

Almatis' new Qingdao calcined alumina plant

ALMATIS GMBH, THE German manufacturer of speciality alumina products, recently invested \$50m. in a new calcining facility that will be integrated with its existing operations in Qingdao, China.

The first phase of the investment, construction of the batch mill for reactive alumina production, is scheduled for completion by the end of 2008. Almatis plans to complete construction of the calcining facility during the first half of 2010, which is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2010.

Communication officer for Almatis, Andreas Putz, told **IM**: "The new facility will produce a full range of Almatis speciality alumina products for refractories, ceramics and

other applications." These products will include fully ground reactive alumina, ground calcined alumina and unground calcined alumina. Both medium soda and low soda content aluminas will be produced.

Martin Laudenbach, chief executive officer of Almatis, commented that customers could expect "increased flexibility and shorter delivery times" in the future as a result of the greater market outreach of the proposed facility.

Laudenbach acknowledged that Almatis' investment comes at a time when "the global economic outlook is uncertain," but asserted that "this decision represents a major commitment to supporting our customer's future growth".

South Asia has solid

demand for alumina, primarily for use in ceramic products such as flat panel displays and spark plugs.

Putz confirmed that the new facility will be producing primarily for alumina markets in China and surrounding south-east Asia, but assured that the facility "will be incorporated into the global supply chain".

Almatis has a strong global presence in the alumina market, aided by nine production facilities worldwide. In November 2007 Almatis was sold for \$1,200m. to the private equity firm Dubai International Capital. This new facility marks the company's first significant investment since its take-over.



The calcining facility will be integrated with Almatis' existing property in Qingdao. Courtesy Almatis GmbH