LE MAG
2025 EDITION

GO FOR RE

Setting the course for renewable energy

Here, energy stakeholders are turning towards sustainable solutions

MONTPELLIER
LET'S MAKE
A NEW WORLD!

Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole

✿Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole
Design: Agence Sensse
Layout: Attractiveness, Economic Development and Employment Department -11/2025
Illustration: K-Prodz
Printing: Imprimerie Debourg

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Why Montpellier?

The urgency to act on energy transition

Renewable energy has shown real growth over the past few years. In 2023, renewable sources accounted for 22.3% of gross end-use energy consumption in France, compared to 9.3% in 2005. Their share has increased by 13 percentage points in 18 years.

Despite the legislative uncertainties of recent months in France that are impacting renewable energy development, France will nonetheless have to ramp up deployment, with the "Energy-Climate" law setting a target of 33% renewable energy in gross final energy consumption by 2030.

The climate emergency is such that the energy transition must be accelerated. Fortunately, the Montpellier area is home to many players in a position to contribute to this effort. With more than 4,500 direct local jobs linked to renewable energy, the area benefits from a concentration of major French players, a network of innovative companies and startups, the Derbi-Cemater and Mer Méditerranée competitiveness clusters, academic expertise, and mobilized public and private stakeholders.

Although Paris remains a major hub, all the players involved with an economic cluster for renewable energy are also present in the Montpellier area.

Wood-fueled boiler room ©3M

Wind turbine ©3M

Montpellier, leading the way in renewable energy

It all started in the 1990s! At that time, wind power was still in its experimental stages and France did not have any wind farms connected to the national grid. But a young Montpellier-based company, La Compagnie du Vent, founded in 1989 by Jean-Michel Germa, was determined to prove the technical and economic feasibility of a wind farm connected to the grid in mainland France.

In 1991, the company installed France's very first wind turbine in Port-la-Nouvelle (Aude department) where electricity generated by wind was fed into the national grid for the first time. The event represented a milestone in the development of the French wind power industry.

The same year was also marked by the creation of Apex Énergies in Montpellier, a pioneering photovoltaic company that remains one of the area's flagship businesses, covering the entire value chain by integrating power plant engineering, construction, development, operation, and maintenance.

Since that time, the industry has continued to grow locally, with companies such as Valeco (created in 1998) and Quadran (created in 2005, becoming Qair in 2020). Founded by Jean-Marc Bouchet, these two companies are active in both wind and photovoltaic energy.

At the same time, a high-level scientific foundation was established around University of Montpellier, engineering schools (Polytech, SupAgro, ENSCM, EPF, etc.), research organizations (CNRS, IRD, etc.), and the Derbi-Cemater com/ cluster, while other pioneers continued to expand the range of offerings within the sector. This is the case for Enerfip, founded in Montpellier in 2014, one of the very first crowdfunding platforms dedicated to renewable energy projects.

The sector today counts nearly 300 players in the area, including more than 170 companies and headquarters for industry majors such as EDF Power Solutions, Engie Green, TotalEnergies Renouvelables, and others, along with producers, and equipment suppliers such as Elements and Vol-V. Interestingly, although several companies have since changed hands, they have continued to grow locally, with their founders and team members embarking on other equally innovative and job-creating projects.

Montpellier BIC plays a valuable role in supporting innovative start-ups in the sector, including well-known alumni such as Urbasolar, Sereema, and Comwatt.

This entrepreneurial dynamic is one of the area's greatest strengths, and one that has never been disputed.

Making the energy transition a reality in the Occitanie region ©3M

Pioneers in renewable energy

Joint interview with Gilles Leandro, Managing Director of MGH Energy/Sunti, and Guirec Dufour, CEO of Qair.

How do you see Montpellier's potential in terms of renewable energy?

Gilles Leandro *I've been working in renewable energy in Montpellier for over 20 years, and with Jean-Michel Germa, the CEO of my company, for over 30 years. The Montpellier area benefits from considerable natural solar and wind resources. That is why many players have set up here, so they can be close to the sites to be developed and operated. An ecosystem has been established, from engineering firms and manufacturers to maintenance companies and specialized banks, working within France and internationally. One of the reasons they chose to set up here is because there were already many developers in the area. The resulting ecosystem makes it possible to undertake ambitious projects with colleagues. A good example is Energies du Sud (Altémed), with whom we installed shade structures for the Montpellier Méditerranée Airport parking lot.*

Guirec Dufour *The playing field here is fantastic, with wind, sun, and sea. The metropolitan area is recognized as a hub for renewable energy. This brings an additional benefit: employees who come here to work for a company know that if they encounter problems with that company, they can easily find another employer. Establishing Qair's national headquarters in Montpellier (in the Cambacérès district, close to the TGV Montpellier Sud de France train station) was an obvious choice. The advantages of a location like Montpellier are essential for attracting high-level skills, particularly in marine energy.*

How did Montpellier Métropole's teams assist you?

Guirec Dufour *As part of the cluster created in 2024, we can discuss our challenges with peers and work together to defend our interests. It is always beneficial to exchange views and get an outside perspective, especially when we are so busy with day-to-day activities.*

Gilles Leandro *Many training courses are emerging in the field of renewable energy and hydrogen. We are working with Professor Gilles Taillades at the University of Montpellier. He is involved in the Master's program in Energy and the GENHYO (Génération Hydrogène Occitanie) program specializing in hydrogen. Having a pool of qualified local talent is essential in a fast-growing sector. For example, five of Sunti's 20 employees graduated from Polytech Montpellier.*

Similarly, the Cap sur le Maroc event coordinated by Montpellier Métropole in September highlighted some particularly interesting opportunities in the Moroccan market.

Renewable energy is facing some challenging times. What is your message for the Energaïa event?

Gilles Leandro *Renewable energy has been under a lot of pressure in recent months. We are waiting for the "PPE 3" multi-year energy program. A moratorium was proposed in the French National Assembly in June, and a lot of misinformation is circulating about renewable energy, even though it is highly competitive with respect to fossil fuels. Faced with the threat of a slowdown in renewable energy, and at a time when we really should be accelerating, we need allies and political forces to show that renewable energy is truly the way forward. This led us to diversify into international activities and synthetic fuels.*

Guirec Dufour *The French market is politically unstable. It takes two years for decrees to be issued. PPE 3 has been expected for two years, and half the National Assembly is opposed to renewable energy. The end of regulated access to historic nuclear electricity (ARENH) makes the electricity market very uncertain. This is not a particularly favorable period, but it is not the first time: we already overcame the moratorium in 2010 and the one on zoned wind-power development areas (ZDEs). And we are still here!*

How do you see the two Montpellier-based renewable energy pioneers you still work with, Jean-Michel Germa and Jean-Marc Bouchet?

Guirec Dufour *We always got along well at the former Compagnie du Vent. They are "friendly rivals." Jean-Michel Germa and Jean-Marc Bouchet have always had a similar approach, which is pragmatic and agile, favoring trusted partners with whom you don't have to sign 800-page contracts to get things done together (smile).*

Gilles Leandro *They were the ones who helped renewable energy take off in France in the 1990s. These pioneers believed in the new energy source. Today's situation proves that they were right. Their journey mirrors the sector's growth: first wind power, followed by a shift towards solar. Today, Qair is more focused on hydrogen, while MGH Energy is concentrating on its derivatives. Jean-Michel Germa and Jean-Marc Bouchet have kept one step ahead. It's very motivating to work with such visionary entrepreneurs, who have stayed the course and remained true to their convictions. Even in hard times, they are driven by the same force to keep pushing forward.*

Sector strengths in the Montpellier area

There are many reasons why the Montpellier area has become a cradle for renewable energy. First of all, its natural and climatic characteristics make it ideal. The area enjoys one of the highest levels of sunshine in France, with over 2,700 hours of sun per year, one of the highest in Europe.

