

Press Information

06 May 2022

30 years of quality and innovation in tooling and parts production

+++ BMW Group Plant Eisenach celebrates 30 years
+++ Most comprehensive plant extension to date reaches completion
+++ Board Member for Production Nedeljković: "Essential plant for the BMW Group" +++

Eisenach. BMW Group Plant Eisenach officially opened for business in 1992. Located in the German state of Thuringia, it has played a major part in the heritage of the BMW Group and seen constant upgrades over the years. It is now the company's largest tooling facility worldwide. The original tool-making section has been transformed into a highly digitalised, industrialised press tooling operation. The former workshop for complex one-off parts is now a super-efficient part and component manufacturing facility for small and very small production runs.

BMW Group Plant Eisenach has a special status within the BMW Group production network (which comprises 31 manufacturing operations in 15 countries). It produces the press tools that give wing, roof and engine bonnet of nearly every BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce model their distinctive shape. The BMW Motorrad plant in Berlin also benefits from the services of the Thuringian plant.

As model diversity increases and design requirements become ever more discerning, the BMW Group's tooling plants in Eisenach, Munich and Dingolfing are rising to the challenge. "Tooling is of quintessential importance to our production system," says Milan Nedeljković, BMW Group Board Member for Production, "because without press tools, we couldn't give our vehicles their unmistakable styling."

But it's not only for tooling that the BMW Group relies on the expertise, innovativeness and quality of Plant Eisenach: the facility also produces almost 230,000 sheet metal body parts a year for BMW, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad models. The product range currently includes all the roofs for the Rolls-Royce Wraith, Ghost, Phantom and Cullinan as well as all the wings for the M3, M4, M5 and M8 by BMW M.

Quality, precision and innovation – Made in Eisenach

BMW Group Plant Eisenach first started delivering press tools for structural components in September 1992. Operations were launched with equipment for the third-generation BMW 7 Series, among others. The current, seventh-generation BMW 7 Series – which made its world debut on 20 April – is also formed by tools from Eisenach. The press tools for the roof, wings and engine bonnet of the new 7 Series – which also includes the very first fully electric BMW i7 – were all developed and produced here. Every year Plant Eisenach makes approx. 140 tools for BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad models. It has advanced over the years to become the BMW Group's centre of excellence for outer skins.

Eisenach is also important for the production of sheet metal parts for the BMW Group. For the Rolls-Royce marque, it is even the main supplier, currently delivering some 6,500 parts a year to Rolls-Royce Motor Cars in Goodwood. As a customer for parts, BMW Motorrad is larger still, sourcing over 100,000 fuel tank components from Eisenach for models such as the BMW R 1200 RS, BMW S 1000 RR and F 700 GS. But the most sheet metal body parts are made for BMW vehicles, with more than 120,000 wings and engine bonnets dispatched to vehicle plants across the globe for models such as the BMW M3, BMW 4 and BMW 8 Series.

Back to the roots

At the official inauguration of Plant Eisenach 30 years ago, Eberhard von Kuenheim, Management Board Chairman at the time, commented: "Eisenach is where we have our roots as a carmaker. So the reason we're back is partly emotional." The decision in 1990 to locate a large tooling works at the site in Thuringia had partly been born from the desire to return to the cradle of BMW as an automotive manufacturer.

It was with the acquisition of the vehicle plant in Eisenach in 1928 that the Bayerische Motorenwerke first ventured into the world of vehicle production. Operations were launched in 1929, with the BMW 3/15 PS, and Eisenach also went on to manufacture the legendary BMW 328. It remained the birthplace of all BMW cars until the early 1940s, when World War II and the subsequent division of Germany put an end to BMW's activities there. Not until after German reunification was the company able to return to this landmark in its heritage.

The ground-breaking ceremony marking the start of construction work for the new facility in Thuringia was held in October 1990. Just two years later, Plant Eisenach was officially inaugurated and delivered its first tools. It has undergone constant extension ever since, with further investments being made in new machinery and systems all the time. The BMW Group has invested €208 million in total since the new plant was founded.

