

## Metsä Group Äänekoski Mill Global experience - local support



Picture: Metsa Group

Metsä Group's new bioproducts mill is the industry's largest-ever investment in Finland. To source more than 1,000 motors for the plant, the company turned to ABB for its excellent project know-how, broad product portfolio and strong local support.

Finnish forest-sector giant Metsä Group is building the world's largest new-generation bioproducts mill in Äänekoski, central Finland – with all of its more than 1,000 motors supplied by ABB. The deal, including extensive project services, is worth more than 30 million euros.

With a price tag of 1.2 billion euros, this is the Finnish forest industry's largest-ever investment, with an annual capacity of 1.3 million tons. Besides pulp, it will produce other bioproducts such as tall oil, turpentine, lignin products, biogas, wood-based fuel and bioelectricity. Without using any fossil fuels, it will generate nearly two and half times as much electricity as it needs – thus raising the country's renewable energy share by 2 percentage points.

This massive contract represents a new chapter in the two companies' long shared history, says Jorma Näsinkoski, Sales Manager, ABB Pulp and Paper: "ABB supplied all the motors and drives for Metsä's previous large project, the Fray Bentos pulp mill, which started up in 2007 in Uruguay," he says. "In recent years the relationship has been quieter in terms of orders, but there's been good cooperation on the service side."

The contracts for the motors and drives were signed in October and December. The first motor deliveries will be in April, with most deliveries during the third and fourth quarters of 2016. The mill is to be tested in spring 2017 and to start up that autumn, replacing the current 30-year-old mill – which was also equipped with ABB electrical systems.

“ABB is delivering the whole plant’s grid connection, power distribution and process electrification systems, including a wide range of products from every division,” says Aki Kulmala, Sales Director, Discrete Automation and Motion, ABB Domestic Sales.

ABB Motors and Generators will deliver more than 1,000 LV and large motors from the Vaasa and Helsinki factories. ABB Drives will supply more than 500 LV and MV Drives. These are ACS 880 series 400 or 690 V drives, as well as four ACS 1000 water-cooled drives for feed water pumps.

### **Key to success**

Local flavor was also essential in the quotation and negotiation process. “Our whole sales team was set up from local Finnish resources, as was the customer’s side,” Näsinkoski says. “One of the customer’s requirements was to have strong local support. ABB ensured in the quotation phase that our decision-making and technical support are here and all in the Finnish language. This was one of the main differentiators compared with the main competitor.”

The customer has also indicated that it is extremely important to have ABB’s own strong local support readily available in central Finland, with quick response in the Finnish language.

The message that Näsinkoski has heard from the customer is clear: “The schedule is king. Getting the right product to the right place at the right time is a must.”

Metsä is also interested in spare parts service and special know-how related to frequency converters.

### **Reliability and know-how**

Both companies have deep experience in pulp mills. Metsä operates four large plants in Finland, while ABB has supplied almost every large pulp mill with capacity of over a million tons per year worldwide. Both know that long-term reliability is a must. For instance, a frequency converter failure is likely to cause a break in production and a big monetary loss. It’s essential that if service is required for the drives, it can be done without disturbing the operation of the drive or can be scheduled during the mill’s service shutdown.

“A mill of this size runs continuously at full capacity until the annual service shutdown,” Näsinkoski says. “The tendency is now that stops are being made every year and a half, or even closer to every two years. The rest of the time, the equipment and systems must run at full capacity without failures.”

### **So what was the ultimate reason why ABB won the deal?**

“The customer feedback has been quite clear – it’s ABB know-how and experience,” Näsinkoski says. “After we had the handshake, I asked the customer why they bought from ABB. The answer was clear and did not refer to any technical feature or performance of the motors or drives. The reason was ABB people’s broad know-how.”

This is reflected in a statement from Metsä Fibre Bioproduct Mill Project Director Timo Merikallio. “We have long-term experience of good cooperation with ABB,” he says. “A broad product portfolio, excellent project know-how and the high domestic share of the deliveries were significant factors in our choice.”

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