Yet, while our area is ideal for photovoltaic energy (roofs, shade structures, ground-mounted systems) and solar thermal energy (domestic hot water, heating networks), it also has potential linked to the frequent Tramontane and Mistral winds and offers favorable conditions for the development of geothermal energy. This asset is rare in urbanized Mediterranean areas.

Beyond geographical considerations, the Montpellier Métropole area has developed tools to promote its own renewable energy potential. A local Climate and Energy Plan was adopted in the 2000s, well before it became a national requirement. This is now being followed up by a solidarity-based Territorial Climate, Air, and Energy Plan, seeking to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, as well as a 2050 Solar Plan with a solar land registry and an Energy Master Plan.

Illustrating this culture in terms of renewable energy, numerous technological demonstrators have been or are being tested by stakeholders in the Montpellier area.

The area is also home to a number of positive energy buildings, including the Jacques Chirac school campus in Castelnau-le-Lez and the Le Liner building in Pérols, which is powered by energy generated from geothermal probes. Also, a groundwater geothermal power plant was opened in May 2024 in Montpellier's Cambacérès business district, providing power to the Montpellier Sud-de-France train station and the Halle de l'Innovation building.

In the same year, following the Demo-Tase call for projects to develop technological building blocks and demonstrators for energy systems as part of the France 2030 investment plan, Montpellier-based company SolarinBlue secured €6 million in funding to install an offshore solar farm in the port of Sète.

This industrial effervescence has been accompanied by partnerships with local stakeholders, a characteristic feature of local ecosystem operation. Going even further, Montpellier Métropole launched the Rencontres des EnR (Renewable Energy Meetings), the first edition of which was held in 2024. That event laid the foundations for creating the renewable energy cluster, which was made official a few months later at the Energaïa conference in December 2024.

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New renewable energy projects in the Montpellier area in 2024

Aerial view: Montpellier has its own solar land registry ©3M

Cambacérès district powered by underground energy ©3M

BUILDING A STRONG SECTOR

A renewable energy cluster to support the industry

Announced in late 2024 at the Energaïa conference and consolidated in 2025, the renewable energy cluster aims to unite and stimulate the local sector, regardless of the energy source (wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, etc.) and across the entire value chain, from development and production to storage, management, energy efficiency, and recycling. Action in response to the principle: "We may go faster alone, but we go further together."

Jointly developed with all stakeholders in the sector, the cluster focuses on four key areas: taking action to promote employment and skills in order to meet the needs of businesses; showcasing innovations emerging in the area; addressing local and national regulatory issues to accelerate project implementation; and increasing exposure of the ecosystem to increase its attractiveness.

Each priority axis is coordinated by a working group responsible for supporting implementation (see pages 14-15). The renewable energy cluster is a flexible and agile structure that further stimulates cooperation between companies, research laboratories, educational institutions, and public-sector players.

A Charter of Commitment for renewable energy players, introduced in the summer of 2025, formalizes their implication in the renewable energy cluster. Its implementation was eagerly awaited by sector professionals, and nearly 40 stakeholders have already signed up.

Other economic players are showing their support for this initiative, including Medef Hérault Montpellier, which has set up the Cercle EnR (Renewable Energy Circle). The cluster's goal is to participate in lobbying efforts and help industry players overcome legal and regulatory obstacles by facilitating dialog between businesses and public authorities. This creates real synergy across everyone's areas of activity!

Working groups to structure and facilitate

All the working groups emerged from discussions that involved all stakeholders in the renewable energy sector. There are four groups: Training and Skills, Demonstration and Innovation Territory, Regulatory Issues, Attractiveness and Outreach. Here's an overview.

TRAINING AND SKILLS WORKING GROUP

The **Training and skills** working group has the following missions:

- Develop the desirability of careers in the renewable energy sector and encourage more women to enter these fields.
- Collaborate on establishing career paths tailored to the current and future needs of the renewable energy sector, including initial training, continuing education, and vocational retraining.
- Support campuses, schools, and apprenticeship training centers and promote the emergence of specialized programs focused on renewable energy professions.
- Participate in building the skills of local people through training, work-study programs, and job placement.
- Actively contribute to the creation of direct and indirect jobs in the area.

The working group is coordinated by Saada Dahmani, director of the France Travail Montpellier Mas de Grille employment agency.

DEMONSTRATION AND INNOVATION TERRITORY WORKING GROUP

The **Demonstration and Innovative Territory** working group has the following missions:

- Initiate the implementation of pilot projects in line with the area's digital heritage.
- Collaborate with academic, scientific, and technological stakeholders to develop innovative solutions.
- Support local applied research, experimentation, and demonstration projects.
- Help innovative startups with their development in the area.

This working group is coordinated by Yannick Fuchey, Digital Centers Competency Manager & Occitanie Ecosystem Manager for SLB.

REGULATORY ISSUES WORKING GROUP

The **Regulatory Issues** working group has the following missions:

- Collectively identify administrative or regulatory barriers to the deployment of industrial renewable energy projects.
- Work with local authorities, the government, relevant institutions, and professional organizations to simplify, test, and adapt regulatory frameworks.
- Support the emergence of local support mechanisms such as innovation permits, calls for expressions of interest, priority zoning, etc.
- Integrate land use and energy planning issues into urban planning initiatives.

The scope of this working group's activities is both local and national. his group is coordinated by Stéphane Bozzarelli, Deputy Chairman of Derbi-Cemater, and Anna Rosique, TotalEnergies, Deputy Director of Transformation at Total Énergies Renouvelables.

ATTRACTIVENESS AND OUTREACH WORKING GROUP

The **Attractiveness and Outreach** working group has the following missions:

- Promote renewable energy throughout the area.
- Join forces with all stakeholders across the value chain at both local and regional levels.
- Promote the localization, relocation, and development of strategic segments of the sector.
- Showcase the area's strengths in attracting local jobs, new businesses, investors, and talent in the field of renewable energy.
- Contribute to the exposure of local successes through active ambassadorship by participating in trade shows, events, publications, and professional networks.
- Collaborate with local elected officials to bring sector challenges to the regional and national levels.

This working group is coordinated by Virginie Monnier Mangue, Deputy Director of Enedis Languedoc-Roussillon.

A commitment charter that unites stakeholders

Unveiled on July 10, 2025, during the 2nd Renewable Energy Conference, the Charter of Commitment for Renewable Energy Stakeholders formalizes players' determination to accelerate the area's energy transition together, while ensuring local dialog, environmental quality, and the creation of non-relocatable jobs.

In 2025, the energy transition is both a necessity and a major opportunity to address climate, environmental, and social challenges. The Charter of Commitment for Renewable Energy Stakeholders encourages and formalizes the development of renewable energy throughout the area. It also helps strengthen the attractiveness of the area's renewable energy ecosystem by fostering strong partnerships and a spirit of open cooperation.

