

Imerys Graphite & Carbon announces capacity extension and R&D acceleration to fuel growth in carbon black and synthetic graphite markets

Doubling Carbon Black production capacity in Willebroek, Belgium

Imerys Graphite & Carbon completes the doubling of its production capacity of conductive carbon black at its facility in Willebroek (Belgium). The new production line has recently been successfully put into operation.

Imerys' Willebroek plant specializes in producing unique and highly conductive carbon black for the lithium-ion batteries and polymer markets. Carbon black benefits from the strong growth of both markets.

Carbon black is an essential component of lithium-ion batteries, a market driven by the growing demand for consumer electronic mobile devices such as PCs, smartphones and tablets, for hybrid and electric cars and for energy storage systems.

In plastics and rubber applications, carbon black is required to prevent electrical discharge, to preserve the activity of electronic components, to allow for further treatment (such as electrostatic painting) and to transport electricity safely.

Carbon black serves industry segments such as automotive, electronic, medical, and everyday life applications.

A Synthetic Graphite Research & Development Center in Japan focused on product application in the lithium-ion market

Imerys Graphite & Carbon has been selected by the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry for the 2014 Subsidy Program for projects promoting foreign direct investment, site location and regional developments in Japan. The project involves the establishment in Japan of a R&D center specialized in environmental friendly high performing specialty carbons' applications such as rechargeable batteries, supercapacitors and fuel cells. Imerys Graphite & Carbon is already present in Japan with a sales team located in Tokyo and a production site located in Fuji.

This R&D center will further reinforce Imerys Graphite & Carbon presence in Asia-Pacific where lithium-ion battery production is located and where most of the lithium-ion battery technology is developed. Japan is a technology leader for rechargeable batteries with a large share in global cell production.

"Imerys is proud of these important achievements reflecting our innovation & investment strategy focusing on high-growth markets, requiring extensive technical know-how, on-going innovation effort and strong customer intimacy" commented **Olivier Hautin, Vice-President of Imerys Energy Solutions & Specialties business group**. "The additional production line in Willebroek and the R&D center project in Japan reinforce our capacity to address key challenges of our customers (environmental impact, technical reliability and cost effectiveness)."

About Imerys, the world leader in mineral-based specialty solutions for industry

Imerys transforms a unique range of minerals to deliver essential functions (heat resistance, mechanical strength, conductivity, coverage, barrier effect, etc.) that are essential to its customers' products and manufacturing processes. Whether mineral components, functional additives, process enablers or finished products, Imerys' solutions contribute to the quality of a great number of applications in consumer goods, industrial equipment or construction.

About Imerys Graphite & Carbon

Imerys Graphite & Carbon is the world leader in high-tech, high performance solutions based on specialized graphite and carbons with processing plants in Switzerland, Belgium, Canada, Japan and China as well as a graphite mine in Canada. Imerys Graphite & Carbon has a strong tradition and history in carbon manufacturing, with its first manufacturing operation founded way back in 1908. Employing an experienced multi-national team of more than 430 employees, Imerys Graphite & Carbon produces and markets a large variety of synthetic and natural graphite powders, conductive carbon blacks and water-based dispersions of consistent high quality. These high-performance mineral specialties have earned Imerys Graphite & Carbon a leading position in the technical-application domains such as mobile energy, engineering products, additives for polymers, lubricants, or metallurgy and refractories products.

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