

Tarascon-en-Provence, June 5, 2023

## **Fibre Excellence Provence inaugurates its BioWatt green electricity turbine, a milestone in its 180 million euro investment plan**

Fibre Excellence Provence is pleased to announce the commissioning of its new BioWatt turbine, at an inauguration held today in the presence of Christophe Mirmand, Prefect of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, Prefect of Bouches-du-Rhône, Renaud Muselier, President of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, Deputy President of Régions de France, and Fabien Bouillard, Deputy Mayor representing Lucien Limousin, Mayor of Tarascon-en-Provence.

This project represents an investment of 53 million euros, as part of Fibre Excellence Provence's overall investment plan of 180 million euros, aiming to bring the site up to the highest industrial and environmental standards, and thus ensure the plant's long-term future.

### **A major step in Fibre Excellence's transformation plan**

The implementation of the BioWatt project will enable the plant not only to accelerate its production of renewable energy to supply the region with biomass electricity, but also to make better use of wood residues from pulp production, as part of a circular economy.

Thanks to a cogeneration boiler equipped with a steam turbine twice as powerful as the existing one (25 megawatts), the project will increase the overall electrical production capacity of the Fibre Excellence Provence site by 50%. The excess power will be fed back into the public grid in Tarascon, thereby boosting the region's energy independence. Commissioned when the plant took over in the summer of 2021, the turbine took 18 months to complete, from delivery to installation and commissioning.

Through its production activity and the implementation of its transformation plan, Fibre Excellence Provence injects around 100 million euros into the local economy every year and contributes to 5,000 indirect jobs within the industry.

### **A forward-looking plant**

Driven by the determination of its management and teams to ensure the long-term future of the site, with priority given to improving its environmental performance, the plant is progressing according to the timetable set out in its recovery plan.

Since 2019, the company has already made significant progress, notably in terms of its environmental footprint, with emissions down by 90% for SO<sub>2</sub>, 99% for H<sub>2</sub>S and 91% for dust on the plant's main equipment. Fibre Excellence Provence intends to pursue these efforts through a number of major projects to be completed over the coming months and years:

- New odour-reduction facilities to reduce odours have been installed, representing a major investment, and are currently in the final stages of adjustment, to substantially reduce odour nuisance for local residents.
- The quality of the water returned to the river will be enhanced by improved filtration and the construction of stormwater retention basins.
- By 2025, an oxygen delignification plant will bleach pulp with oxygen, drastically reducing the use of chemicals when the mill resumes production of bleached pulp - it currently produces exclusively unbleached pulp to avoid the use of these products. This

installation will also enable Fibre Excellence Provence to position itself in the production of "fluff" pulp, used for sanitary products (e.g. diapers), which is currently entirely imported, and thus contribute to the relocation of industrial sectors on the European market.

Jean-François Guillot, President of Fibre Excellence, comments: *"We are very proud to inaugurate a major milestone in our plan to transform the plant, made possible by the commitment of all our stakeholders, first and foremost our employees, but also the national, regional and local public authorities who have supported Fibre Excellence in a demanding way. The BioWatt project will enable us to accelerate the production of renewable energy for the benefit of local communities. Reducing our environmental footprint and maintaining high safety standards are our top priorities, and we will continue to work relentlessly on our modernization. I am convinced that the quality of our know-how and the strength of our commitment to industrial excellence and to local residents will continue to bear fruit in the months and years to come."*

Christophe Mirmand, Prefect of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, Prefect of Bouches-du-Rhône, declares: *"The cogeneration equipment we are inaugurating is an integral part of this investment plan and, by contributing to improved energy performance for the company and greater production reliability, it is also helping to maintain this strategic industrial complex for the Tarascon and Pays d'Arles area, in economic and employment terms, but also for the upstream French forestry sector. We are therefore delighted by this concrete proof of Fibre Excellence's commitment to maintaining production facilities and modernizing the Tarascon plant."*

*"Since 2016, we have made industry a priority, by being the leading partner for businesses. Fibre Excellence, based in the South of France, is a nationally-renowned company for which we have mobilized 3 million euros of aid with the State in 2022. Together, we share the determination to make our region the 1st green region in Europe. Today, we are delighted to be here with you to inaugurate the BioWatt turbine, which will accelerate the production of renewable energy for the benefit of the health and well-being of local residents. This project is essential to the decarbonization of industry, and we're delighted to be supporting you in this",* declared Renaud Muselier, President of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region and Deputy Chairman of Régions de France.

Fabien Bouillard, Deputy Mayor of Tarascon-en-Provence, comments: *"The French government wanted to support these investments in 'green' energies to accelerate the production of renewable energy at the Fibre Excellence Provence site and thus contribute to national energy sovereignty. I would like to pay tribute to the considerable financial efforts made by the management of Fibre Excellence in 2021 to increase its energy independence, while reinjecting surplus production into the Tarascon power grid."*

### **Fibre Excellence Provence facts and figures**

- Takeover in August 2021 of the Tarascon site, existing since 1951 and first modernized in 1982
- 250,000 tonnes of pulp produced per year
- Some 250 employees at the production site
- 250 suppliers and 150 transporters, mainly SMEs located within an average 250 km radius of the plant
- Annual consumption of 1.2 million tons of wood (250 km around the mill; 85% certified suppliers).
- FEP contributes to regional dynamism, with some 5,000 indirect jobs in the forestry-wood industry, transport and industrial maintenance, as well as some \$100 million injected into the local economy every year.
- PEFC/FSC-certified production (sustainable forest management)

### **Biomass conversion at Fibre Excellence pulp mills**

Fibre Excellence sees biomass, i.e. wood, as a resource that must be optimized at every stage of its life cycle.

- In forests, good resource management ensures healthy, sustainable forests that play their part in capturing carbon.
- Once harvested, the wood is put to the most appropriate use: firstly, as lumber (carpentry, furniture, etc.), then as lower-quality industrial wood for use in the paper industry.

In mills, cellulose is extracted from biomass to produce pulp. The part of the wood that cannot be turned into pulp (bark, lignin, etc.) is burned to generate steam and electricity.