A partnership steering committee monitors and coordinates the actions undertaken in the four areas covered by the four working groups: Training and Skills, Demonstration and Innovation Territory, Regulatory Issues, Attractiveness and Outreach. (see pages 14-15)

A collective assessment is carried out each year to measure progress, adjust priorities, and bring in new partners.

The charter remains flexible and can be revised to incorporate new directions or partners, depending on the dynamics at play locally.

Nearing the end of 2025, the charter has 35 signatories, including major national players (EDF Power Solutions, Engie Green, Total Energies Renouvelables, etc.) as well as independent producers and suppliers (Qair, Soper, Urbasolar Valeco, etc.), along with the Caisse des Dépôts group, France Travail, GRDF, the Derbi-Cemater competitiveness cluster, UIMM, French Tech Méditerranée, and more.

Signatories of the commitment charter:

BIOTOPE
CAISSE DES DÉPÔTS GROUPE
CELSIUS ENERGY
CEMATER
DERBI-CEMATER
EDF
EDF RENOUVELABLES
ENEDIS
ÉNERGIES DU SUD BY ALTEMED
ENGIE
EPF
FRANCE TRAVAIL
GRDF
LA FRENCH TECH MED
LOOKUP
MAÏA ÉNERGIE
MGH ENERGY
NOTUS
OMEXOM
POLYTECH MONTPELLIER
QAIR
SIANSE
SIREOS
SOPER
SLB
SUN R
SUNTI
SWEEN
TERINOV
TOTALENERGIES
UIMM
URBASOLAR
VALECO
VALECO ENBW
WATTEOS

Annual opportunities for sharing

100 participants at the first event, 150 at the next. Launched in 2024, the Rencontres des EnR (Renewable Energy Conference) has become the most important event for professionals in the area. Held on June 20, 2024, at the Halle de l'Innovation, the first event laid the foundations for a collective approach by defining a framework for structuring the sector.

Thanks to these first events, we were able to kick off the joint elaboration of the sector's development strategy, based on an assessment and shared ambitions among all stakeholders.

This marked the foundation of the local renewable energy cluster and provided an opportunity to announce a new incubation program called Henera, which supports innovative start-ups in the field of carbon-free energy (see page 33).

The launch of the Renewable Energy Cluster was presented formally to a broad panel of industry representatives at the Energaïa conference in December 2024. The Cluster is based on collective work organized into working groups designed to jointly address the main challenges facing the industry. Each working group focuses on a specific topic and helps confirm the directions and actions to take in support of renewable energy development in the area.

The second meeting, held on July 10, 2025, at the Halle de l'Innovation, cemented the event's presence on Montpellier's agenda. The first session opened the discussion on energy mix issues and highlighted geothermal energy as a major and promising energy source. High-level speakers, researchers, and entrepreneurs presented the properties and potential of geothermal energy, drawing on actual use cases and concrete fields of study in France... and Montpellier.

The event also provided an opportunity to review the work done up to now. The working groups were presented and the Charter of Commitment was unveiled and signed by the group (see page 16).

> ***We chose Montpellier as our second base to develop our projects.***
>
> Philippe Lesoil, Managing Director of Maïa Énergie, which designs and implements geothermal systems

Renewable Energy Meetings at the Halle de l'Innovation (Cambacérès district) ©3M

Energaïa, the annual must-attend professional event

Nearly 22,000 participants in 2024, marking a record 32% increase in attendance! The Energaïa forum, held every year in December at the Montpellier Parc des Expositions, has established itself as a major national and international event for professionals involved in the energy transition. The number of exhibitors has more than doubled over the last three events.

Held in the Montpellier Métropole area, with support from the Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée Region, Energaïa offers the ideal opportunity to stay up to date with the latest trends, regulations, technologies, and field experience in renewable energy. It is the place to showcase your company, products, and innovations, with a forum for meeting partners, customers, and suppliers, and even forging new collaborations.

A leading venue for networking, Energaïa also sets the stage for debates on public energy transition policies, which is useful for both local authorities and strategic companies. Once again, the event offers a particularly packed program with numerous round-tables, this year focusing in particular on "*the latest news in the solar sector: what to expect for 2026?*", "*artificial intelligence and renewable energy*", "*strategies for diversifying producer revenues*", and *"real-life testimonials regarding storage plants*." Green hydrogen will also be on the agenda.

In addition, this year's Energaïa will also address the convergence of green gas, hydrogen, and solar thermal energy: three links in the same energy system. "*Find out how these sectors work together to strengthen the resilience, flexibility, and decarbonization of the French energy mix,"* the announcement states.

The beating heart of renewable energy resonates at Energaïa, where all the key players from France and around the world come together for two days of discussions, entrepreneurship, and future projects.

Montpellier reinforces its position at the ENERGAÏA conference every year ©3M

Major groups based in Montpellier

EDF, a key player in decarbonization

While France already produces more than 95% carbon-free electricity and Occitanie 99%, the challenge no longer lies as much in production as it does in consumption. “We produce clean energy, but consumption still tends to be overly carbon-intensive. We need to help territories adopt decarbonized energy consumption in a rational and controlled manner,” explains Bastien Toulemonde, Director of Regional Action for the EDF Group in Occitanie.

This rationale is based on two priorities: reducing energy consumption and promoting the use of decarbonized energy. To achieve these objectives, EDF provides developers and energy users with the skills and resources they need to decarbonize their energy consumption.

In Occitanie, this strategy is particularly evident in renewable heating projects. EDF’s subsidiary Dalkia, which specializes in energy services, operates two thalassothermal networks that use seawater to produce heating and cooling. The future network in La Grande-Motte (just outside Montpellier) will supply more than 3,000 homes and all public buildings. “This project will reduce energy bills by 5% and avoid the emission of 1,800 tons of CO_2 per year,” explains Bastien Toulemonde.

In Sète (also near Montpellier), a second network commissioned in 2023 prevents the emission of 4,600 tons of CO_2 per year. In terms of electricity production, EDF continues to optimize the operation of its power plants and develop new projects, while ensuring the preservation of biodiversity.

The company is also focusing on cooperation between the various players and institutions. “We need to work together, anticipate, and engage with regulators, network operators, associations, and others. This is a sector-wide approach rather than a group-wide approach,” says Bastien Toulemonde. EDF is also involved with local incubators, such as Henera in Montpellier (see page 33).

Motteo thalassothermal network

Enedis, a vital link in the energy transition

A key player in the energy transition, Enedis is investing €223 million this year alone to modernize the network in the former Languedoc-Roussillon region. This investment will strengthen its resilience to climate change and support increasing levels of electricity use.

Enedis is a major employer in the area, with 1,500 employees and more than 720 indirect jobs in the coastal departments of western Occitanie. It plays a central role in the development of renewable energies: 90% of today's renewable energy installations are connected to its network. To help keep up with this trend, the company has set up an Energy Transition agency in Montpellier, which focuses on helping project leaders, along with a team that specializes in collective self-consumption to serve local authorities and players.

"*Our expertise in Montpellier covers all aspects of renewable energy production, digital technology, and network management*," explains Virginie Monnier Mangue, Deputy Regional Director of Enedis Languedoc-Roussillon, who is involved in the area's collective dynamic by coordinating the Attractiveness and Outreach working group (see page 15). "*We have everything we need to succeed in Montpellier because all the skills in the value chain are available here. The challenge for tomorrow is how to manage renewable energy, which requires new solutions*."

