

Bridgestone Turkey Venture Says Tire Volume May Rise 15% in 2013

Bridgestone Corp.'s (5108) joint tiremaking venture in Turkey intends to boost its sales volume by 10 percent to 15 percent in 2013 as the country makes winter tires compulsory for commercial vehicles.

Brisa Bridgestone Sabanci Lastik Sanayi & Ticaret AS (BRISA), a joint venture of the Tokyo-based manufacturer and Haci Omer Sabanci Holding AS (SAHOL) of Turkey, plans to sell 11 million tires next year, Hakan Bayman, chief executive of the unit, said in a news conference in Istanbul today. Revenue will grow "faster than the volume," he said.

Brisa Bridgestone has a market share of about 30 percent in Turkey, where it competes with Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. (GT), Continental AG (CON), Michelin & Cie (ML) and Pirelli & C SpA. (PC)

The company is expected to close 2012 with sales growth of about 10 percent to 1.4 billion liras (\$785 million) to 1.5 billion liras, compared with a 1.6 percent expansion in the market, Bayman said. Brisa Bridgestone expects the Turkish tire market to expand as much as 7 percent in 2013.

"Tire renewals, increase in winter tire sales and exports will be the main driver of our growth in 2013," Bayman said.

The company increased winter tire sales by about 50 percent after the Turkish government ordered all commercial vehicles to use winter tires from December to the end of March every year, Bayman said.

Brisa Bridgestone will invest \$70 million for expansion in 2013 as part of a plan to spend \$200 million by 2015, after completing investment of \$117 million for capacity expansion this year, he said.