

Koehler examines use of hydrogen to attain its climate targets

Specialty paper producer Koehler Group has published its Climate Strategy 2030, which sets out a roadmap to fully replace fossil fuels with renewable energy. On balance the group succeeded in covering around 60 per cent of its heat demand and roughly 70 per cent of its electricity demand required for paper production by using renewable energy sources as early as 2022.

Looking for ways to replace the remaining share of natural gas it still uses for the production of paper, the group plans to examine to what extent it could utilise hydrogen in special areas of paper production. One component of Koehler Group's strategy to achieve its sustainability targets is a feasibility study together with H2Apex, a company specialising in the storage of green hydrogen, in order to assess the opportunities presented by green hydrogen. The group intends to produce more renewable energy than it needs for manufacturing its products. Koehler is prepared to spend half a billion euros on achieving net zero within the group.

Most recently Koehler Renewable Energy, which forms part of Koehler Group, started up a new wind farm in Wetzlar-Blasbach in the west of Germany. In addition, another five turbines in a wind farm near Waldeck in central Germany are about to be constructed in the year 2025. A further wind farm with two turbines in Lich in the same region are also expected to be started up in 2025.

Koehler's climate targets

The transformation process at Koehler Group is underway. The group explains that the aim is to cut direct Scope 1 fossil-based greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent by 2030, before achieving net zero by 2045. The group has already made investments, and further capital expenditures are on its agenda. Currently, Koehler Group is spend-

ing over €70m on rebuilding its combined heat and power station in Oberkirch, which is being converted to run on biomass instead of hard coal. The decarbonisation of the power plant in Oberkirch will save around 150,000 t of direct fossil CO₂ emissions each year.

For process-related reasons, a certain volume of natural gas has to date also been used for producing paper. This has been necessary to achieve the high temperatures required for drying the paper coating. By 2045, Koehler intends to be completely free from fossil fuels, which also includes natural gas.

Ambitious goals have also been defined in the Climate Strategy for indirect emissions. These provide for the full compensation of Scope 2 emissions, which relate to purchased energy, by the year 2030. In order to reach this aim, Koehler Group is relying on the purchase of green electricity and on using guarantees of origin for renewable energies.

For example, production line 8 at Koehler Paper's Kehl plant exclusively uses green energy that stems from renewable power generation based on hydropower in the Black Forest and wind power from the Netherlands.

All other emissions along the value chain are covered by Scope 3. This includes greenhouse gas emissions exhausted along the supply chain, i. e. during the production of raw materials or in the logistics chain, and in connection with using and disposing of Koehler's products. As Koehler is not the direct cause of these emissions, recording and reduction are far more challenging. Nevertheless, the group is determined to make a contribution in this regard. It therefore aims at reducing Scope 3 emissions by 20 per cent by 2030, before they are to decrease by 25 per cent by 2040. □

UPM electrifies heat and steam generation in Germany

UPM started installing an electric boiler at its Schongau paper mill. The move represents a seven-digit euro investment to upgrade heat and steam generators with thermal recovery for the TMP mill at the site. UPM expects to commission the new equipment at the end of the second quarter of 2024.

The installation in Schongau is part of an investment package UPM announced a year ago for eight German and Finnish paper mills to improve heat and steam generation. According to these plans, gas boilers would be replaced with electrical boilers to optimise reliable supply to paper mills in Schongau, Augsburg, Ettringen and

Dörpen, UPM announced. Switching from gas to electrical power is aimed to reduce the group's CO₂ emissions.

The upgrade at the Schongau site will reportedly involve installing a so-called reboiler for the existing thermal recovery plant of the TMP mill at the site. It will increase overall efficiency of the TMP mill with recovered steam replacing the steam recovered from the gas-powered plants.

The electrical steam generators in Augsburg and Ettringen will start operating in the second quarter of 2024. The steam generators at the Nordland Papier mill in Dörpen has already been in operation from last year's second quarter. □

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