
LANXESS Rubber and Electrabel join forces to build a new cogeneration unit

LANXESS Rubber is bolstering its competitive position by investing in a cogeneration unit and has chosen Electrabel as energy partner for the future. The companies are jointly investing €60 million in this cogeneration unit. This new power plant will contribute to a fall in CO₂ emissions of around 80,000 tonnes/year.

Cogeneration: the most efficient solution

The steam boilers currently used by LANXESS Rubber date back to the 1960s and would require expensive upgrades to bring them in line with future environmental standards. That is why LANXESS Rubber carried out a study showing a cogeneration unit is the most efficient solution.

Based on its experience, Electrabel was selected as partner to construct and operate the new power plant. It is also investing in three back-up boilers to guarantee the supply of steam. The cogeneration unit will be built on the LANXESS Rubber site in Zwijndrecht, sufficiently far away from the nearby Blokkersdijk nature reserve.

Construction work is set to start in mid-2007 and the commissioning is scheduled approximately a year later.

“With this investment, Electrabel is boosting its total available capacity from cogeneration units in Belgium to 980 MW spread across some 38 customers. Our cooperative venture once more confirms Electrabel's flexibility in offering tailor-made solutions that meet the customer's specific needs” says Electrabel CEO Jean-Pierre Hansen.

“Since we are investing minimally in this project, we can allocate our resources to our core business of producing butyl rubber. This confirms our confidence in the future of the LANXESS Rubber site”, says Paul Van Damme, CEO of LANXESS Rubber NV.

Cogeneration: a few figures

Cogeneration is a technique used to produce steam and electricity simultaneously, yielding significant energy savings. Temperatures reach between - 100°C and + 200°C during certain stages in the butyl production process. In other words, the producing synthetic rubber requires a great deal of energy, meaning significant savings can be achieved in these thermodynamic processes.

The new cogeneration unit will have an electrical capacity of 55 MW and a thermal capacity of 40 to 85 MW. Around half of the generated electricity is intended for LANXESS Rubber. Electrabel will supply the remaining capacity to its other customers.

This new unit, which has an efficiency rating of around 89%, will lead to a saving of around 400 GWh of natural gas per year, corresponding to a fall in CO₂ emissions of around 80,000 tonnes, compared to the current situation.

About LANXESS in Belgium

LANXESS, one of the world's leading international chemicals groups, is headquartered in Leverkusen, Germany. Its core business is developing, producing and marketing chemicals, rubber and plastics. The group has 1,500 employees at two sites in Belgium.

LANXESS Rubber NV in Zwijndrecht has produced synthetic rubber since 1963. Applications include tyres, pharmaceutical plugs, wiring, conveyor belts and protective clothing. The Zwijndrecht site employs 500 people.

LANXESS NV in Lillo and Kallo produce caprolactam (a preliminary product for polyamide and nylon), and glass fibre and rubber chemicals respectively.

Electrabel, a European supplier of all-in, tailor-made energy solutions

Electrabel is one of Europe's front-runners in the energy sector and a leader on the Benelux market. It is capitalising on the opportunities presented by the deregulation of the electricity and natural gas markets to achieve sustainable growth in Europe whilst adhering to strict profitability criteria.

The company is currently developing its range of energy products and services by exploiting the synergies between electricity and natural gas. It offers each customer a high-quality service that is close at hand, provided through subsidiaries and partnerships with local operators.

The company manages a diversified range of generating facilities totalling more than 29,800 MW, and trades on all energy markets. In Belgium, it operates the electricity and natural gas networks on behalf of distribution system operators.

Electrabel is part of SUEZ, an international industrial and services group that is active in the energy and environment sectors.

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