

ASPAs: Aurubis introduces more efficient way of recycling

- » Next step towards the goal of becoming the most efficient and sustainable integrated smelter network worldwide
- » € 27 million investment for processing anode sludge at the Beerse site in Belgium
- » COO Heiko Arnold: “Faster, more efficient, and with less valuable metal loss”
- » ASPA (Advanced Sludge Processing by Aurubis): Innovative metals-from-waste recycling

Hamburg/Beerse, July 28, 2021 – Today, Aurubis announced the construction of a state-of-the-art recycling facility at its Beerse site in Belgium. With the hydrometallurgical facility, the company is strengthening its core business and is taking the next step towards becoming the most efficient and sustainable integrated smelter network worldwide. At the ASPA facility, anode sludge, a valuable intermediate product from electrolytic copper refining, from the recycling sites in Beerse and Lünen (Germany) will be processed. The new process will enable faster extraction of more precious metals, such as gold and silver, as well as tin from the anode sludge.

As another high-performance metal recycling site in the Aurubis smelter network, the plant in Beerse processes about 250,000 tons of multimetal scrap annually – ranging from the most complex residues to higher-grade scrap types – and produces metals, metal products, and minerals from them. Since the acquisition of the Metallo Group in 2020, Aurubis is further expanding its role as one of the world’s leading copper recycler and now processes a total of about 1 million tons of recycling materials per year in the company.

Using synergies created by Metallo acquisition

“Metal recycling is a core business area for Aurubis. This is how we contribute significantly to the circular economy. With ASPA, our production in Beerse is becoming faster, more efficient, and with less valuable metal loss,” Dr. Heiko Arnold, COO of Aurubis AG, said. “The new facility is also a prime example of the synergies created by the acquisition of Metallo and how the whole company benefits in developing new innovative solutions together. ASPA uses the in-house recycling know-how of the Beerse plant and grafts it into the processes of other Aurubis plants.”

Strengthening the Beerse site

With the project, Aurubis is investing € 27 million in Beerse. “We are leveraging synergies, strengthening and securing the Beerse site with ASPA. We are creating

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new jobs and increasing the plant's importance for the whole Group," Arnold explained. "Its central geographical position between the involved sites enables us to keep the transport distance of the intermediates low."

Metal recycling is becoming increasingly complex. The number of metals in discarded electronic consumer goods – for example, smartphones or laptops – has risen sharply and the product design of the devices is becoming more intricate. Valorizing metals from this end-of-life pool in a sustainable way therefore requires special recycling skills and investment in research and development. "ASPA is taking metal recycling to the next level. We combine efficiency and speed to get even more out of it. It's a complex process. However, recycling as many components as possible and harnessing the potential of 'urban mining' – which means using the city as a raw material depot – for scrap metal is crucial to closing the waste loop and catering to the increased demand for metals in a resource-efficient way," Arnold added.

ASPA: Circular economy at its best

The development of the new state-of-the-art recycling facility proves Aurubis' drive to innovate and to reach the goal of an independent production cycle. "We have been working on perfecting the ASPA process for more than three years," Dirk Vandenberghe, Managing Director for Beerse, said. "This is a special and very important project for us because it allows us to get more valuable metals out of the same intermediate product and to do it faster than before." The newly developed hydrometallurgical process significantly increases the valorization of valuable metals such as tin and precious metals. "There will be more metals that can be reused. For us, this is the circular economy at its best," added Vandenberghe.

Detailed engineering and approval processes for ASPA are currently under way. The start of construction for the facility is planned for the second quarter of 2022 and the commissioning for early 2024.

Aurubis – Metals for Progress

Aurubis AG is a leading global provider of non-ferrous metals and one of the largest copper recyclers worldwide. The company processes complex metal concentrates, scrap metals, and metal-bearing recycling materials into metals of the highest quality. Aurubis produces more than 1 million tons of copper cathodes annually, and from them a variety of products such as wire rod, continuous cast shapes, profiles, and flat rolled products made of copper and copper alloys. Aurubis produces a number of other metals as well, including precious metals, selenium, lead, nickel, tin, and zinc. The portfolio also includes additional products such as sulfuric acid and iron silicate.

Sustainability is a fundamental part of the Aurubis strategy. "Aurubis responsibly transforms raw materials into value" – following this maxim, the company integrates sustainable conduct and business activities into the corporate culture. This involves a careful approach to natural resources, responsible social and ecological conduct in everyday business, and sensible, healthy growth.

Aurubis has about 7,200 employees, production sites in Europe and the US, and an extensive service and distribution system in Europe, Asia, and North America.

Aurubis shares are part of the Prime Standard Segment of the German Stock Exchange and are listed in the MDAX and the Global Challenges Index (GCX).

Further information at www.aurubis.com