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Tata Steel announces track supply deal with French rail operator

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Tata Steel has won a two-year contract to supply more than 200,000 tonnes of track to French rail operator SNCF.

The contract will see Tata Steel supply the majority of SNCF's rail requirements in lengths of up to 108 metres from its plant Hayange, Northern France.

The order was secured following a €35 million investment by Tata Steel in 2011 which allowed the Hayange mill to produce 108m lengths of rail that SNCF will use throughout France's standard and high-speed networks. The new order is an extension of a previous contract with SNCF.

Henrik Adam, Tata Steel's Chief Commercial Officer, said: "We know that by working with customers we are able to innovate and develop products they want. We made a significant investment in Hayange to be able to produce the 108m long rail required by SNCF. Our heat-treatment facility means we are also now able to produce highly wear-resistant rail in lengths up to 108m – a key requirement of most of our European customers."

The Hayange rolling mill is supplied with steel from Tata Steel's Scunthorpe steelworks in the UK.

As well as the new 108m-long rail, Hayange is also able to roll shorter lengths when required by customers. The shorter lengths can be processed in the heat-treatment facility, allowing rail operators to enhance performance and reduce costs associated with more frequent worn rail replacement.

Gérard Glas, Rail Sector Head, Tata Steel, said: "We are committed to serving the needs of our customers and SNCF is Hayange's largest and most important customer."

"We have worked closely with SNCF to understand their requirements and have invested in both our plant and technical areas to ensure we can continue to meet their needs. This contract helps to justify the confidence Tata Steel placed in the Hayange mill when the company invested in 108m rail and more recently in 108m 'stress-free' heat-treated rail."

The news comes just weeks after the unveiling of the new €12 million heat-treatment facility at the Hayange plant, built as part of Tata Steel's customer-focused approach to the market.

Heat-treated rail can last up to three times longer than standard rail when used in high wear conditions such as heavy traffic, high axle loads or tight curves. The newly opened facility will allow Tata Steel to more than double its annual output of heat-treated rail from 55,000 to 125,000 tonnes.

About Tata Steel in Europe

The European operations of Tata Steel, whose main steelmaking sites are in the UK and the Netherlands, comprise Europe's second largest steel producer. They supply steel and related services to construction, automotive, packaging, rail, lifting & excavating, energy, power, aerospace and other demanding markets worldwide. The combined Tata Steel group is one of the world's largest steel producers, with an aggregate crude steel capacity of more than 29 million tonnes and approximately 80,000 employees across five continents.