Nevertheless, the Montpellier area is ideal for developing innovations. "*This is the birthplace of renewable energy. All the major players in wind and solar power are located here. Not only that, but it is here that these companies have based their R&D, control, and operations centers. This is a major advantage. Secondly, the area is home to a network of innovative digital companies. A third advantage is that local stakeholders are able to work together. This is a distinctive feature of our area*," says Virginie Monnier Mangue, who concludes: "*This is where the technologies of tomorrow must be invented*."

©Enedis

Engie, an essential player in the local energy mix

Formerly GDF Suez, Engie is involved in a wide range of activities spanning the entire energy mix, from gas distribution and sale to local authorities to renewable electricity generation and the development of biomass, geothermal energy, and hydrogen. The group leverages two flagship operations in the Occitanie region.

Ocean Winds, a joint venture dedicated to offshore wind power, is spearheading major projects, including the EFGL project off the coast of Leucate, south of Montpellier, and was the winner of the recent AO6 wind farm call for tender. By 2031, approximately fifteen wind turbines will generate low-carbon electricity there. Shem (Société Hydro-Électrique du Midi), another of the group's flagships, manages several dams in the Pyrenees, contributing both to hydraulic regulation and green energy production.

Engie has nearly 550 employees in the Montpellier area, 220 of whom work for **Engie Green, based in the heart of Montpellier's Cambacérès district.** Although these teams operate nationwide, they represent a significant portion of the group's expertise in wind and solar power.

"*Renewable energy is one of the territory's hallmarks, like wine in Bordeaux and aeronautics in Toulouse,*" points out Jean-Jacques Bascoul, Engie's deputy director for the region. The group is a member of the Renewable Energy Cluster. For Jean-Jacques Bascoul, "*biomass and geothermal energy are effective complements to renewable energies.*" He concludes:

"*We are actively pursuing opportunities in hydrogen." We have no means of storing electricity. However, we can use electrolysis to convert it into hydrogen, which can be stored.*"

Jean-Jacques Bascoul ©Engie

TotalEnergies Renewables, a key presence in the area

Montpellier, the powerhouse for renewable energy in France.

Located since 2019 in 1,500 m² of office space in Lattes, just outside Montpellier, the TotalEnergies Renewables France team is comprised of 130 people.

The operational control center is located on-site, overseeing all of the energy company's renewable facilities in France.

"*Our employees are highly qualified and have a variety of different backgrounds, including engineers, lawyers, financial specialists, land experts, and property developers. Renewable energy projects are complex to set up and require a wide range of expertise,*" explains Sylvain Panas, Director of TotalEnergies in Occitanie.

The company has grown quickly in Montpellier: 20 employees in 2019, 80 in 2022, 130 today. Why did you choose this area? "*Montpellier has been a pioneer in renewable energy." We have sun and wind, and the territory has become a hub for renewable energy, with a concentration of players bringing technical and environmental engineering firms, subcontractors, and operators along with them,"* explains the director.

With the industry now well established here, TotalEnergies Renewables can find all the talent it needs locally. Specialized training programs are offered at Polytech and the Faculty of Chemistry, among others.

"*The Master's in Renewable Energy/Energy Transition prepares project managers, whom we take on as interns,"* observes Sylvain Panas, adding: "*For recent graduates looking at a map of France, Montpellier certainly ticks all the boxes in terms of quality of life.*"

He welcomes the creation of the renewable energy cluster, as well as the international scope of Energaïa and the success of the first two Renewable Energy Meetings, which he says have "*become essential.*"

In his opinion, a milestone has also been reached in terms of exports. "*We have a lot of strong skills here. Yet many countries need to develop renewable energies, in the Mediterranean and elsewhere in Europe, and they do not necessarily have our assets and expertise,*" concludes Sylvain Panas.

Photovolataic panels in Cazedarnes (PVS34) ©TotalEnergies

Photovolataic panels in Cazedarnes (PVS34) ©TotalEnergies

PVS34 ©TotalEnergies

MID-SIZED COMPANIES

Montpellier-based Elements sets out to win over Europe

Elements is celebrating its tenth anniversary in Montpellier. Founded in 2015 by Pierre-Alexandre Cichostepski and Loïc Chazalet, the company fosters a multi-energy approach covering hydroelectricity, solar power, wind power, and storage. With 110 employees, Elements has a portfolio representing 2.2 GW of projects in progress, including 100 MW under construction or in operation. In 2025, the company inaugurated several photovoltaic farms: Graulhet (2.6 MWp), Ortaffa (2.376 MWp), Castelnau-d'Aude (4.27 MWp) and Castres-Gironde (4.13 MWp), with a total capacity of 10 MWp. Other projects are underway, including a 50 MWp floating photovoltaic project in preparation in Nièvre (central France). "*We are now moving to a new scale, with larger farms and storage projects,*" says Sarah Tézenas du Montcel, communications manager at Elements.

In 2025, Elements completed repayment of its €6 million "Swell" participatory financing operation, conducted with Enerfip. A pioneer in this type of financing, Elements has raised more than €22 million to fund 30 projects with a combined capacity of 260 MW.

Today, the company is launching a new €5 million participatory fund-raising campaign to support its expansion in Europe. "*These funds will finance seven photovoltaic projects, divided between France (four projects) and Italy (three projects), with a total capacity of 122 MWp,*" says Sarah Tézenas du Montcel.

Elements is also involved in the renewable energy cluster. "*We need to work together, share our challenges, and make our voices heard by institutional bodies,*" explains Sarah Tézenas du Montcel, who concludes: "*Toulouse has aeronautics. Montpellier has the highest concentration of renewable energy companies.*"

Solar panels in Saint-Feliu d'Avall ©Elements

Enerfip, European leader in crowdfunding

Since Enerfip was founded in 2014, its mission has been to give people an opportunity to invest their savings directly in the energy transition in a transparent and responsible manner.

Founded by its CEO Julien Hostache along with Léo Lemordant, Sébastien Jamme, and Édouard Dischamps, the crowdfunding platform for renewable energy projects was one of the first of its kind in France. Approved by the French Financial Markets Authority (AMF) as a European Crowdfunding Service Provider, it is now the European leader in its sector, notably thanks to the quality of the projects it selects from among those it receives.

Enerfip offers people wishing to invest their savings in real projects with a positive environmental impact through a range of financial instruments, including simple bonds, equity investments, co-investments, and more.

It also gives them the opportunity to choose projects based on the type of energy, such as solar, wind, hydro, biomass, energy mix, storage, or others, or geographical location. The photovoltaic shade structures at the Palace of Sports in Castelnau-le-Lez, installed in 2023, were financed entirely by residents of the metropolitan area with the aim of supplying power to public buildings in the city.

Enerfip has continued to grow since that time. After buying out all of Crédit Agricole's shares in the company, Enerfip became "the only platform 100% owned by its founders and its 55 employees," says Julien Hostache, a former Valeco employee.

The platform raised nearly €160 million in 2024, a record achieved two years after the creation of Enerfip International, dedicated to international development.

"*In renewable energy, not everything happens in Paris,*" summarizes Julien Hostache, who concludes: "*Fintech companies have a unique characteristic. We have never aspired to unicorn status.*"

Paris may be France's leading financial center in the field of renewable energy, but the Montpellier area is the ideal place to expand financing for renewable energy projects.

