

Media information  
26 July 2023

## **BMW Group launches proving ground for automated driving and parking in Sokolov.**

+++ BMW's largest test site in the world at 600 hectares +++ Ongoing development of highly and fully automated driving and parking +++ 300 million Euro investment +++ 100 new jobs +++ 100 percent green electricity and the highest sustainability standards +++

**Sokolov/Munich.** The BMW Group celebrated the launch of its new test site in Sokolov (Czechia), the Future Mobility Development Center (FMDC). With Petr Očko, the Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade in Czechia, and Petr Kulhánek, the Governor of the Karlovy Vary region, in attendance, Ilka Hortsmeier, BMW Group's Board Member for People and Real Estate, and Frank Weber, BMW Group's Board Member for Development, officially opened the test site for fully automated development and test drives.

As the first development location of its kind in central Europe, the FMDC, in which 300 million euros have been invested, will play a key role in the company's future mobility development. The former mining region has transformed into an innovation hub employing more than one hundred skilled workers. The surrounding terrain offers the best real-world conditions for testing of highly and fully automated driving and parking to supplement the virtual simulation of driving situations. Through this combination of virtual simulation and real-world testing, the BMW Group meets the highest safety requirements of its customers. The FMDC in Sokolov rounds out BMW's existing group of test sites in Aschheim near Munich, Miramas in France, and Arjeplog in Sweden.

"With our new Future Mobility Development Center, we have created a one-of-a-kind test site, designed exclusively for the highly demanding testing of automated driving and parking up to level 4. On 600 hectares of land, we test all possible driving conditions with maximum flexibility and tremendous efficiency: city, countryside, freeway, as well as automated parking. The special thing: We can run our test modules one after the other without stopping. This makes our testing as realistic, reliable, and customer-oriented as possible," said Frank Weber, BMW Board Member for Development.

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The new test site not only enables the testing and further development of technological innovations, but also stands as an example of how the highest environmental protection and sustainability standards have been consistently integrated in concept and implemented. Throughout the planning and establishment of the proving ground, BMW worked in close cooperation with specialized ecological construction monitoring.

"Making mobility electric, digital, and sustainable goes beyond our vehicles at the BMW Group. We look at the entire value chain, including our own sites. Together with our partners, we were able to develop a former surface mine site here in Sokolov into a modern and efficient test site and create new, attractive jobs," said Ilka Horstmeier, BMW Board Member for People and Real Estate. "The Future Mobility Development Center and its charging infrastructure are supplied with one hundred percent green electricity from renewable energy sources. This is another step toward the decarbonization of our sites globally."

In addition to the use of green electricity, the site is equipped with an innovative water management system that systematically collects rainwater and uses it for track irrigation. The protection and promotion of the local biodiversity were also considered throughout the planning process: amphibian control systems were installed throughout the site to ensure the safe crossing of animals across the proving ground. 2.2 million cubic meters of soil previously excavated by nearby mining were used to build the site. Thus, no additional land was sealed, but rather an area that had lain fallow was recycled for forward-looking technological development.

## Corporate Communications

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E-Mail: [andreas.sauer@bmw.be](mailto:andreas.sauer@bmw.be)Internet: [www.press.bmwgroup.com/global](http://www.press.bmwgroup.com/global)E-mail: [presse@bmw.de](mailto:presse@bmw.de)**The BMW Group**

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2022, the BMW Group sold nearly 2.4 million passenger vehicles and more than 202,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2022 was € 23.5 billion on revenues amounting to € 142.6 billion. As of 31 December 2022, the BMW Group had a workforce of 149,475 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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