

Press Release

COGENERATION BIOMASS NOVILLARS (CBN) A PROJECT THAT COMBINES RENEWABLE ENERGIES AND INDUSTRIAL SYNERGIES

Akuo Energy launches its wood biomass cogeneration plant in Novillars in Doubs.

Novillars, France, February 15: Akuo Energy, France's leading independent producer of renewable and distributed energy, as well as its project partners, inaugurated the Novillars Cogeneration Plant in the presence of Ms Emmanuelle Wargon, Secretary of State to the Minister of State, Minister of Ecological Transition and Solidarity.

A project supporting energy transition

With a capacity of 20 MWe and a thermal capacity of 63 MWth, this project was born from partnership of Akuo Biomasse and a long-standing player in paper production, the Gemdoub's paper mill. The biomass power plant will sell electricity to EDF for 20 years as well as thermal energy in the form of steam to Gemdoub's SAS in order to cover all its industrial needs.

A major asset for Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region

CBN is a real tool for revitalizing the territory. The project improves Gemdoub's papermill competitiveness by guaranteeing 200 000 tons of steam per year at a controlled price. Indeed, the energy bill is the first expense of the papermill after its raw material supply – which consists of recycled paper.

A circular economy project

The power plant produces electricity and steam from a wood resource coming from a secondary forest located nearby (on average 50km). It also develops the wood sector in the region by adding value to wood that has no existing market. What is more, Gemdoub's papermill is supplied with recycled paper coming from Bourgogne Franche-Comté.

A positive impact on job creation and professional training

This project has contributed to the economic development of the territory by using local and national service providers to carry out its work that lasted 27 months and involved nearly 120 people. In addition, the paper mill's energy bill has been reduced, allowing it to keep its 70 jobs.

50 jobs in the wood sector have been preserved and CBN has created around 20 new jobs to operate of the plant. Finally, this inauguration took place in the presence of the students of the BAC PRO "wood" and "landscape" from the CFAA of Chateaufarine, Besançon. Their presence here testifies the vitality of renewable energies in terms of direct or induced job creation.

A €87 million investment

CBN is owned by Akuo Energy, Banque des Territoires, CAPG Energies Nouvelles (formerly-CAM Energie), Gemdoubts and Crédit Agricole Franche-Comté Investissements. The plant was fully financed in October 2016 for a total amount of €87 million. A banking pool composed of Banque Populaire Méditerranée, BNP Paribas, Bpifrance Financement, Caisse d'Epargne Loire Centre, Caisse d'Epargne et de Prévoyance Bourgogne Franche-Comté and Unifergie - Crédit Agricole Group, led by Natixis Energéco, provided the senior bank debt financing. In addition, the Mirova EuroFideme 3 fund, the Banque des Territoires and Méthanor financed the project's junior debt.

First Biomass project open to crowdfunding

In order to benefit from the profitability of the Novillars power plant, Akuo Energy offers all citizens the opportunity to participate in the project refinancing through its AkuoCoop platform. The objective of this approach is to highlight the advantages of wood biomass cogeneration: continuous energy production and valorization of wood with no market. Since its creation, the platform has raised more than three million euros for an average amount of 962 euros per lender.

Eric Scotto, CEO and co-fondateur of Akuo Energy, says: *"Novillars Biomass Cogeneration Plant is an exemplary circular economy project that perfectly follows the logic of further clean energy development, but also industrial synergies growth. Surrounding ourselves with all these major partners was a wise choice that allowed us to successfully complete this project and to inaugurate this biomass cogeneration plant today."*

Dr. Fady Gemayel, President of Gemdoubts, added: *"The launch of the Novillars cogeneration plant is another important milestone for Gemdoubts, a manufacturer of packaging paper. In addition to controlling energy costs, this project confirms Gemdoubts as an important player in the local circular economy committed to reducing its environmental footprint. Hence, 50% of our "green" papers are exported for the benefit of the community."*

Antoine Bréhard, Regional Director of the Banque des Territoires, said: *"We have invested €7.7 million in an industrial site that has long been weakened, 120 jobs have been sustained and 20 created. This support is part of the Banque de Territories' action to promote more sustainable and attractive territories."*

Ms Emmanuelle Wargon, Secretary of State to the Minister of State, Minister of Ecological and Solidarity Transition concludes by stating: *"What we see here are acts in the service of a great ambition. (...) This project is absolutely remarkable. (...) When you see this type of projects, you say "the Energy Transition is possible"."*

About GEMDOUBS papermill

Gemdoubs is a century-old paper mill located in Novillars (25). It produces 85,000 tons of packaging paper annually from recovered paper and cardboard. It exports nearly 50% of this paper, mainly to manufacturers of corrugated cardboard packaging for the food industry, industry and e-commerce. For more information, visit www.gemdoubs.com

About the Bank of the Territories

Created in 2018, Banque des Territoires is one of Caisse des Dépôts' five business lines. It brings together in the same structure the internal expertise intended for the territories. As a single client gateway, it offers tailor-made advisory and financing solutions in loans and investments to meet the needs of local authorities, social housing organisations, local public companies and the legal professions. It is aimed at all territories, from rural areas to metropolitan areas, with the goal of combating social inequalities and territorial divisions. Banque des Territoires is deployed in Caisse des Dépôts' 16 regional divisions and 35 territorial offices in order to be better identified with its clients and as close as possible to them. For more attractive, inclusive, sustainable and connected territories.

For more information, visit www.banquedesterritoires.fr, @BanqueDesTerr

About Akuo Energy

Akuo Energy is the leading French independent producer for renewable and distributed energy. Akuo Energy is present across the whole value chain, including project development, financing, construction, and operation. As of end-2017, Akuo Energy had invested more than EUR 2.1 billion for a total capacity of 1.1 GW in operation, under construction or with financing underway and over 2 GW in projects being developed. With to date more than 350 staff, the Group, whose headquarters are in Paris, France, operates in 17 other countries around the world. Akuo Energy aims at a global production capacity of 3,500 MW in 2022.

For more information, visit www.akuoenergy.com

About Crédit Agricole

Crédit Agricole Franche-Comté markets a complete range of financial products and services. As a bank for individuals, farmers, professionals, companies and local authorities, the Regional Bank relies on its territorial roots to meet the needs of its members and customers. With more than 133 branches throughout the Franche-Comté region, the Regional Bank relies on its values of responsibility, solidarity and proximity to offer its customers the best possible services.

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