Enerfip team ©Enerfip

Notus Energy shines from Montpellier

"*We design, finance, and operate solar and wind farms,*" summarizes Heinrich Lieser, CEO of Notus Energy France. Founded in 2001 in Potsdam, Germany, the group employs nearly 500 people worldwide, including 45 in France. Based in Montpellier since 2021, Notus Energy manages most of its photovoltaic and agrivoltaic projects in France from the south.

The capital of the Hérault department, which has become a *"hub of expertise for photovoltaics and agrivoltaics,*" is home to technical teams, project managers, cartographers, and regional developers. "*We have the expertise here,*" highlights the CEO. Also present in Paris, Nantes, Bordeaux, Dijon, and Toulouse, the group plans to expand its activities "*towards the southeast, with a branch in Cannes*," he explains.

"*It takes five to six years from initial prospection to the commissioning of a photovoltaic project,*" points out Heinrich Lieser. In the Occitanie region, these projects are mainly located in the Ariège, Lot, Tarn-et-Garonne, and Aude departments, often involving agrivoltaics, on "*20 to 30 hectares, sometimes 50.*" Discussions are currently being held regarding the Canal du Midi.

At the same time, Notus Energy is making progress in the wind energy sector. Since 2023, the company's teams have been working on building a wind farm in Pipriac (Ille-et-Vilaine department), where a single wind turbine will generate 13 GWh per year.

The group has invested €60 million since its arrival in France. Montpellier was also chosen for its environment. "*Everything we need is here, in this young, well-connected city between the sea and the mountains,*" says the CEO, highlighting the presence of schools and real momentum in terms of recruitment. The company also signed the Charter of Commitment for Renewable Energy Stakeholders.

Solarpark ©Notus Energy

Qair, the soul of an eternal pioneer

Whether we are talking about hydrogen, solar, wind, or marine energy, the independent renewable energy company Qair, led by Jean-Marc Bouchet, continually develops innovative, multi-technology solutions from its base in Montpellier. Qair's energy management experts also design tailor-made solutions, including battery energy storage systems and direct electricity purchase agreements.

Qair has a workforce of approximately 100 employees in Montpellier's Cambacérès district, out of a total of 200 employees in France and 700 internationally. People of a dozen different nationalities work side by side there: Australians, Moroccans, Iranians, Germans, and more.

One of its biggest current projects is equipping the floating offshore wind turbines of the Eolmed project in the Aude department south of Montpellier and connecting them to the grid. "*This is the culmination of ten years of intense work. The project was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, resulting inflation, and other factors. As a result, we responded to the call for tender in 2015 and placed the orders in 2022! Renewable energy projects require perseverance,*" notes Guirec Dufour, CEO of Qair.

The Montpellier area and Occitanie region are the group's testing ground.

"We are able to carry out innovative projects here, particularly in the areas of floating wind power and carbon-free hydrogen production, with provided support helping to offset some of the risks involved," he adds.

One of Qair's strengths lies in its multi-energy and multi-geographical approach, and the pioneering spirit instilled by Jean-Marc Bouchet is still very much alive.

"*I started working with him in 2008. I was his fourth employee! He is an incredible entrepreneur, a visionary in renewable energy. He is also capable of trusting others, taking risks, and making effective decisions at the coffee machine. This enables us to move very quickly and with agility, which has saved Qair more than once,*" says Guirec Dufour.

Qair generates €200 million in revenue, with 1.5 GW in operation, 500 MW under construction, and a target of 3 GW by 2027.

France Offshore Eolmed - Floating top tower lifter 3 ©Qair

Sunti and MGH Energy, shining stars of the Soper group

Both MGH Energy and Sunti (a total of 40 employees in Pérols near Montpellier and 10 in Paris), headed by Jean-Michel Germa and managed by Gilles Leandro, are subsidiaries of the Soper holding company and are positioned in two distinct areas: Sunti focuses on solar energy, mainly in France, while MGH Energy focuses on synthetic fuels, which are expected to emerge from 2030 onwards.

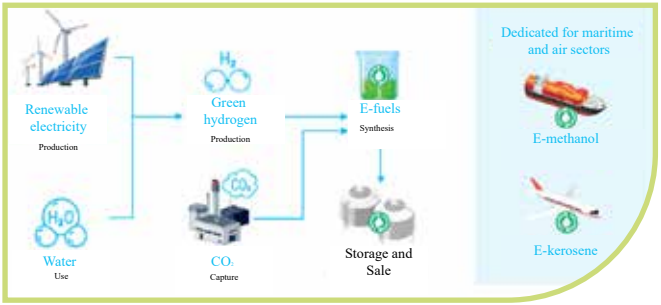
Sunti has "*obtained permits for 65 MW and secured land with capacity for 500 MW, currently in the planning phase. Our business activity has grown significantly over the past five years,*" emphasizes Gilles Leandro. Though still young, the company has "*two references in Occitanie, one near Perpignan and the other in Vestric-et-Candiac, in the Gard department.*"

Meanwhile, MGH Energy is involved with an ambitious project to produce synthetic fuels – e-fuels or electrofuels – through water electrolysis.

Supported by the Moroccan oil company Petrom via a joint venture, the synthetic fuel production project is currently being studied in southern Morocco, in the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region, with the objective of producing 500,000 tons per year of green fuels on 30,000 hectares of desert land in the Sahara. The goal is to begin production in 2030.

The project encompasses technological building blocks for solar and wind power generation (2 GW) and hydrogen production (1 GW), as well as a synthetic fuel production plant. The investment is colossal, estimated at €5 billion. The target markets are air and maritime transport (large ships), which are "*difficult to decarbonize solely by using electricity,*" explains Gilles Leandro.

As part of the renewable energy cluster, MGH Energy and Sunti are also deeply involved in training. "*We need to identify the jobs of tomorrow. For example, developing hydrogen energy requires both knowing how to build water electrolysis units to produce energy and working on synthetic fuel unit processes. These jobs are highly technical and very specific, requiring appropriate training programs,*" concludes Gilles Leandro.



Types of e-fuels ©MGH

Urbasolar, expanding across Europe from Montpellier

Founded in Montpellier in 2006, Urbasolar (now with 500 employees) specializes in the design, construction, and operation of solar power plants and has established itself as one of the leaders in photovoltaics in France and Europe. The company today manages a substantial portfolio.

"*Fifty new projects are launched every year, the equivalent of 400 megawatts installed annually. More than sixty projects are currently in progress in France, as well as in Spain, Italy, Germany, and Poland,*" says Antoine Millioud, CEO of Urbasolar.

Urbasolar is reaching a new milestone internationally: a 200 MW project will be commissioned in the first quarter of 2026 in northwestern Spain. Additionally, seven projects have been launched in Italy and three in Germany. "*We are now at a stage where we are starting to show the results of our development efforts in neighboring European countries,*" says the CEO.

The Hérault-based company also intends to contribute at the local level. Characterized by its high concentration of renewable energy players, the Montpellier ecosystem offers untapped potential.

"*The* renewable energy cluster will facilitate interaction between different companies. *The area has the potential to build a real ecosystem,*" says Antoine Millioud.

From engineering and legal services to financing and asset management, Urbasolar covers the entire solar value chain, including land prospection and power plant operation. "*This strategy enables us to be involved in every stage of a project's life cycle, whether for our own portfolio or for third-party investors,*" explains Antoine Millioud. Remaining loyal to its local roots, the company has kept its headquarters in Montpellier, the capital of the Hérault department, even after it was acquired by the Swiss energy company Axpo in 2019.

