

## Maxime Morel: From Hydro Prospector to Asset Owner RE

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Maxime Morel joined Voltaia almost nine years ago. Talking about adventure seems to be the most appropriate terminology, far from cliché, to illustrate his career at Voltaia. From Paris to Remire-Montjoly, from hydro to wind energy, from prospector to asset owner, many doors have opened to him over the years, resulting in an atypical and highly rounded career path. Supporting and guiding our employees to develop their full potential, and to achieve their best, all for the benefit of a career unlike any other: That's what Voltaia is committed as an employer of renewable energies. Let's meet Maxime and look at his career evolution at Voltaia. Let's have A look back at Maxime's career with Voltaia.



**Maxime Morel** Asset Owner RE at Voltaia

### Maxime's career path: from the Ecole des Mines to Hydro Prospector at Voltaia

After graduating from high school, Maxime went on to study engineering at the Ecole des Mines de Nantes, choosing a specialization in energy expertise engineering. While he was looking for an internship at the end of his studies, he met a former student of his school, Guillaume Sainton, who had become Hydro Energy Development Project Manager at Voltaia. Guillaume shared with him an internship offer at Voltaia, as a Hydro Energy prospector. "Why not?" Maxime then had an interview with Alexis Goybet, today Country Manager for Voltaia Greece: a friendly and open discussion, which resulted in a big "Yes" from Maxime. And this is how his journey with Voltaia began in 2015.

In a few months, Maxime discovered, explored, and made his own the job of Hydro prospector, which suited him well: from trips to the Alps to meetings with village mayors, who were also breeders: "It was a blast, it was very cross-functional and always new". A successful integration so.

### Taking off for French Guiana, Voltaia's hometown, to become Development Project Manager

At the end of his 6-month internship, Maxime [got the chance to work in French Guiana](#) as a Development Project Manager, a move in line with Voltaia's project development logic, and a bridge in his career path. Maxime has been used to change of environment since he was very young, having already lived in Kuala Lumpur or Abu Dhabi. This step doesn't frighten him, but opting for this direction, training in an unfamiliar environment, requires reflection. Guillaume Sainton, her internship mentor, offered to accompany him in his decision-making process, by organizing a trip to discover French Guiana and enable him to assess this opportunity, what it represented, and his ability to project himself into this Amazonian adventure. Once again, the answer was a resounding "Yes": "I discovered a small, close-knit team, which I was delighted to join".

So following his graduation, Maxime took a one-way ticket to French Guiana to become a Project Developer for Voltaia in French Guiana. The first year was a double discovery: the job and the territory. From his very first assignments, Maxime was given the freedom and autonomy more that he could have hoped for.

In French Guiana, Maxime "dabbled in everything" and learned a lot: not only did he discover [biomass](#), solar and even floating energy, but also activities that were new to him in professional terms: contributing to public affairs, meeting with the French Regional Directorate for Environment, Development and Housing (DREAL), environmental associations and local partners.... Thanks to the mentoring of his superiors and colleagues, he has grown as a Developer over the years, gaining in skills and ambition.

**"I wanted to be able to develop a project and build it, from A to Z."**

Maxime's wishes were granted, as he had the privilege of writing the first lines of the [Pôle Scierie et Energie de Petit Saut](#) project, now under construction in 2024. Through this project, biomass - one of the five energies in which Voltaia is present - came to him, to the benefit of the development of its expertise in renewable energies. His hierarchy still highlights this great achievement today, full of encouragement and recognition: "You've contributed a lot: you've pushed and carried the project, been persistent. You can be entrusted with a project of any size, even as a junior. It's your presence and commitment that count, even if you're not the one to carry the project through to the end. Your contribution remains important."

Maxime has unforgettable memories of his six years in French Guiana: *"It was as unexpected as it was incredible in terms of personal development and accomplishment. I can only advise and wish everyone to have an experience like this in their career, accompanied by caring teams who supported me a lot."*

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### **An attachment and loyalty to Voltalia**

In October 2021, after his experience in French Guiana, Maxime is looking into the possibility of internal mobility, as he would like to give his career a new boost and increase his skills portfolio by moving towards the position of Asset Owner. As this subject had already been discussed with his superiors in French Guiana, Maxime received all the support he needed from his managers to achieve this objective, despite the disappointment of seeing one of their colleagues move on to other horizons. So his manager recommended him to Hadrien Guillemard, Director of Assets France.

