

Press Release - April 24, 2019

Meridiam, European Biomass and Bank of the Territories launch in France a unique industrial complex in the world as a sustainable alternative to coal

In the presence of Emmanuelle Wargon, Secretary of State to the Minister of State, Minister of Ecological and Solidarity Transition, Meridiam, Européenne de Biomasse and Banque des Territoires are proud to officially launch today the construction of the first production unit of HPCI® black pellet, a new generation biofuel, combined with a biomass cogeneration plant, at the Pomacle Bazancourt Bio-Economy Centre in the Grand Est region near Reims.

This first of its kind industrial complex in France is a world first. It consists of two installations that contribute to the energy transition by producing 100% renewable energy in a circular economy:

- A production unit for two biofuels: a biomass fuel for the cogeneration plant located on site, and HPCI® black pellet, a new generation biofuel for industrial use. These pellets will replace coal for heating about 130,000 people.
- A cogeneration plant that produces both electricity (90 GWh per year, or the domestic consumption of 30,000 inhabitants) and thermal energy (130GWh per year in the form of steam and hot water) to supply the biofuel production unit, as well as the ADM Chamtor plant located in the Bio-economy cluster.

The cogeneration plant is scheduled to come on stream in June 2020, and HPCI® black pellet production from October 2020.

The use of these wood pellets, the new generation HPCI® black pellet biofuels, under European Biomass license, represents a double innovation :

- Production by a steam cracking process (wood processing, subjected to high temperature and high pressure). This process, which gives it its dark colour, gives it a higher energy potential, very high water resistance and a limited dust content. These properties make it directly usable as a substitute for coal, supporting the same logistics (external storage) and burning in the same boilers.
- The creation of an industrial alternative to coal to provide renewable, local and environmentally friendly energy for the equivalent of heating for 130,000 inhabitants

This project, led by partners who are resolutely committed to the long term, constitutes a new model of virtuous, inclusive and sustainable economic development, designed to benefit the energy transition and the prosperity of local ecosystems. Representing an investment of €100 million, these facilities will produce green electricity, thermal energy and biofuel locally to replace coal.

In compliance with the highest environmental requirements (supply of clean wood, no odours emitted, water contained in the wood used for the industrial process, recovery of combustion ash for the surrounding land), the project will contribute to the reduction of nearly 230,000 tons of CO2 emissions per year over the coming decades, equivalent to the emissions of 145,000 cars. This project contributes directly to the achievement of the sustainable development objectives set by the UN and in particular the fight against climate change and its impacts.

Resolutely based on the circular economy model, this new production site also contributes to the creation of 350 full-time local jobs. Indeed, the Pomacle site will employ 40 people and its activity will contribute to the development of 310 jobs in the biomass sector in the East of France.

Meridiam, Européenne de Biomasse and Banque des Territoires have created a dedicated company, FICA HPCI, to manage the project, the management and the operation of these facilities. These three companies hold 80.5%, 5% and 14.5% respectively of FICA HPCI.

About Meridiam

Meridiam was founded in 2005 by Thierry Déau, with the belief that the alignment of interests between the public and private sector can provide critical solutions to the collective needs of communities. Meridiam is an independent investment firm specializing in the development, financing, and management of long-term and sustainable public infrastructure projects in three key sectors: mobility of people and goods, energy transition and environment and social infrastructure. With offices in, Addis Ababa, Amman, Dakar, Istanbul, New York, Luxembourg, Paris, Toronto and, Vienna, Meridiam currently manages 7 billion Euros of assets, and more than 70 projects and assets to date. Meridiam is certified ISO 9001: 2015, ISO 26000 Robust by VigeoEiris and operates on a proprietary methodology in relation to ESG and impact based on UNSDGs. www.meridiam.com

About Européenne de Biomasse

Européenne de Biomasse, a biomass innovation company created in 2004 by Jean Baptiste Marin, has developed the process of transforming biomass into a biofuel to replace coal, HPCI® black pellet. The success of FICA-HPCI, the intensification of its R&D, the protection of its innovations through an active intellectual property policy and the creation of an HPCI sector through the development of other licensed projects in France and abroad are today the major axes of the European Biomass strategy. To achieve this ambitious objective, the company is organizing itself and implementing its excellence management program. www.ebiomass.eu

About Banque des Territoires

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 aim 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. www.banquedesterritoires.fr

Press contacts

FICA-HPCI
Christophe Thevenon
+33 6 75 81 54 09
cthevenon@fica-hpci.fr

Meridiam
Antoine Lenoir
+33 6 07 50 75 85
a.lenoir@meridiam.com

Européenne de Biomasse
Bertrand Boullé
+33 6 79 70 21 26
bboullé@ebiomass.eu

Banque des Territoires
Joëlle Lagrange
+ 33 3 88 52 45 36
joelle.lagrange@caissedesdepots.fr