

Press release

Morges, 9 January 2024

Further step towards energy independence

The Eoliennes de Sainte-Croix wind farm becomes part of Swiss energetic mix

After a 25-year process, including two years of construction work, the six turbines situated atop the Jura mountains will officially come on stream on January 2024. This wind farm – the first ever in the canton of Vaud – exemplifies the domestic generation capabilities that Switzerland so desperately needs, adding a 22 million kWh annually production.

Because of stronger winds in winter, wind power is the perfect partner for solar and hydroelectric assets, which have a lower output in that season. This makes it the perfect time of year to add a new domestic power source to the grid.

The entire project took 25 years to complete. In March 2021, the Swiss Federal Supreme Court ruled in its favour, declaring the project to be of national interest under the Energy Act. After two years of construction work following that ruling, the turbines are now turning and generating energy.

An emblematic project of the highest standard

Throughout the construction process, which began on 13 October 2021, all stakeholders maintained an exceptional level of enthusiasm and commitment to the project. This is currently the only wind turbine project under way in Switzerland. Together with its mitigation measures, this project reflects an ideal that respects both people and the environment.

The employees working on the project were extremely courteous and considerate towards local residents and hikers in the area, so much so that at the wrap-up local information meeting in the spring of 2023, many local people expressed appreciation of their conduct.

This construction project is in line with the Group's sustainability pillars. In the social field, for example, it was keen to bring a non-profit organisation (Embellimur) on board to assist with the reconstruction of dry-stone walls on the site, which was one of the mitigation measures.

Romande Energie has complied with all applicable regulations and additional requests from various authorities. The project team has always been accessible and available to talk to local residents who wanted information or had concerns.

The Group's environmental pillar – a core value of the project – strictly guided decision-making at all times.

Test phase

Once the rotor blades had been mounted on the 98-metre-high towers, the six wind turbines were connected to the regional substation in Sainte-Croix by means of a below-ground 20 kV medium-voltage cable network extending over more than 10 km, and then the installation underwent a series of tests in preparation for commissioning from January 2024 on.

The turbines automatically start to rotate when the wind speed reaches 9 km/h. The installation is equipped with various sensors. The nacelle and rotor blades move into the wind and adapt to the wind speed (up to 100 km/h, at which point the turbines automatically shut down).

Environmental monitoring

An environmental monitoring committee has been set up in cooperation with the canton of Vaud, the environmental charities Aspobirdlife and ProNatura, the municipalities of Sainte-Croix and Baulmes, the environmental consultancy working on the project, and Romande Energie, to monitor operations and check that mitigation measures have been put in place and are working. Mitigation measures have included the installation of barriers at specific access points to protect birdlife, bat monitoring equipment and electricity pylon upgrades. A radar system will be installed next spring to track bird migration and halt the turbines whenever there is a heightened risk of collision.

Next project stages

The turbines may be capable of generating power but the project is not yet fully complete. Additional environmental mitigation measures are planned. For example, work will be carried out next year to ensure that the ground platforms of the turbines blend into the landscape by adapting their appearance and planting greenery around them. The tracks created for the construction work will also be restored to their original condition. This will be followed by civil engineering work in partnership with the Sainte-Croix municipality to complete the waste-water system and bury the electricity and telephone cables connected with the Gittaz hamlet. These measures will be largely financed by Romande Energie.

It is estimated that the Eoliennes de Sainte-Croix will feed 22 million kWh annually into the grid, which would cover the entire demand from all homes, businesses and factories in the town of Sainte-Croix.

Click [here](#) to view the documentary telling the story of this groundbreaking project (in French).

An open day for residents of Sainte-Croix is planned for Saturday 4 May 2024.

Contact

Michèle Cassani
Spokesperson, Romande Energie Group
+41 (0)21 802 95 67
michele.cassani@romande-energie.ch

Romande Energie at a glance

The Romande Energie Group is the leading electricity provider in Western Switzerland with services spanning the energy value chain. It offers a wide range of sustainability solutions to help cut carbon emissions, including tailor-made support for the independent production of clean energy as well as products and services that save energy and encourage smarter energy use.

Romande Energie aims to make Western Switzerland the first region in the country to be 'net zero'. It continues to invest heavily in expanding its network of local renewable assets – solar farms, hydropower and biomass plants, its many district heating networks, and its geothermal and wind projects – with an ever-increasing share of renewable energy supplied to its customers.

Romande Energie is committed to being a trustworthy partner in creating a society that respects the environment and people, and in promoting a sustainable local economy. **Helping customers build this sustainable future** is its core purpose.

For more information, visit romande-energie.ch