

Verkor, Europe's new battery cell producer, begins its industrial journey, backed by EIT InnoEnergy, Schneider Electric and the GROUPE IDEC

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Verkor, a French industrial company, is set to amplify battery cell production in Europe, with the support of EIT InnoEnergy, Schneider Electric and the GROUPE IDEC. The new venture will accelerate the production capacity of low-carbon batteries in southern Europe to meet growing demand for electric vehicles and stationary storage.

Production in Verkor's first Gigafactory is scheduled to begin in 2023, with a capacity of 16 GWh of battery cells which will increase to 50 GWh in line with market dynamics. The facility will require an initial investment of €1.6bn and will create more than 2,000 direct jobs while supporting thousands more in its supply chain and ecosystem. The search for 200+ hectares of land is already underway.

Verkor was founded in response to the growing gap between the expected demand for batteries and the committed and planned European supply. Indeed, the expected growth in demand this decade will require three to four Gigafactories in France alone. The European industrial ecosystem is therefore compelled to establish a sustainable and indigenous European battery supply chain, which in turn will reduce reliance on imports.

France's affordable and low-carbon electricity, prominent automotive manufacturers, leading energy providers, and its demonstrated industrial prowess make it the ideal location for Gigafactories in southern Europe, a region which falls short of such projects when compared to northern and central Europe.

Benoit Lemaignan, the CEO of Verkor, is passionate: "Our team is made up of industrial entrepreneurs who have accumulated vast experience in the field, especially in battery-cell manufacturing. We are multinational and growing fast with the addition of new talent from all over the world. We are working in an agile, fast-follower mode to bring locally manufactured, low-CO₂ battery cells to the market.

"Combined with the expertise of our strategic partners, I am confident that we are aligning the winning conditions to start the construction of a highly efficient manufacturing Gigafactory in 2022,

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InnoEnergy is supported by the EIT,
a body of the European Union

deliver our first cells in 2023, and stepping up of industrial activities, key to accelerating low carbon mobility in Europe.”

Diego Pavia, CEO of EIT InnoEnergy, said: “The first Verkor Gigafactory will help bridge the gap between Europe’s planned demand and currently forecasted European supply in this decade. Verkor’s unique value proposition on manufacturing optimisation and excellence is welcome. The strategic partnerships they are building make us confident that Verkor will deliver. Coupled with the Covid recovery, the initiative will further accelerate the French and European battery value chain, from mining to recycling, and boost the growth of hundreds of businesses across France and Europe.

“Anchored in our work with the European Battery Alliance, we are on a mission to achieve a sustainable battery value chain in Europe. By locating the site in France, we can produce batteries with a carbon footprint nearly four times lower than that of China. France also boasts a highly-skilled workforce and industry players across the entire value chain.”

Schneider Electric, the leader in digital transformation of energy management and automation, brings its industrial expertise and strong links into the existing battery supply chain in Europe. It will help Verkor build and execute optimised and sustainable operations that leverage IOT & Industry 4.0. “We are excited to support Verkor’s creation and share our technical and manufacturing expertise. This brings together the best of energy management and industrial expertise to build green, competitive batteries as part of our commitment to help the European transition to electric vehicles,” said Christel Galbrun-Noel, Mobility Segment President at Schneider Electric.

The GROUPE IDEC, and its associated partner ER2I, are now working with the project stakeholders to drive all aspects related to finding land and designing and constructing the new high value-added industrial site. The Group will draw on the knowledge of its subsidiaries in cross-functional business lines to formulate a response to meet the challenges of this Gigafactory. "The IDEC GROUP is proud to be part of this innovative and sustainable industrial project from its inception, alongside its complementary partners", explains Patrice Lafargue, President and Founder of the GROUPE IDEC.

About EIT InnoEnergy

EIT InnoEnergy is the leading engine for innovation and entrepreneurship in sustainable energy across Europe and beyond.

EIT InnoEnergy has provided investments and added value services to some 380 sustainable energy related start-ups, of those 30+ are in storage, including flagship players like Northvolt, a vertically integrated sustainable battery manufacturer, and Skeleton Technologies, a global leader in ultracapacitors who is playing a key role within leading OEMs.

Following the mandate of the EU Commission, EIT InnoEnergy is leading the industrial stream of the European Battery Alliance in 2017, a European Commission initiative to build a strong and competitive European battery industry.

EIT InnoEnergy was established in 2010, has invested €560 million in sustainable energy innovations and is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

<https://innoenergy.com/>

About Schneider Electric

At Schneider, we believe access to energy and digital is a basic human right. We empower all to make the most of their energy and resources, ensuring Life Is On everywhere, for everyone, at every moment.

We provide energy and automation digital solutions for efficiency and sustainability. We combine world-leading energy technologies, real-time automation, software, and services into integrated solutions for Homes, Buildings, Data Centers, Infrastructure and Industries.

We are committed to unleash the infinite possibilities of an open, global, innovative community that is passionate about our Meaningful Purpose, Inclusive and Empowered values

<https://www.se.com/>

About the GROUPE IDEC

Founded in 2000 by Patrice LAFARGUE, the GROUPE IDEC is one of the few global players in the French real estate market, present in all businesses (planning, development, investment, design-build, tailored energy solutions) and all areas of activity (industry, logistics, services, offices, commercial, interior design ...). The GROUPE IDEC can thus provide a comprehensive and tailor-made response to its customers and partners: businesses, communities, and individuals. Composed of 20 companies, the GROUPE IDEC combines the power and leverage of a large group with the agility and ability to listen of smaller structures. Firmly established in France, the GROUPE IDEC has been accelerating its international development for the last three years.

<https://www.groupeidec.com/>

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