**Schneider Electric and Saint-Gobain collaborate on innovative automation initiative driving smarter and safer glass production**

* 1-minute of power failure can cause up to 6 months of unplanned downtime, costing up to €200,000 per day
* Joint initiative ensures reliability of critical annealing lehr drive process using software-defined automation, saving time and money during tendering, execution and operation
* Schneider showcased how it is transforming operations for the glass sector at Glasstec 2024

**Dusseldorf (Germany), 28 October 2024 -** [Schneider Electric](https://www.se.com/ww/en/), leader in the digital transformation of energy management and automation, and [Saint-Gobain](https://www.saint-gobain.com/en#:~:text=Saint-Gobain%20designs,%20manufactures%20and%20distributes%20materials%20and%20solutions%20which%20are), leader in light and sustainable construction, have joined forces to deploy the first-of-its kind [software-defined automation](https://www.se.com/ww/en/insights/next-generation-automation/universal-automation/software-defined-industrial-automation.jsp) system for glass production.

Unveiled at [Glasstec 2024](https://www.glasstec-online.com/), the world's leading trade fair for the glass industry, the project

addresses the urgent need for enhanced reliability in the critical lehr process. This furnace, vital for annealing and cooling flat glass, usually lasts for 15 to 20 years. However, any downtime in the process halts production completely, as highlighted by industry studies, where a mere 1-minute power interruption can lead to up to 6 months of production loss, often requiring equipment replacement, and costing up to €200,000 per day.

Saint-Gobain together with Schneider Electric has developed the first open automation solution for the lehr process. The proof of concept (POC) is powered by Schneider Electric’s open automation technology, [EcoStruxure Automation Expert](https://www.se.com/uk/en/product-range/23643079-ecostruxure-automation-expert/#products) (EAE) which decouples hardware and software, allowing devices and equipment to be freely connected across architecture layers, regardless of manufacturer.

The project also enhances safety and efficiency in glass manufacturing, with EAE enabling autonomous drive capabilities and representing a major advancement in distributed intelligence. The ‘smart’ drives control the two glass-pulling motors, allowing autonomous operation and critical process decision-making at the equipment level, including deciding which motor will pull the glass, performing quality checks and paving the way for predictive maintenance.

"Our understanding of the float glass process has led to a groundbreaking solution that ensures dependability, safety, and productivity. Autonomous drive technology enables smart decision-making, and this solution, with its built-in modularization and standardization, provides immediate scalability, increased flexibility, and reliability. It demonstrates our dedication to innovation and serves as evidence of the potential to expand this technology across the industry" said **Alex Richards, VP EMEA of Mining Minerals and Metals at Schneider Electric.**

Crucially, the solution’s modular design means it is easy to deploy worldwide with its plug-and-play interoperability enabling up to 50% reduction in engineering, testing and commissioning times. This intrinsic scalability enables the construction company to realize value at its sites and see exponential value globally.

**Related resources:**

* [Combining digitization and green energy infrastructures to transform the glass industry](https://blog.se.com/industry/mining-metals-minerals/2023/09/05/combining-digitization-and-green-energy-infrastructures-to-transform-the-glass-industry/)
* [The future of glass industry is all electric (Green Glass)](https://download.schneider-electric.com/files?p_Doc_Ref=Green_Glass_White_Paper)
* [Green Glass transformation](https://download.schneider-electric.com/files?p_Doc_Ref=Green_Glass_Handout)

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