CS Caveirac ©Urbasolar

PRD Beauvais ©Urbasolar

Valeco, pioneer in renewable energy and driving force for agrivoltaics

Founded in 1995 in Montpellier, renewable energy producer Valeco is one of the pioneers of renewable energy in France. The fourth largest employer in the wind energy sector in the Occitanie region, the company, which is now part of the German group EnBW, designed and installed France's very first ground-mounted solar power plant in 2008. The site was in Lunel, just east of Montpellier.

Valeco, whose workforce has grown by nearly 40 employees per year since 2021, now employs 350 people and operates an installed capacity of 1 GW. This includes 704 MW from wind power, equivalent to a nuclear reactor, and accounts for 10% of Occitanie's solar and wind energy production, approximately 7.8 GWh.

The company, which celebrated its 30th anniversary last May, continues to expand. Valeco has authorized projects totaling 1.1 GW, with permits to build over the next three years. "*Our goal is to reach 3 GW by 2032*," says François Daumard, the company's CEO. Valeco also has a portfolio of 5 GW in the pipeline over the next 10 years.

A signatory to the local renewable energy charter, Valeco is also one of France's leaders in agrivoltaics, with three pilot projects already completed: one involving sheep, another involving cattle and horses, and the third involving poultry. All three projects were implemented in consultation with the chambers of agriculture and INRAE. Today, Valeco is launching the construction of one of the largest agri-solar power plants in France, with a capacity of 118 MW in Haute-Vienne, to be commissioned in 2027.

Like all players in the renewable energy sector, Valeco pays particular attention to the ecological impact of its installations. More than 50% of its wind turbines are equipped with radar systems to detect birds.

The company was also the first to sign a contract to supply electricity to a group of nine mid-sized companies based in Nouvelle-Aquitaine. "*Valeco is committed to providing local businesses with green electricity,*" says François Daumard, whose company is now investing heavily in storage projects involving several hundred MW. "*As producers, we must now be in a position to eliminate the risk of disruption,*" concludes the CEO.

François Daumard, CEO Valeco ©Valeco

Watteos, local energy developer

"*We work hand in hand with local authorities to help them play an active role in their energy policy,*" explains Carlos Mesias, CEO of Watteos and the Sowen Group. In Marseillan (Hérault department) and Gruissan (Aude department), Watteos is driving a unique initiative to create a photovoltaic energy production company in which the towns themselves are shareholders. "*This is the first time that towns are taking on this dual role as shareholder and local authority,*" he explains. Other similar projects are underway in Vitrolles (Bouches-du-Rhône department), where the generated energy supplies public buildings, with the surplus made available to residents through a 30-year concession agreement, which is unique at this time.

Established in **Montpellier's Cambacérès district**, since October, Watteos is building its local presence. With a portfolio totaling 400 MW under development and €40 million in projects financed, the company is one of the most dynamic players in the sector. Watteos works with local communities to develop projects such as that in Restinclières (Hérault department), where a 500 kW photovoltaic system was installed to cover a padel court.

Carlos Mesias praises the creation of the renewable energy cluster: "*The Montpellier area has always been a pioneer in renewable energy.*" For Watteos, the cluster represents a major opportunity for cooperation between public and private players. "*Renewable energy has its place here, just like digital technology and healthcare,*" adds the CEO.

Watteos is a subsidiary of the Sowen Group, which also includes Sireos, a leading builder of large-scale photovoltaic power plants based in Paris and Milan. The group is now pursuing its diversification into "*electrification solutions for everyday use.*"

Photovoltaic panels ©Watteos

SUPPORT FOR RISING STARS

Henera, an incubator dedicated to decarbonization

While there are many incubators focused on cleantech in France and around the world, Henera sets itself apart with its unique public-private partnership. "*What distinguishes Henera from other incubators is the presence among its founders of two international players in the energy transition, EDF and SLB, both of which bring their experience, expertise, and networks to the selected project leaders and entrepreneurs,*" confirms Yannick Fuchey, Innovation & Ecosystem Manager at SLB.

EDF's Regional Director for Occitanie shares his opinion: "*The creation of Henera, France's very first incubator dedicated to carbon-free energy, is the culmination of a shared vision held by its three founders, SLB, EDF, and Montpellier BIC.*"

Providing assistance to creators of innovative businesses in the field of carbon-free energy, including production, storage, distribution, and management, Henera offers a high-level, free, nine-month program developed jointly by its three partners. The incubation program is open to innovative start-ups and companies that are less than a year old.

Announced at the VivaTech trade show in May 2024, the first cohort comprises three laureates: e-Ethylène, Renvo et Celest.Science. "*We were provided with specific support. Henera also promised to put us in touch with the right people to help us resolve the issues we face. That really helped us speed up our development, thanks to resources provided by EDF, SLB, and Montpellier BIC,*" says Léo Lemordant, co-founder with Pierre Gentine of Celest.Science, which raised €2 million in April 2025.

Henera has now welcomed its second cohort, consisting of equally promising projects: Anarion, Colvert, Ild Solutions, and Look Up Géoscience.

With this second season, Henera is further reinforcing its role as an incubator for carbon-free energy, a key part of the Renewable Energy Cluster.

The Henera incubator at Montpellier BIC ©Gilles Lefrancq

SLB, specialist solutions for decarbonization

Nearly a century old, but still as innovative as ever. The SLB Group, formerly Schlumberger, is one of the world leaders in energy technologies, whose development draws on the expertise of its Montpellier teams specializing in software development.

With nearly 200 employees, SLB's Montpellier site applies its expertise to energy transition and decarbonization projects. Established following the acquisition of the innovative company Techsia, creator of Techlog, a software program for interpreting data from drilling wells, it now offers new digital solutions for geothermal energy and natural hydrogen among its flagship software products, as well as customized software for setting up Industry 4.0 factories. One example is Genvia in Béziers, which industrializes high-temperature solid oxide electrolysis cells (SOECs), a breakthrough technology for low-carbon hydrogen production. SLB is a co-founder of Genvia, alongside the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), VINCI Construction, Vicat, and the Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée region.