Maxime is very attached to Voltalia, for its diversity of missions and the career development opportunities it offers. *"When I joined the teams in Aix-en-Provence, I didn't feel I was staying with the same company, because I'd known Voltalia's Paris and Rémire-Montjoly sites, but in different positions."* Although Voltalia has been growing strongly for several years, Maxime has not felt the potential impact of the changing environment of a fast-moving company, but has benefited from all its advantages, in a very fluid way, to the advantage of his career path. His skills are recognized by his peers and his employer. Voltalia aims to maintain and develop the expertise of its employees internally, and therefore places great importance on facilitating and encouraging career development within the company. Ambitions and aspirations are welcomed and supported for personal and collective enrichment.

### **Back to metropolitan France for a new career step: the role of Asset Owner**

In 2021, after a few months' transition, Maxime moved to the South of France, with one foot still in the Amazon and the other in the sunny city of Aix-en-Provence.

Maxime discovered his new role: from managing the project team to coordinating the teams, the Asset Owner position is very comprehensive, and the fundamental values are key: listening to others, having team spirit, communicating, knowing how to work in continuous collaboration with multiple stakeholders... Maxime acquires many new skills every day and never gets bored!

### **Maxime's major project at Voltalia: Rives Charentaises, 37.4 MW wind farm in New Aquitaine**

As Asset Owner, Maxime had the opportunity to follow his first wind power project under construction: the largest wind farm in France, [Rives Charentaises](#), located in Nouvelle Aquitaine and with a capacity of 37.4 MW. "We all learned a lot together on this project: you have to be proactive, anticipate, be present during the construction phase but also upstream with local residents."

***"The teams had already followed a wind power project, but we all upped our skills, now the wind turbines are standing, and we're very proud of this achievement."***

*"Being an Asset Owner means being multi-disciplinary, and sometimes taking on unexpected missions... like contributing to the launch and running of a crowdfunding campaign."*

For the Rives Charentaises project, Maxime was given the opportunity to set up an equity crowdfunding campaign as part of a sustainable approach based on value-sharing with all project stakeholders, including local inhabitants and residents, which is dear to Voltalia's values. Maxime was given "carte blanche" to set up this operation with the Financing & Investments Department, supported by the Group Executive Committee: a sometimes unsettling, but highly gratifying experience, which brought out many ideas and opportunities for Voltalia and its subsidiaries!

He couldn't have imagined pursuing such a mission just a few years ago. While it required a significant commitment and coordination, as well as the acquisition of specific skills, Maxime also encountered the world of participative financing, and "it was great that Voltalia followed me in this process!" The results were worthy of the teams' hard work, as the operation raised 5 million euros in just a few weeks - *"We did it! And it also enabled me to tell some friends about it afterwards, to be able to promote the approach in my day-to-day life. It was a great experience!"*

### **A caring atmosphere essential to career development**

*"My colleagues are good listeners, caring, in all circumstances, even when the workload is heavy in Aix, I get to see all the different businesses and talk a lot with other Voltalia sites and entities. My job gives me a global view of the company, which is absolutely essential for me."*

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Voltalia is a fast-growing company, and for Maxime, *"the best is to come."* At Voltalia, projects are developed in a responsible and sustainable way, with great autonomy for employees in their respective positions and expertise, enabling measured risk-taking, while guaranteeing a successful result. *"If the lands were flat, empty, with no environmental issues, no trees and no local residents, it wouldn't be the same job, that's what's interesting."* The Development teams do a tremendous amount of work with ingenuity and integrity, respecting all the rules, to ensure a long-term future for the projects. It is these foundations and values, promoted and defended by Voltalia on a daily basis, that constitute a remarkable differentiating factor.

In Maxime's eyes, Voltalia is also differentiated by its plurality: *"We're present in all areas of renewable energies, from the blank page to financing, from construction to operation, from B2B to B2C, and we're especially involved in four energies, so [we've got a lot of fun in a lot of countries!](#)"*

### **The final word: What message would you like to give to someone thinking of joining Voltalia tomorrow?**

*"First of all, I'd say that we do a beautiful job, and that there's a diversity of activities, missions and positions at Voltalia, which can allow us to build a nice career plan. It's a great place to grow and develop new skills, in a promising field, and in a caring atmosphere that's sometimes hard to find in other companies. Voltalia tries to keep renewing itself and moving forward and that often makes all the difference."*

**A career in renewable energy: French Guiana, a land of opportunity!**

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