



AkzoNobel
Tomorrow's Answers Today

Press release

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AkzoNobel investing €30 million to meet demand for Expancel

AkzoNobel is boosting capacity in Sweden for its Expancel expandable microspheres in order to meet growing global demand.

Used as a blowing agent or lightweight filler, the Expancel product line is continuing to evolve and find new applications in markets such as thermoplastics, printing inks, coatings and paper and board.

The extra capacity – due to come on stream in early 2012 – will be added at the company's site in Stockvik. Part of the investment will also be used to further improve eco-efficiency at the facility and to implement several additional upgrades.

"This is a significant investment in organic growth which underlines our commitment to seize opportunities in established markets and contribute to the company's accelerated growth agenda," explained Rob Frohn, the AkzoNobel Executive Committee member responsible for Specialty Chemicals. "We are the leading provider of expandable microsphere solutions worldwide and improving our scale and capability will ensure that we increase our capacity to supply customers worldwide with our innovative products."

Added Ruud Joosten, Managing Director of AkzoNobel's Pulp and Paper Chemicals business, which runs the Expancel activities: "As we continue to find new applications for Expancel we are becoming even more competitive in the marketplace, hence the need to increase capacity. Strong worldwide demand is also forecast to intensify in the years ahead, so we will be well positioned to establish ourselves in new markets when the opportunities arise."

Expancel is made up of small plastic spheres filled with gas. When the gas inside the shell is heated, it increases its pressure and the thermoplastic shell softens, resulting in a dramatic increase in the volume of the spheres. When fully expanded, the volume of these spheres increases more than 50 times.

Some of the newest Expancel products include ultra-high temperature microspheres for engineering plastics which reduce weight and save on expensive raw materials. Available in both unexpanded and expanded versions, more common applications include fillers for vehicle bodies, injection-moulded PVC soles for footwear, tennis balls and wine bottle corks.

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AkzoNobel is the largest global paints and coatings' company and a major producer of specialty chemicals. We supply industries and consumers worldwide with innovative products and are passionate about developing sustainable answers for our customers. Our portfolio includes well known brands such as Dulux, Sikkens, International and Eka. Headquartered in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, we are a Global Fortune 500 company and are consistently ranked as one of the leaders in the area of sustainability. With operations in more than 80 countries, our 55,000 people around the world are committed to excellence and delivering Tomorrow's Answers Today™.

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