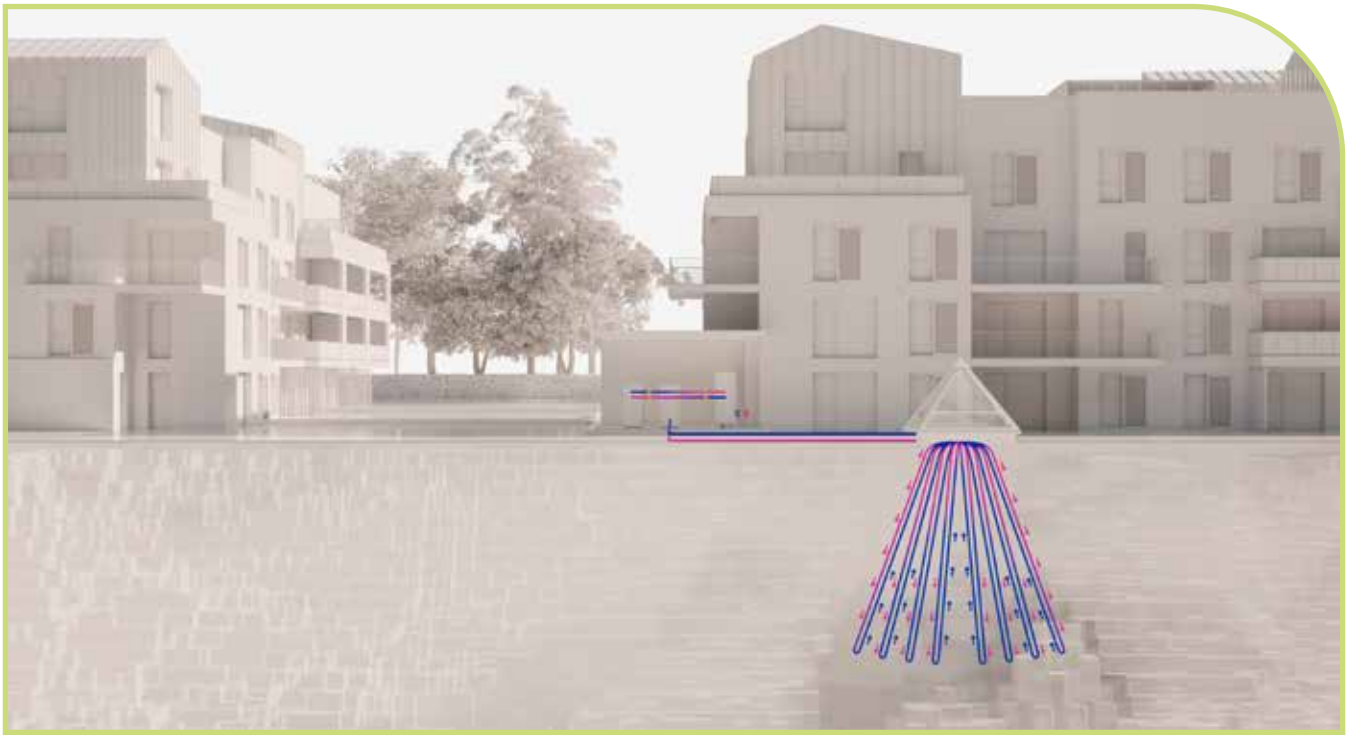
In addition, the company's teams in Montpellier are developing the digital component of an integrated solution from Celsius Energy, a subsidiary of SLB New Energy, focused on shallow geothermal energy for heating and cooling buildings.

It was therefore natural for SLB to become a co-creator of the Henera incubator alongside Montpellier BIC and the EDF Group. "We firmly believe in public-private partnerships, and that is the case here. The incubator is part of a strategy to produce local (or "glocal") carbon-free energy. We must now take action at regional levels to achieve greater energy sovereignty. That is why we are actively involved in building an ecosystem in Occitanie, leveraging collective strength. These days, international players are observing our area to see what is being done," says Yannick Fuchey, Innovation and Ecosystem Manager at SLB.

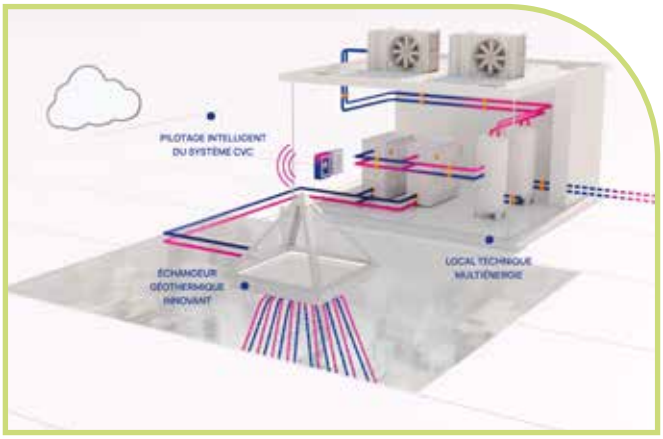
Responsible for co-coordinating the Demonstrator and Innovative Territory working group (see page 14), Yannick Fuchey adds: "We will have succeeded when the ecosystem we are helping to establish is replicated elsewhere. "

"As industrial players, what we bring to Henera is a gateway into the world of industry for project leaders. We provide guidance and support for growth, and we offer our internal know-how and skills to selected companies, along with our expertise gained from working with a large group. Synergies may also emerge between our selected companies' technologies and our own."

"Henera distinguishes itself from other incubators by the presence of two international players in the energy transition who bring their experience, know-how, and network to project leaders and selected entrepreneurs. "



Celsius Energy ©SLB



Celsius Energy ©SLB

Celsius Energy - “Château de Pondre” ©SLB

RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Renewable energy, a key priority for UIMM

The French Union of Metallurgy Industries and Professions (UIMM) has represented and supported the renewable energy sector from the very beginning. One of the largest professional organizations in France, UIMM not only covers the expertise essential to the sector's development, including metallurgy, power electronics, robotics, automation, sensors, and supervision, but it also trains talent for current and future jobs.

"Our mission is to re-industrialize France, and in our region, the renewable energy sector and its players are an important part of this recovery," says Éric Fouillot, president of UIMM Méditerranée Ouest and director of institutional relations for the Qair France group.

UIMM Méditerranée Ouest comprises 190 member companies with 7,200 employees and provides its sector with two training centers, including the one in Baillargues, where its headquarters are also located. Its catalog of training opportunities is developed in collaboration with companies to ensure that it meets their needs.

This led UIMM Méditerranée Ouest to set up a Bachelor's degree entitled "Advanced Maintenance: Renewable Energies", a program designed to train post-baccalaureate technicians, and a vocational degree in "Electrical and Energy Professions – Electrical and Electronic Engineering Project Manager (CAIEE)", a program offered in Baillargues that includes courses in new energies, climate engineering, power electronics, and more.

UIMM is a signatory of the Renewable Energy Charter, member of the Renewable Energy Cluster, and stakeholder in the Employment and Training Working Group. On January 1, it is set to merge with UIMM MP Occitanie. "This will provide companies in the western Occitanie region, particularly those in the renewable energy sector, with access to industrial expertise in aeronautics and space," says Éric Fouillot, adding: AI and cybersecurity are also major challenges, and we intend to support companies in those areas as well." Making Industry 4.0 a reality is key for ensuring our sovereignty.

Renewable energy Bachelor's-Master's Program ©UIMM

Polytech, committed to the transition

"*Renewable energy is a cross-disciplinary field that draws on several of our specialties: electronics, water, materials, computer science, and more.*" Lionel Torres, director of Polytech, is positioning his engineering school at the forefront of the energy transition and decarbonization movement.

As part of University of Montpellier, where Lionel Torres is also a lecturer and researcher, Polytech caters to the ecosystem's expectations in terms of skills and talent. "*Given that this sector is undergoing major changes, we are in discussions with players such as EDF and GENVIA to adapt our training programs to match their needs,*" he explains. He continues: "*We are also involved in Montpellier Métropole's Employment and Training working group, which brings together companies, academic players, and all stakeholders in the field of renewable energy.*"

This focus on listening is part of the school's philosophy. With nearly 300 graduates each year, Polytech contributes its expertise to industrial projects defined jointly with companies, getting its students involved and raising their awareness in terms of entrepreneurship.

Pol'Innov is another example of this. This sustainable innovation challenge gives Polytech's engineering students an opportunity to develop innovative projects. "*Over a ten-year period, 3% to 4% of our students have started their own businesses after graduating. This represents more than 200 companies created over the last ten years, including SWEEP, whose goal is to help decarbonize industry,*" says Lionel Torres.

Polytech also runs a partner club made up of around forty member companies. More than 300 business professionals contribute to the school's courses and conferences, and even provide tutoring.

