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Fibre Excellence PROVENCE is launching its major maintenance shutdown with over 10 million euros of investments to modernise the plant

Fibre Excellence PROVENCE is launching its major maintenance and modernisation shutdown, with over 10 million euros of investments and a thousand participants mobilised for several weeks on the project. After the recent launch of the Biowatt project, Fibre Excellence PROVENCE is continuing to implement its modernisation plan, which includes 180 million euros of investments over four years to upgrade the plant to the best industrial and environmental standards.

Modernisation and maintenance operations to improve plant safety and efficiency

During the Major Maintenance Shutdown, the teams will complete over 500 preventive maintenance operations, such as early obsolescence treatments and preventive part or equipment replacements. The shutdown will also be an opportunity to completely replace the boiler hearth and refurbish the economisers. The digester, an important item of equipment for the process used to extract cellulose from wood, will undergo cleaning, inspections, works, and re-qualification. Signs of wear were detected during a recent inspection of the digester. As a precautionary measure, the decision was made to shut down the equipment immediately to begin the inspections, resulting in the Major Maintenance Shutdown starting early. The black liquor boiler will also be inspected and re-qualified.

The plant is thus continuing the implementation of its ambitious industrial strategy to return to positive results and achieve the best industrial and environmental standards. This shutdown will be used to prepare for the installation of the new Biowatt turbine on the site, scheduled for the end of 2022, with the connection of two 15 kV cells to the electrical network and the fitting of additional valves on the steam and water networks.

Significant resources boosting the local economy with local expert partners

Every year, the plant injects about 100 million euros into the local economy. **The budget for the Major Maintenance Shutdown will have a considerable additional knock-on effect on the local economy:** over 150 partner companies are being mobilised in specialist sectors such as mechanics, electricity, instrumentation, sheet metal work and civil engineering. **Over 85% of the budget for the operation thus benefits French companies, including almost 6 million euros for companies based in the PACA (Provence, Alpes, Côte d'Azur) region.** With close to a thousand contractors working on the site over several weeks, the works are also a revenue source for local retailers.

Strong measures to guarantee safety, especially in the Covid-19 context

The plant is relying on the positive feedback from the Major Maintenance Shutdown organised in the Saint-Gaudens plant in June to guarantee the health safety of those involved and take part in the general effort to combat the pandemic. Industry best practice measures are in place.

In addition to the measures specifically implemented in the Covid-19 context, **Fibre Excellence Provence's top priority is the safety of people.** The company is particularly vigilant in enforcing compliance with very strict safety rules, in which all participants are trained, and deploys significant resources to guarantee high safety levels throughout the Major Maintenance Shutdown operations.