Key investments over the last few years include the two latest-generation servo induction presses, which optimally prepare press tools for series production. The first went on-stream in 2016, the second in early 2022, having been added with the latest plant extension. Servo induction presses simulate forthcoming series production processes and digitally transmit the settings data to the presses in the plants. This significantly reduces the amount of time needed to set up new tool systems for operations and is just

one example of how Plant Eisenach contributes to constant quality enhancement and highly efficient structures in the BMW Group production network.

The most comprehensive upgrade in the history of the plant

Between 2001 and 2016, Plant Eisenach was gradually upgraded, but its largest extension to date started with the ground-breaking ceremony in 2019. It came at an investment of €38 million and adds another 13,500 square metres to the facility. With a total of over 34,000 square metres, Plant Eisenach is now the largest tooling plant in the BMW Group in terms of area. The inauguration of the new extension coincides with the plant's 30th anniversary.

The latest upgrade affects every area of the facility, from mechanical production, tooling and the press shop to parts production, quality assurance, administration, logistics and parking areas. It is an investment not only in additional capacity but also in the future viability of the plant. The focus throughout has been on sustainability and the efficient use of energy and resources. Like all BMW Group plants, Eisenach is supplied purely with energy from renewable sources. Waste steel and aluminium from production are avoided as far as possible, and what cannot be avoided is returned to the material cycle to be reused.

Highly qualified, highly motivated employees as a factor for success

A key factor in the competitiveness of Plant Eisenach is the employees. "Our team are highly qualified, flexible and committed, and the growth and development of Eisenach would never have been possible without them," says Robert Frittrang, Managing Director of BMW Fahrzeugtechnik GmbH since 1 March. "As we celebrate our anniversary, I would like to say a big thank-you to them all – because more than anything, the success of any company depends on its team."



Plant Eisenach currently employs some 300 people, 16 of whom are trainees and 10 are students doing combined vocational training and university studies at the University of Gera/Eisenach. When it first opened, in 1992, the workforce consisted of around 150 people. Since then, the number has doubled and will continue to rise over the next few years, with plans for another 40 or so associates to join the team by the end of 2024. Investments in the recruitment of specialists and future specialists continue.

Ready for the future

The extensions and investments of previous years have set the course for the future at Plant Eisenach. In the eyes of Plant Director Robert Frittrang, Eisenach is ready for the upcoming challenges and transformation processes: "Production of the future is based on lean, flexible processes. It is sustainable and circular and uses the full potential of digitalisation. In my view, Plant Eisenach is ready for the future in every one of these areas."

If you have any questions, please contact:

Kai Lichte, Head of Communications Plant Leipzig, Berlin, Eisenach

Telefon: +49 176 60151240

E-Mail: Kai.Lichte@bmwgroup.com

Internet: www.bmwgroup-werke.com/eisenach
www.press.bmwgroup.com

The BMW Group production network

For decades, the BMW Group has seen itself as a benchmark in terms of production technology and operational excellence in vehicle construction. BMW iFACTORY. LEAN. GREEN. DIGITAL. stands for the strategic target image of the worldwide production network. It provides the answers to the challenges of the transformation towards e-mobility and pursues a global approach.

Lean stands for efficiency, precision, maximum flexibility and outstanding integration capability. Green involves the use of state-of-the-art technologies to establish production with the least use of resources. The aim is to reduce CO2 emissions in production per vehicle by 80% by 2030 compared to 2019. Digital focuses on data science, artificial intelligence as well as virtual planning and development. The BMW Group's production thus makes a decisive contribution to the company's profitability.

The BMW Group

With its brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and a provider of premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 31 production and assembly sites in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network with representatives in over 140 countries.

In 2021, the BMW Group achieved worldwide sales of more than 2.5 million automobiles and over 194,000 motorcycles. Profit from taxes in the 2021 financial year amounted to €16.1 billion and sales to €111.2 billion. As of December 31, 2021, the company employed 118 people worldwide. 909 employees.

Long-term thinking and responsible action have always been the basis of the BMW Group's economic success. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently places sustainability and resource conservation at the center of its orientation, from the supply chain to production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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