IFB Refractories

Scheduled opetional maintenance in pursuit of excellence

The quality of the fire bricks produced by IFB Refractories largely depends on the performance of a machining centre. The company, based in the Indre county of France, has drawn up procedures and the maintenance programme designed to improve the reliability of its equipment.



OUR CUSTOMER

Corporate name IFB Refractories

Workforce

45 employees.

Production

3 million bricks and other components per year. Exports 85% of its production.

Business activity

Founded in 1919, the company specialises in the manufacture of insulating fire bricks from natural, local raw materials.

1919, IFB ince Refractories has been cultivating a historic craft in the Centre-Val de Loire region. However, that has not stopped the centuryold company, which has been awarded the "Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant" (Living heritage company) label, from continually modernising its production processes. Three furnaces with temperatures of up to 1500 °C, operating 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, and three 70-meter long drying tunnels are used to manufacture low-density insulating fire bricks made from a mixture of clay and saw dust from the region. Once fired, the bricks are ground to adjust their dimensions to the required specifications, and any grooving and drilling operations are carried out. This grinding phase is crucial as 80% of production is assigned to this machining centre. "We wanted to fine tune our maintenance methods with a view to improving the reliability of this equipment and maximising its operating time. We asked Cetim to support us in this process," disclosed Jean-Luc Lesage, the company's CEO.

A structured preventive maintenance plan

As part of the project, the aim was to prioritise the machine's maintenance operations and prepare a consistent preventive maintenance plan. The FMECA (Failure Modes, Effects and Criticality Analysis) method was used, drawing on the operational experience of the machine's maintenance and control technicians. Based on the functional and organic breakdown of the equipment, a preventive maintenance plan was defined for each subassembly. A number of components will now be checked at specific intervals, while others will be replaced systematically, either every year or every five years. "This maintenance programme is now operational. It is being implemented by our teams, who have adopted the FMECA method, which we now intend to use for our other production equipment," added Jean-Luc Lesage.

Cetim's asset



Cetim provides a fresh look and a perspective that are essential for improving industrial maintenance programmes. It draws on tried and tested methodologies as well as extensive feedback regarding preventive maintenance plans implemented in various industrial sectors.



