

# SAMAC plant start-up welcomed by Europe MMA players

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Saudi Methacrylates (SAMAC), a joint venture between Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation (MCC) and Sabic, have started commercial operations of its methyl methacrylate (MMA) and polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) plants in Saudi Arabia, MCC announced in a press release on Wednesday.

The producer has completed performance tests and commenced commercial operations of both plants on 2 April 2018.

"SAMAC commenced test production and achieved in-specification production of both MMA monomer and PMMA last November, after which, first shipment of MMA to customers was made. It has been in the process of optimising operations since then," the producer added.

The MMA plant has an annual capacity of 250,000 tonnes, using the Alpha technology, with ethylene as a feedstock.

The PMMA plant has a capacity of 40,000 tonne/year, with the joint venture agreement meaning a 50/50 split between the two chemical companies.

The news of the successful start-up of the plant has been eagerly awaited by global MMA and PMMA players, in a market that has been plagued with tightness since mid-2016.

"MCC will utilize SAMAC as a strategic supply base for markets in Asia, Europe, Middle East and Africa," the producer added in the press release.

Material from the facility started to arrive in Europe in March, with product initially expected in late 2017.

There are currently a number of global turnarounds taking place, and a major overhaul for Lucite International at its Cassel, UK facility at its 200,000 tonne /year plant.

Lucite International are part of MCC, with the producer having a two-month maintenance stop in the UK from March- April.

Given the ongoing tightness in the market, steady growth in demand in line with GDP, and the number of current turnarounds, the successful start-up of the Saudi plant will be welcomed news to MMA buyers.

*Source Icis News*