

"India has a huge potential for profitable growth"

Dr Joerg Strassburger, Country Representative & Managing Director, Lanxess India Pvt Ltd, acquaints Indira Rao on the ongoing status of the chemical process industry and various initiatives undertaken by the company to stand apart from the rest. Excerpts...

■ What are your views on the current outlook of the chemical process industry, in India?

The chemical process industry in India is currently growing at a very healthy rate and has the potential to build a USD 80 to USD100 billion specialty chemical industry by 2020. The Asia Pacific region now forms nearly 42 per cent of the global market for chemicals, clearly making it the largest contributor. This implies that India can leverage this shift in specialty chemical landscape. This growth has a strong positive correlation with overall buoyancy of India's economy and a steady growth in the end user industries like automobile, construction, paints and coatings, agro-chemicals among others. The factors that can propel this growth are strong domestic demand supported by the large rising middle class household consumption, increase in discretionary spending by middle-class households. Furthermore, currently India is a net importer of specialty chemicals and thus there is a huge potential for profitable growth both in terms of local demand and export.

■ What are Lanxess' initiatives in modernising / automating its various facilities? What are the future plans in this area?

Lanxess plants are modern, fully automated and deploys latest state-of-the-art technology. Technology plays an important role in maintaining the high levels of safety and minimising environmental impact at every stage of production, which are of paramount importance to us. All our sites are upgraded periodically in order to introduce the latest control systems that can keep pace with the advancements in technology.



"We have a highly effective innovation network that combines global reach with local expertise. Roughly, 80 per cent of all our projects in our R&D pipeline are ready for launch in two years or less."

Dr Joerg Strassburger

■ What is Lanxess approach towards automation/modernisation when it comes to vendor selection and the deployment of appropriate automation technology?

Being an innovation centric company, we believe in continuous improvement. The same approach is followed for the selection of vendors and automation technology. We consider our suppliers and service providers to be partners and select them on the basis of their expertise,

reliability, compliance and transparency. The system chosen must be reliable and stable, deploying the latest technology and adaptable to new upgrades. We expect the vendor to provide good support as per the terms of agreement.

■ How does Lanxess go about fostering innovation?

Maintaining a steady focus towards providing premium quality of products and services in a sustainable way,

on trust and entrepreneurial freedom, helps us go the extra mile for the products and process and consider out-of-the-box innovations.

In addition we have developed several products in our laboratories that have helped minimise the adverse impacts on the environment in many ways. By March 2010, we had reduced our direct climate gas emissions by more than 50 per cent. From 2007 to 2009, annual emissions from the group's plants were cut from 3.5 million to 1.5 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalents.

■ What is Lanxess' approach to upgrading batch control processes to avoid downtime and maximise efficiency?

We are committed to constantly improving productivity and efficiency in all unit operations across all our sites and invest appropriately. The batch process operations are controlled by a centralised control system and do not require separate batch process controllers. There are barely any chances of unplanned downtime as we have a built-in control system including processor, input-output cards, communication bus, power supply, etc. ■

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