Deal With Ineos Will Boost Akzo Chelates

AkzoNobel Specialty Chemicals has signed a long-term cooperation agreement with Ineos Nitrile that will allow it to expand its biodegradable chelates output in Europe.

Terms of the deal call for the Amsterdam-based company to build production facilities at the Ineos subsidiary’s acrylonitrile complex at Cologne, Germany, utilizing as feedstock raw materials manufactured there.

Construction of the new production lines is due to begin later this year, with completion due in 2020. Ineos will operate the plants. Beyond acrylonitrile, Ineos Nitriles also produces specialty nitriles such as acetonitrile, oxazole, hydrogen cyanide (HCN), acetone cyanohydrin (ACH) and ammonium sulphate.

AkzoNobel Specialty Chemicals, recently sold to a partnership of private equity investor Carlyle and Singapore sovereign wealth fund GIC, said the agreement will move will “significantly strengthen” its leadership position for the chelates, used in detergents and other industries.

The European cooperation between the two companies builds on an existing supply relationship at an Ineos plant in Lima, Ohio, USA, as Gordon Adams, business director of Ineos Nitriles, explained.

Adams said the pact continues his company’s strategy of attracting petrochemical integration opportunities to the Cologne site. With the biodegradables facility, “Ineos’ chemicals will be used to enable a significant industry sustainability improvement,” he added.

According to Peter Kuijpers, general manager, Chelates and Micronutrients at AkzoNobel Specialty Chemicals, demand for high-quality chelates has been increasing strongly in the past few years, in particular following the European ban on phosphates in consumer automatic dishwasher detergents due to environmental concerns.

Kuijpers described the long-term cooperation with Ineos as a strategic step to secure a solid asset base for high-quality chelates in Europe, enabling the new
standalone company to meet growing demand from customers.

Using material with a lower carbon footprint, switching heat and electricity to more environmentally friendly energy sources or renewable electricity and decreasing the transport distance of its products will improve the sustainability profile of the chelates business, Kuijpers said.

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