

Successful conclusion to the longest inspection shut-down in Oxxynova's history

On 24 September, chemical company Oxxynova GmbH completed the biggest inspection shut-down of the last 40 years on schedule, and successfully resumed production of its main product, dimethyl terephthalate.

Every five years, Oxxynova undergoes a scheduled TÜV inspection of its dimethyl terephthalate production site in Steyerberg, Germany. As the sole remaining European producer of dimethyl terephthalate (DMT), the major challenge here was to continue to supply all customers to the greatest extent possible even with the entire site in shut-down. Neither the company nor its customers had experienced anything like this before.

Thanks to long-term planning carried out over more than 18 months and close cooperation with all customers, it was possible to agree shut-down and supply concepts for the period in question. This meant that customers were able to safeguard their production capabilities during this time.

As well as filling liquid DMT tanks to capacity, this also included producing customer-specific solid DMT stocks. These could then be melted down into liquid goods again for the individual customers using Oxxynova's available internal melting capacity. Thanks to the new solid DMT production site, commissioned in 2017, Oxxynova was able to cost-effectively produce these solid DMT stocks for its customers in advance. This meant the company was able to continue supplying them in a competent and reliable manner while the site was shut down.

Alongside the usual planned maintenance and renewal work, followed by the prescribed TÜV inspections of a wide range of machinery and equipment, the main focus was on renovating the combustion chamber for the first time after 40 years of operation. The combustion chamber is used to generate steam and is therefore the centrepiece of the system. The rebricking of the combustion chamber and the related drying process were key factors in determining the five-week duration of this site shut-down, which had previously been limited to three or four weeks.

Precisely five weeks after the start of the shut-down on 20 August, operations were gradually resumed and the first 'new product' was delivered the same week.

"All of our employees showed an exceptional level of commitment during the shut-down, without which we would not have been able to meet the deadline for this challenge nor remain within budget. We would therefore like to thank all of our colleagues and also external contractors for their cooperation." said Oxxynova's two Managing Directors, Dr Klaus F. Puell and Henning Buuk, in a joint statement.

Despite the presence of numerous external contractors with over 200 employees on site, the shut-down was concluded without any major medical problems and without a single reportable work incident. This means that, having completed the TÜV inspection, Oxxynova can now look back on over 630 incident-free days.

This represents another milestone for Oxxynova and means 2018 can already be declared a success. The company will now continue to supply the global market with high quality DMT in both liquid and solid form.

About Oxxynova

Oxxynova is a producer of dimethyl terephthalate (DMT), a monomer that is used for the production of technical plastics such as polybutylene terephthalate (PBT) and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) in the form of granules, fibres and films. DMT is also used in the production of 1,4-cyclohexanedi-methanol (CHDM), a component of co-polyesters, as well as for producing dioctyl terephthalate (DOTP), a phthalate-free plasticiser. All of these technical plastics are used as functional materials in the automotive, electrical and electronics, personal care and household products industries, where they are further processed for use in a wide range of final applications and products.

Oxxynova has been supplying liquid DMT to the European market for more than 40 years, and has also recently begun supplying the global export markets with DMT in solid form. Oxxynova is committed to ensuring a sustainable, long-term supply of DMT for the global market. The company has also established itself in recent years as a distiller of chemical side-streams and waste streams with a particular focus on the distillation of glycols, tetrahydrofuran and methanol.

For more information, please contact us at info@oxxynova.com or visit our website, www.oxxynova.com