

Press release

Morges, 12 December 2022

Romande Energie promoting biomass as reused energy source and supporting start-up Proxipel

As a producer of renewable energy, the Romande Energie Group is helping to lead the decarbonisation drive in Western Switzerland. The group, which owns the Enerbois biomass plant in Rueyres (Vaud canton), is now expanding in this field by investing in Proxipel, a start-up offering a solution producing pellets from biomass material.

Biomass is a useful source of clean energy for advancing the energy transition that is so vital for Switzerland. Power and heat can be recovered from timber by-products. Woody residue can be hardened into pellets to offer a viable alternative to fuel oil as a feedstock for boilers. The Enerbois plant in Rueyres, owned by Romande Energie, produces no less than 20,000 tonnes of pellets every year. Demand is currently higher because of energy market conditions.

Keen to partner with and support start-ups, Romande Energie SA is acquiring a 4.5% interest in Proxipel, based in Le Vaud. Proxipel's business model involves a mobile pellet-production unit that transforms green waste into pellets for heating as it moves from location to location. The pellet-production unit, mounted on a truck trailer, can be used by municipalities and their forestry services, or directly by waste collection centres, provided that the wood has not been treated beforehand.

This mobile production unit is already a success story, having won the innovation prize from the Region of Nyon. It is also attracting attention from outside Switzerland, with several countries expressing interest in using this same type of mobile unit on their territory.

“Romande Energie is aiming to make Western Switzerland the first net-zero region in the country through actions supporting all its stakeholders,” says Paolo Pizzolato, head of venture capital at Romande Energie. “By investing in this start-up, we want to help broaden Proxipel's impact. Romande Energie is a specialist in renewable energies, including biomass, and is focusing on local sourcing. We salute the ingenuity and sustainability of this concept for our vital transition to cleaner energy.”

“We're delighted we can count on the expertise and network of a company such as Romande Energie to help us develop our concept of a mobile pellet plant,” says Richard Pfister, co-founder and co-owner of Proxipel. “We believe that the recycling of woody residues into heat-generating pellets, locally and as needed, represents a huge opportunity. We're glad to have Romande Energie alongside for this next stage of our development as a start-up.”

As well as meeting the current brisk demand for pellets, Proxipel slots neatly into an ecosystem that is highly beneficial for forestry managers. They will no longer have to pay to dispose of forestry by-products and can also earn income from pellet sales. This example of the circular economy in action is a welcome development amid the current energy crisis.



Contacts

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

Richard Pfister
CEO, Proxipel
+41 (0)79 333 24 86
richard.pfister@proxipel.com

Romande Energie at a glance

Romande Energie Group is the leading supplier of electricity in Western Switzerland and a mainstay in the Swiss energy industry. It offers several sustainable solutions for the distribution and generation of electricity in addition to energy services, which include efficiency and electromobility solutions.

All its generation assets are driven by renewable sources of energy. Additionally, it is working hand in hand with customers, investors and employees to provide ever-better standards of living through innovative services and a commitment to sustainability. In addition to security of supply, the Group is dedicated to offering innovative services that meet customers' expectations as it supports them in switching to more sustainable sources of energy in pursuit of a net-zero goal in Western Switzerland.

For more information, go to www.romande-energie.ch