

Iqony drives the local heating transition

A district heating storage facility is being constructed in Gelsenkirchen to supply the local network for around a weekend

Gelsenkirchen/Arnsberg/Essen. Iqony Fernwärme is building a district heating storage facility on Gewerkenstrasse in the Schalke district of Gelsenkirchen, starting at the end of February 2024. It will contain around 31 million liters of water and have a heating capacity of 1,050 megawatt hours (MWh). This means it could supply Iqony's local district heating network with the required heat for around a weekend if needed.

"Heat storage facilities are one of the core elements of our move towards climate neutrality. The start of construction at the storage project in Gelsenkirchen is therefore an important building block in our strategy to shape the local heating transition," says Matthias Ohl, CEO of Iqony Fernwärme GmbH. "With the storage capacity available in future, we will be able to increase our use of climate-friendly heat, for example from waste-to-energy plants or unavoidable industrial waste heat, when it is generated or produced, and even if it is not needed by our customers at that moment. In this way, that energy is not lost, but is retained for later use."

The new heat storage facility from Iqony will also help to make the heat supply more flexible overall and therefore better able to respond to a wide range of fluctuations, whether in terms of weather, technical availability or energy markets.

Construction work on the 57 meter high and 28 meter diameter facility will start in the coming weeks. "Depending on the weather conditions, construction work will begin at the end of February or beginning of March, and will take around two years. The plan is for the heat storage facility to go into operation in January 2026," says Dr. Gregor Krampe, who is responsible for the project at Iqony Fernwärme.

Lighthouse project and landmark

"Its size alone literally makes the storage facility a lighthouse project and a landmark for the transformation of the local heat supply towards the desired climate neutrality. We have appointed Bilfinger Industrial Services from Austria, an experienced partner who has already implemented several storage projects, to build the facility," says project manager Gregor Krampe. The main

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challenge of the project was to integrate the facility into the existing district heating system during operation.

Funding from the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

The project, with an investment volume of around 30 million euros, is being supported by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia with funds from the “Program for efficient energy use, renewable energy and energy saving” – progres.nrw for short. The funding amounts to around 7.1 million euros.

Arnsberg District Government’s President Heinrich Böckelühr, whose authority oversees the funding program for the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, welcomes the project as an important building block in the effort to make the heat supply in the Ruhr metropolitan region as secure and reliable as it is climate-neutral in the future. “The project shows that the energy companies in North Rhine-Westphalia have already taken the necessary steps: They have already set out to meet the challenges arising from climate change and the energy transition. We are therefore happy to support such efforts on behalf of the state of NRW.”

Contribution to the local heating transition

The city of Gelsenkirchen also sees the project as an important contribution to the success of the municipal heating transition. “The construction of the heat storage facility is good news for the people of Gelsenkirchen, as it makes the heat supply for district heating customers even more secure and at the same time helps to achieve the climate targets set for the city,” says Gelsenkirchen’s Mayor Karin Welge.

At the same time, the new heat storage facility also creates potential that will be needed for a possible expansion of the district heating network in the coming years: “The larger a heating network becomes, the more heat sources are needed, and they then have to be integrated and controlled in the overall system. In this respect, the construction of the heat storage facility, which is now beginning, is an important step towards creating the necessary conditions for the further development of our district heating network in Gelsenkirchen, also in view of the numerous requests for new house connections that we have received in recent months,” says Matthias Ohl.

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About Iqony Fernwärme

Iqony Fernwärme GmbH, based in Essen, is jointly owned by Iqony GmbH (51 percent) and MEAG (49 percent). As a regional energy provider, Iqony supplies private households, large customers and property companies with district heating, the majority of which is generated in combined heat and power plants. Each year, STEAG makes around 1.6 billion kilowatt hours of thermal energy available to its customers – equivalent to the needs of over 275,000 households. This makes Iqony Fernwärme one of the largest district heating companies in Germany.

About Iqony

Iqony makes green energy feasible. With more than 85 years of experience in the planning, construction and operation of energy facilities, the company provides holistic solutions for the decarbonization, decentralization and digitalization of the energy supply. Iqony focuses on renewable energies and bridging technologies that can be used in a climate-neutral way now and in the future. In addition to solar, wind and geothermal energy, the portfolio includes hydrogen solutions, storage technologies, engineering services and gas-fired power plants. Around 2,300 employees worldwide implement projects for major industrial companies, utilities, cities and municipalities in numerous countries across the globe. Specializing in tailor-made solutions for complex challenges, Iqony draws on its broad and in-depth knowledge of the energy industry across the full range of technologies and services.

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