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John Cockerill strengthens its microgrid activities in Africa by acquiring AUSAR Energy

On October 31, 2022, John Cockerill acquired from ENGIE 51% of the shares of the French company AUSAR Energy (Lyon). AUSAR Energy develops and deploys microgrids in Africa, delivering carbon-free and price-competitive energy to off-grid areas and industries. This acquisition perfectly fits with John Cockerill's ambition to facilitate access to low-carbon energy, and completes John Cockerill Integrated Renewable Solution's offering for the African market, combining solar panels, battery storage and gensets, as well as its in-house Energy Management System.

Benefitting from the power cabinet technology developed by AUSAR Energy's historical shareholder Centum T&S, AUSAR Energy's microgrids are both quickly deployable and reliable. They offer an efficient solution to deliver carbon-free, price-competitive and reliable energy, especially in Africa, for off-grid areas and industries where most of the power is produced by diesel generators and grid stability is often a problem.

Dieter Hasevoets, Business Line Manager IRS: *« At John Cockerill we have the ambition to decarbonize human activities, fight against climate change and give people access to sustainable energy at a competitive and stable price. This acquisition is a perfect example of how we join forces to carry out this mission. We want to thank ENGIE for the good collaboration throughout the acquisition process, and look forward to further develop our activities with AUSAR Energy. »*

This acquisition will allow John Cockerill to speed up its activities across Africa: John Cockerill targets off-grid industrial clients in Sub-Saharan Africa, leveraging its experience in PV, battery storage and Energy Management System. It has acquired extensive experience in microgrids and battery storage thanks to MiRIS, a microgrid installed at John Cockerill's headquarter in Belgium in 2018. It has also developed several external EPC projects in Europe and Africa involving Lithium and NaS battery storage, PV and green EV charging hubs, and has developed its own in-house Energy Management System, a powerful tool to optimize microgrid operation in function of weather forecast, consumption profile, grid prices etc.

From AUSAR Energy's point of view, integrating John Cockerill will allow it to accelerate its product development and project pipeline deployment. AUSAR Energy recently signed a contract for two microgrid projects in Djibouti for the national utility EDD (Electricité De Djibouti). The project consists of 2 off-grid localities currently powered by diesel generators to be equipped with 3MWp PV, 4MWh battery storage and AUSAR's proprietary Power Management System. Beyond this project, AUSAR has a promising pipeline for MW-scale microgrid projects in several countries including Gabon, Djibouti and Mauritania.

MiRiS: an innovative microgrid that continues to grow

MiRiS is an electrical microgrid project that combines renewable energy production with battery storage. The particularity of MiRiS, which makes it a unique project in Europe, is the diversity of the battery storage systems installed and the extensive flexibility of the various electrical network configurations allowed by the system. Currently MiRiS produces green energy from a 2 MW photovoltaic system rooftop mounted on John Cockerill's headquarters workshops. The storage capacities include four different technologies, totaling 2.5 MW of power and 4 MWh of energy capacity. The system is connected to a power grid that can replicate different configurations: grid-connected, island mode or weak/failed grids. The system is controlled by an intelligent software developed by John Cockerill. Precise measurements, collected through a secure and efficient communication system, allow real-time monitoring of the equipment. Computer algorithms and forecasting models optimize the energy flows exchanged between renewable production, battery, consumption site and the electrical grid, to which the excess energy is sold. Launched in 2018, the MiRiS project powers the Group's Headquarters with renewable electricity and helps greening John Cockerill's vehicle fleet.

John Cockerill, leading the energy transition

John Cockerill is a world player in the energy transition. Backed by more than 200 years of experience in energy and industry, the Group is today developing innovative technological solutions which contribute to the decarbonization of human activities, either by developing new electricity production capacities from renewable sources, storing green electricity or optimizing the electricity output of existing electric power plants and industrial installations. It adapts its technologies and expertise – heat recuperation boilers for combined cycle gas-steam electric power plant, units for the production, storage and distribution of green hydrogen, receivers for thermo-solar concentration power plants, integrated units for the production, storage and management of green electricity, industrial boilers, wind turbine and hydroelectric installation maintenance, nuclear pipe-work, the automation of industrial processes – to the specific needs of its clients in the industrial and energy domains. John Cockerill is thus providing its technological contribution to the fight against climate change.

John Cockerill, enabler of opportunities

Driven since 1817 by the entrepreneurial spirit and passion for innovation of its founder, the John Cockerill Group develops large-scale technological solutions to meet the needs of its time: preserving natural resources, contributing to greener mobility, manufacturing sustainably, building security and facilitating access to renewable energy.

Its offer to businesses, governments and communities consists of services and associated equipment for the sectors of energy, defence, industry, the environment, transport and infrastructures. John Cockerill achieved a turnover of 947 million euro in 22 countries on five continents in 2021.

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