

## **A year after its creation, Bontaz's "Fuel Cell & Hydrogen" Business Unit is preparing the pre-industrialisation phase of its projects for 2024.**

Bontaz's hydrogen "branch", which was launched a year ago, is the driving force behind the automotive supplier's ongoing diversification into low-carbon mobility, and is already delivering positive results, with projects under way and the prospect of pre-industrialisation from 2024 onwards.

Over the past year, by positioning itself on a new market sector for fuel cells and hydrogen, the Bontaz Group asserts its commitment to diversifying its traditional business of hydraulic sub-assemblies for internal combustion engines.

Under the direction of Yohann Perrot, the "Fuel Cell & Hydrogen" Business Unit (B.U.) is working on two separate innovative technologies:

- Cooling the fuel cell system by designing 2 or even 3-way valves
- The creation of specific valves to adjust the flow rates in the hydrogen section.

In terms of objectives, the B.U. aims a 5\* level of technological maturity for the cooling and 4\* for the hydrogen section by the end of the year.

*"We are on course to reach these levels of technological maturity. Which will also involve test phases, both in-house and with our customers", says Yohann Perrot, Director of the B.U. Fuel Cell & Hydrogen*

In this respect, the Bontaz Group was recently rewarded by one of its customers for its "filtration system in the cooling loop" technology, a sound endorsement in the eyes of the market.

Meanwhile, the entity's twenty-strong team continues the innovation, development and standardisation phase for these two technologies in order to best meet customer demands. The standardisation of processes, which requires prior receipt of specifications from key customers, is being consolidated and will continue through to end of 2023.

*"We are working on the phases of product approval (operational, durability), consolidation and development of the design aspect. Pre-industrialisation will not start before 2024", states Yohann Perrot.*

**A sales dynamic already under way and recruitment in the pipeline**



The projects launched by the Hydrogen Business Unit have already been adopted by sub-segments of the road transport, maritime, rail and aeronautics markets, with 8 projects at various stages of development.

To date, one road transport customer (heavy duty truck) has already made a commitment to the Haute-Savoie equipment manufacturer. Bontaz is currently involved in three calls for tenders, which would pave the way for mass production. Finally, 4 recent contacts are in the pre-project phase, with a view to preparing the first technology demonstrators.

At the same time, and to support this dynamic and anchor the Bontaz Group at the heart of the hydrogen ecosystem on a national and international level, the B.U. has also applied for a call for Hydrogen projects from the BPI (*French Public Investment Bank*).

In terms of workforce, the Fuel Cell & Hydrogen Business Unit needs to build on this momentum to meet the many challenges and projects it will be tackling over the next 2-3 years. To this end, it is looking to recruit **around ten** employees across a number of departments.

### **Pre-industrialisation in 2024, with eco-design**

By planning its pre-industrialisation phase in 2024, the B.U., as with other Group activities, also wants to incorporate the concept of eco-design, with a research and development programme that is due to run until 2026-2027.

As a first step, Bontaz will be using **recycled plastic** in the manufacturing of the “cooling” valves. Research into the design of the components used will also be carried out. The next stage will involve making parts lighter to reduce the carbon emissions of vehicles: *“Vehicle mass is a top priority. We will be looking to optimise the parts and trim back any extra grams”*.

### **The “Fuel Cell & Hydrogen” B.U. in figures:**

- Around twenty employees (outside production), throughout Europe, Asia and North America
- Between €30 and 40 M in revenues expected in 2030

4\*: approval of components or models in laboratory / 5\*: approval of components or models in a representative environment



## About the Bontaz Group

Did you know that more than one out of two vehicles in operation around the world is equipped with a hydraulic sub-assembly designed and manufactured by the Bontaz Group?

Founded in 1965 in the heart of the Arve Valley, this family-run French mid-cap business, whose head offices are located in Marnaz (Haute-Savoie), has conquered the world and established its position as a tier-1 automotive supplier recognised by car manufacturers worldwide. With the strength of its excellent industrial expertise, which vertically integrates the design, development, production and distribution stages, and by the commitment of its 4,000 employees at 24 sites around the world, the Bontaz Group has been quick to embrace the opportunities created by the new economic and environmental landscape in the automotive sector.

A €200 million investment and diversification plan, combined with an extensive reorganisation, will enable the company to meet the challenges of decarbonising its traditional markets (automotive, truck & off-road), by producing solutions for electric or hydrogen-powered vehicles, while positioning itself in the light mobility segment, with the launch of hydraulic brakes for electrically-assisted bikes from 2023.

This plan is being developed in line with a committed sustainable development policy rooted in the values and history of Bontaz. As part of its B1 2030 strategy, this drive by Bontaz continues to give substance to its primary ambition: to design, develop and produce high-performance technical solutions responsibly and reliably, while aligning its customers' needs with today's social and environmental challenges.

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