

Media release

Canton of Solothurn and Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne cooperate in the field of electromobility

30.01.2025—The canton of Solothurn is collaborating with the Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne to advance automation technologies for electric vehicle (EV) battery recycling processes. As part of this initiative, it is establishing the Swiss Battery Technology Center (SBTC) Solothurn GmbH in Biberist. By focusing on the key technology of electromobility, the canton is strengthening its position as a business hub while demonstrating leadership in sustainability.

Initiated by the cantonal location promotion agency, the Solothurn government is supporting the activities of the SBTC Solothurn GmbH as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne SIPBB. Leveraging SIPBB's research, the GmbH offers unique technologies and expertise for the industrial implementation of battery recycling at Papieri Biberist.

SIPBB as a catalyst for a circular center in electromobility

The sustainable recovery of raw materials from lithium-ion batteries (LIBs) presents a significant challenge. In Switzerland alone, at least 15,000 tons of LIBs from electrically powered vehicles will need to be recycled annually by 2040. Across Europe, establishing a closed material cycle for LIBs is becoming a mandatory requirement. Closing this cycle will make electromobility even more advantageous over combustion engines in ecological, social and economic terms.

With the increasing quantities of discarded LIBs, the demand for automation and safety processes in the material cycle is also growing. The canton of Solothurn, the SIPBB— of which the canton of Solothurn has been a co-shareholder since 2015— and the companies operating in Biberist see great economic potential in this development. The SBTC Solothurn GmbH combines automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, safety technologies and chemical and material technology processes to enable efficient battery recycling. Starting in 2026, the GmbH will establish itself as an innovation leader in Biberist, which, together with the companies already based here, will form a recycling center for electromobility with a European reach.

Knowledge transfer and economic opportunities

The cumulative experience gained with the new automation process offers important information on the technological design of more easily dismantled e-batteries and future regulatory requirements in EV recycling. Building on this knowledge, the GmbH is positioned to serve as a training and further education center, focusing on the optimal design of new EV batteries and their safe handling.

Christian Ochsenbein, Head of the SBTC at SIPBB, sees this as a significant economic advantage: "For electromobility in Europe and Switzerland, this type of circular economy offers the opportunity to massively reduce global dependencies on critical raw materials."

Numerous Benefits for All Stakeholders

The SIPBB, along with its new subsidiary and the companies in Biberist, will benefit from a wide range of cooperation opportunities. Librec AG, a Swiss battery recycler located in Biberist, can further enhance its recovery rates for battery raw materials in battery recycling. Grensol AG will supplement vehicle recycling from 2025 by processing remaining automotive components, such as mixed plastics, metal fragments and automotive glass. Finally, Libattion AG will also contribute its internationally leading expertise in up-cycling in the field of battery storage. As the owner of the Papieri Biberist site, HIAG can further enhance the site's attractiveness of the Papieri by developing the recycling centre for electromobility.

SIPBB enables the canton of Solothurn to gain valuable industrial expertise from research in key technology areas. The establishment of the SIPBB subsidiary is also attracting other national and international research organizations to the region, strengthening its position as a hub for innovation. The expertise in recyclable electromobility developed in Biberist serves as an important driver for education at various levels. The cantonal location promotion agency actively supports the recycling center to facilitate the creation of additional jobs in an appealing environment. "With the SBTC Solothurn GmbH, we have gained another important partner at the Biberist site, helping us to become a European-class workplace in electromobility," says Monika Beck, Head of Cantonal Location Promotion.

An initial opportunity to exchange ideas on the numerous opportunities offered by this topic and the new center will be provided at the LiBa Protect Forum, taking place on February 11, 2025, in Biberist ([Agenda](#)).

Further information can be found on the [SBTC-Solothurn website](#).

About the location promotion of the canton of Solothurn

The Office for Economic Development serves as the first point of contact for cantonal companies and foreign businesses looking to establish themselves in the Solothurn economic region. In addition to managing a diverse range of daily operations, the office focuses on initiating strategic partnerships at the intersection of public and private sectors. <https://standortsolothurn.so.ch/>

About the Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne SIPBB

The SIPBB is a private non-profit organization headquartered in the Canton of Bern that conducts and supports industry-focused, primarily applied research and development. As part of the national and international network of the Switzerland Innovation Foundation, it attracts research investments from abroad, promotes Swiss innovation and startups, and accelerates the transformation of research results into market-ready products. www.sipbb.ch

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