



Michelin plant in La Roche-sur-Yon set to transform into an innovation cluster for sustainable energy

- The Pays de la Loire region, the department of Vendée, Greater La Roche-sur-Yon, the utilities operator SyDEV, the renewable energy company Vendée Energie and the Michelin Group signed a letter of intent today on the project to transform the site at La Roche-sur-Yon.
- An innovation cluster dedicated to new energy technologies will be created on the site of the former Michelin tire plant.
- The first manifestation of the project, a multi-energy distribution center, will be installed by local utility SyDEV in 2021.

On announcing the closure of its plant in La Roche-sur-Yon on October 10, 2019, the Michelin Group committed to launching a large-scale public-private project to develop new sustainable ventures on the site in support of the local economy. After several months of discussions and co-construction, led by a dedicated stakeholder committee, the first stage of the project to transform the former Michelin plant at La Roche-sur-Yon began today with a signed letter of intent concerning the site's future.

Signed by the Pays de la Loire region, the department of Vendée, La Roche-sur-Yon, the utilities operator SyDEV, the renewable energy company Vendée Energie and the Michelin Group, this document sets out a shared vision for the project and the fundamental drivers of the future "Energy Innovation Cluster". The objective is to set up an ecosystem that will create jobs and businesses in sustainable energy and "manufacturing of the future", based on the following five drivers:

- manufacturing-artisanship: developing the manufacturing or artisanal activities of the future;
- research-development/demonstrators: developing profitable applications;
- training-research: developing skills geared toward energy and the manufacturing of the future;
- start-up/incubator: developing young, innovative companies;
- services-engagement: developing services that meet the needs of the cluster, the companies operating there and regional players.

In this way, the cluster aims to generate fresh economic momentum supported by key regional entities, in both the public sector (the city, greater metropolitan area, department, region, SyDEV, etc.) and the private sector (start-up, small, medium and large companies). The first of the cluster's installations and operations will get up and running in 2021, bringing to fruition certain projects that were previously laid out: the distribution of new types of energy, a research and training hub for sustainable regions and energy flexibility.

During the official signing of the letter this morning at Michelin's La Roche-sur-Yon plant, the stakeholders hailed the start of the project, saying, "This letter of intent is a joint commitment between the Pays de la Loire region, the department of Vendée, Greater La Roche-sur-Yon and the Michelin Group to support an ambitious project focused on the region's economic development and attractiveness. Focused on the energy transition and energy of the future, the project offers solid prospects for the creation of new businesses and sustainable jobs. The installation of the multi-energy station by SyDEV and Vendée Energie, both signatories of the letter, is one of the initial steps. We will continue to work closely as part of this public-private partnership to ensure that the first stages of the cluster project are successfully completed in 2021."

The multi-energy station: the first manifestation of the Michelin plant transformation project

Actively engaged in the region's energy transition, SyDEV and its semi-public company Vendée Energie, are developing a sustainable mobility ecosystem in the department of Vendée. In this regard, SyDEV is rolling out a network of charging stations for electric vehicles and, through Vendée Energie, is producing and distributing green hydrogen and natural biogas for vehicles (BioGNV).

This year, the first hydrogen filling station will be set up in Vendée. This will provide completely green hydrogen from the Bouin production facility, directly powered by wind turbines, with the first kilograms set to be produced at the end of the first half of the year. This station will also distribute natural biogas and will have several fast-charging points for electric vehicles.

The future energy innovation cluster aims to be a showcase for environmental excellence, and a model for regional resilience and the energy transition. Setting up the first multi-energy station for Vendée at the former Michelin site makes a lot of sense. In line with the vision for the innovation cluster, this station sets an example for clean mobility and demonstrates the active role that Vendée is playing in the energy transition.

The multi-energy station will power:

- the buses and garbage trucks of Greater La Roche-sur-Yon, emergency vehicles, the Vendée department's truck fleet, two tractor units for local transport companies and other vehicles, with hydrogen;
- fleets of heavy vehicles for transporting goods, people, waste, and some lighter vehicles with natural biogas;
- electric vehicles with fast charging points.

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