Lastly, on an international level, Polytech has signed more than 70 agreements with universities such as Cranfield University (UK), University of Sherbrooke (Canada), and Politecnico di Torino (Italy).

Its training programs are continually updated to meet business demands and societal expectations. This is why Polytech is a signatory of the local Renewable Energy Charter, and why it pays particular attention to the energy transition and decarbonization sector. "*Many Enercoop employees are alumni from our school,*" says Ahmad Mehdi, Deputy Director of Partnerships.

Lionel Torres, Director of Polytech ©Polytech

Ahmad Mehdi, Director in charge of partnerships ©Polytech

COMPETITIVENESS CLUSTERS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Derbi-Cemater, a competitiveness cluster dedicated to renewable energy

"*The role of our competitiveness cluster is to provide a platform where companies can meet, form consortiums, respond to calls for tender, and innovate together to become more competitive.*" Stéphane Bozzarelli is the deputy chairman of Derbi-Cemater.

With over 300 members, this competitiveness cluster operating in Montpellier, Perpignan, and Toulouse, is dedicated to supporting innovation in the energy transition sectors and helping to structure the renewable energy industry. The cluster certifies innovative projects, supports project leaders, promotes the industry, and facilitates networking.

Derbi-Cemater is the result of the June 2025 merger of the Cemater cluster and the Derbi competitiveness cluster, which at the time of the merger had certified 391 projects since 2005. Of these, 224 were funded, representing €546 million in investment, including €191 million in public aid.

"*This merger firmly established the competitiveness cluster in the Montpellier area, where the largest number of industrial players in the Occitanie region are located,*" points out Stéphane Bozzarelli.

As a member of the renewable energy cluster and a signatory of the renewable energy charter, Derbi-Cemater is taking action on national issues affecting the sector, while also making Occitanie "*a laboratory for accelerating project deployment.*" "*We don't have any other options: we must accelerate the energy transition and decarbonization,*" he says, highlighting the advantage of the area's ecosystem: "*The local ecosystem is unique in France, encompassing all renewable energy and decarbonization sectors.*"

photovoltaics ©Derbi-Cemater

Pôle Mer Méditerranée cluster, decarbonizing the economy

Based in La Seyne-sur-Mer in the Var department, but very active here! The Pôle de Compétitivité Mer Méditerranée (Mediterranean Sea Competitiveness Cluster) is very active in the Montpellier area and Occitanie region, notably through its involvement in Wind'Occ, a collective initiative for the floating offshore wind energy sector, alongside AD'OCC and the Derbi-Cemater competitiveness cluster.

"*While it is firmly rooted in renewable energies, the Montpellier area is also home to major offshore wind operators such as Qair, EnBW Valeco Offshore, and Ocean Winds, along with service providers and a significant university and research ecosystem,*" comments Arthur Serment, project manager for marine energy and mineral resources at Pôle Mer Méditerranée.

Certified in July 2005, this competitiveness cluster is working to foster a sustainable, carbon-free blue economy. Active in the Sud-Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée, and Corsica regions, it federates a network of nearly 500 members including businesses, laboratories, training providers, and local authorities, around maritime and coastal issues with significant societal and environmental implications.

With a branch in Montpellier, the cluster assisted two pilot projects in the region involving floating offshore wind farms off the coast of Port-la-Nouvelle (Aude department): EolMed, led through a consortium headed by Qair; and EFGL, led through a consortium headed by Ocean Winds.

"*We recognized these efforts as structural projects and then helped mobilize the industry around them," Arthur Serment explains. In particular, the cluster organized "events where these projects could be showcased.*"

And that's not all! The Mer Méditerranée cluster is co-organizing the upcoming Floating Offshore Wind Turbines (FOWT) conference, the world's largest event dedicated to floating offshore wind power. The next edition will be held in Montpellier from March 24 to 26, 2026.

Arthur Serment ©Pôle Mer Méditerranée

SER, providing strong support for territorial development

"*The need for energy transition is no longer taken for granted by national authorities.*" Jules Nyssen, president of the Syndicat des Énergies Renouvelables (Renewable Energy Union), states quite clearly that times are hard for the sector.

With this in mind, his professional organization backs all local initiatives that help renewable energy to flourish, especially the one that players in the Montpellier area have started and formalized through the renewable energy charter (see page 16).

"*A territory-wide initiative like this is a milestone for renewable energy, with Montpellier setting the standard in France. SER supports this effort,*" adds Jules Nyssen.

As France's leading professional organization in the renewable energy sector, SER has nearly 500 members, including major groups, SMEs, startups, semi-public entities, consulting firms, law firms, and research laboratories, all of which are active in renewable energy production and related technologies. Today, they are all standing up against France's retreat from its stated ambitions in terms of energy transition and decarbonization.

Last June, SER called on members of parliament to reject the proposed law on national planning and regulatory simplification in the energy sector, which it considered to be "an act of energy irresponsibility" after the amendments were adopted, including a moratorium on wind and solar power. Fortunately, the French Senate subsequently revised the text to reflect more sustainable terms.

SER represents all renewable energy sectors, including renewable electricity (onshore and offshore wind, solar photovoltaic, hydroelectricity, marine energy, etc.), renewable heat (wood energy, geothermal energy, solar thermal energy, heating networks), and renewable gas and fuels (biogas, biofuels, and e-fuels). All these fields of specialization are well represented in the Montpellier area.

And for good reason! "*Local players have always embraced a culture of innovation and collective solutions. This is especially evident given that the energy transition has been promoted here for a long time,*" observes Jules Nyssen.

Jules Nyssen ©SER

INSTITUTIONAL PLAYERS

Occitanie also boosting renewable energy

"To become the first positive energy region (REPOS) by 2050." This is the strategy adopted by the Occitanie region, France's second largest producer of renewable energy. The regional authority is aiming to cut per capita energy consumption in half. Actions include supporting energy-efficient home renovations, expanding carpooling and car sharing, replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy, and developing new practices in industrial and agricultural sectors. The Region also wants to triple renewable energy production by 2050. As a result, wood energy, hydroelectricity, wind power, solar power, and geothermal energy are being deployed throughout the Occitanie region.

Specifically, the REPOS strategy is designed to support the structuring and development of energy sectors. To achieve this, the Region is supporting growth in the photovoltaic sector in three ways: "*welcoming industrial leaders to manufacture photovoltaic panels and handle recycling; positioning Occitanie as a hub for integrating photovoltaics within its territories and for various uses (floating photovoltaics, agrivoltaics); and promoting the development of smart grids and self-consumption,*" explains the Occitanie Region, presided by Carole Delga. In addition to photovoltaics, the public authority is also working to promote the expansion of new sectors, such as green hydrogen and floating offshore wind power.

The economic impact behind this strategy is significant: 100,000 jobs are expected to be created in the renewable energy sector by 2050. The Occitanie region counts 28,000 jobs in renewable energies, spread across 640 companies. Among them: Enercon (Aude), Tenesol (Hérault), Lhyfe (Haute-Garonne), Tecsol (Pyrénées-Orientales), Genvia (Hérault), EcoTech Ceram (Haute-Garonne), and more. The local renewable energy cluster complements this regional strategy, without competing with it. The cluster's objectives are to unite local stakeholders, promote the emergence of new projects, and serve as a testing ground.

Installing photovoltaic panels ©Occitanie Region