

VW to set up battery plants, expand charging points in e-car shift

March 15 2021, by Yann Schreiber



Volkswagen group, which includes brands from Audi to Seat to Porsche, has ploughed more than 30 billion euros (\$36 billion) into e-mobility

Germany car giant Volkswagen said Monday it would set up six battery factories and significantly expand charging points in Europe, in a major ramp up of its drive into electric vehicles.

Chief executive Herbert Diess said the group is "planning to operate six gigafactories on our own and in collaboration with partners."

The plants, to be set up by 2030, will have a total capacity of 240 Gigawatt hours.

To this end, Volkswagen announced a deal to raise its stake in Swedish battery maker Northvolt, which is currently bulding a gigafactory in the Swedish city of Skelleftea.

VW previously owned 20 percent of Northvolt, but didn't disclose how big its new share would be.

It placed an order worth 14 billion euros (\$17 billion) over the next 10 years from Northvolt while also acquiring from the Swedish battery maker its stake for a factory in Salzgitter, Germany, which would become one of the six upcoming plants announced by VW.

Charging stations will also be significantly expanded in coming years.

"We will multiply the number of fast charging points in Europe by a factor of five over the next four years," said Diess.

Cooperation deals have been agreed with Britain's BP, Spain's Iberdrola and Italy's Enel, VW said.

The [charging stations](#) set up in conjunction with partners are aimed at covering a third of European e-mobility demand by 2025.

Turning a page

Volkswagen group, which includes brands from Audi to Seat to Porsche, has ploughed more than 30 billion euros into e-mobility in order to

comply with stricter environmental rules in the EU.

Its eponymous flagship brand said in March that it was aiming for [electric vehicles](#) to account for 70 percent of its European sales by 2030.

The VW brand also said it would launch at least one new battery-powered model each year between now and 2030.

VW's all-electric ID.3 became the second best-selling car in Europe last December, and the brand has US e-mobility pioneer Tesla in its sights with its 2021 ID.4 SUV model.

Tesla has upped the pressure on major German carmakers such as Volkswagen in recent years with its plans to open a manufacturing plant outside Berlin next July.

But Volkswagen's electric push was also accelerated by its "dieselgate" scandal, which rocked Germany's car industry and cost the company dearly in both cash and reputational harm.

Legal cases grind on over VW's admission in 2015 that it illegally fitted 11 million diesel vehicles worldwide with software to make them appear less polluting.

Former Volkswagen chief Martin Winterkorn is due to stand trial from April, accused of fraud in the diesel trickery.

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