCAL CONTEXT

- ☐ **15. Where do the mayor and the inter-municipal body stand?**
A project presented early, with verifiable commitments, faces late opposition less often.
- ☐ **16. Are there known challenges in the area?**
Data centers, power lines, battery parks: a neighbouring residents' group may target the next project.

☐ **17. Are water, noise and heat commitments ready?**

These are the first questions from residents and the public inquiry officer.

FINANCE AND COMPLIANCE

☐ **18. Does the financing plan hold if full power comes later?**

A bridge solution or phased commissioning should be costed before the investment decision.

☐ **19. Are regulatory obligations anticipated?**

EU reporting above 500 kW, the upcoming A-G rating, the tertiary decree and the BACS decree weigh on operations and asset value.

☐ **20. Is every seller claim backed by a document?**

"Connected", "permitted", "available": without a dated, signed document, a claim remains an assumption.

**Several answers missing? Land pre-assessment and lender due diligence:
gridreadiness.com/data-center-land-assessment**

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