

Evonik paves the way for construction of the first MMA production plant using the AVENEER® process

- Evonik starts planning the large-scale plant with a capacity of 120,000 metric tons of methyl methacrylate (MMA)
- Start-up planned for the middle of 2015
- Mobile site, USA

Evonik Industries is starting basic planning for a new methyl methacrylate (MMA) production plant using the AVENEER® process at its Mobile site in Alabama, USA.

The capital expenditure involved will be in the three-digit million € range. The large-scale plant, with a production capacity of 120,000 metric tons, is expected to come on stream in the middle of 2015 and will create up to 100 jobs in Mobile. The overall project is awaiting the approval of the relevant bodies. Methacrylate monomers and their derivatives are the starting materials for innovative products for resource-efficient solutions, as for example in lightweight construction in the automotive industry.

“With AVENEER® technology and our decision in favor of Mobile we’re systematically expanding our global methacrylates platform and consolidating our leading market position further,” says Dr. Dahai Yu, member of the Executive Board of Evonik Industries with responsibility for the Specialty Materials Segment. The AVENEER® process developed by Evonik is distinguished by an improved carbon footprint and is thus particularly eco-friendly. Process CO₂ emissions are lower than 1,000 kg CO₂ per metric ton of MMA, or a little over half of the current value.

Mobile, USA, was chosen as the site for the first MMA plant to use the new AVENEER® process. “As Evonik’s largest North American site, Mobile offers the advantages of a strong infrastructure and optimal availability of all raw materials and power,” says Gregor Hetzke, head of Evonik’s Performance Polymers Business Unit. The location of the site on the Gulf of Mexico also allows delivery by sea to customers all over the world.

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Evonik has so far been producing MMA at the German sites of Worms and Wesseling as well as in Fortier (USA) and Shanghai (China).

AVENEER® uses the same starting materials (ammonia, methane, acetone, and methanol) as the traditional ACH sulfo process, but does not need sulfuric acid. With an overall yield of 95 percent, AVENEER® uses the available resources significantly more efficiently than the current process.

In a pilot facility in Worms, Evonik has brought the innovative process to technological readiness over the last five years. An important advantage of the new process is the capability to produce methyl methacrylate and methacrylic acid simultaneously in a single plant. “The proportion of the two products can be adjusted within wide limits, allowing us a high degree of flexibility,” says Dr. Hans-Peter Hauck, head of Evonik’s Acrylic Monomers Business Line.

As the starting product of Evonik’s methacrylates platform, methyl methacrylate is the base for a number of products and a very important monomer for the Group. With more than 100 years of experience in methacrylate chemistry, Evonik produces and markets under the VISIOMER® brand name more than 50 monomers, in addition to MMA, which are produced from or related to MMA. It thus provides the chemical industry with the most extensive range of such products.

Company information

Evonik, the creative industrial group from Germany, is one of the world leaders in specialty chemicals. Its activities focus on the key megatrends health, nutrition, resource efficiency and globalization. Profitable growth and a sustained increase in the value of the company form the heart of Evonik’s corporate strategy. Evonik benefits specifically from its innovative prowess and integrated technology platforms.

Evonik is active in over 100 countries around the world. In fiscal 2011 more than 33,000 employees generated sales of around €14.5 billion and an operating profit (adjusted EBITDA) of about €2.8 billion.

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