

Braskem and Genomatica partner for bio-based butadiene

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Brazilian petrochemical company Braskem and biochemicals company Genomatica said they have agreed to jointly develop technology to make bio-based butadiene from renewable feedstocks.

Braskem is the world's leading producer of biopolymers and the world's third largest producer of butadiene, which is used mainly to manufacture tires.

Under the agreement, Braskem will provide "significant funding" to Genomatica's research and development of bio-based butadiene. In return, Braskem will receive certain exclusive license rights to use the resulting technology in the Americas.

"Braskem has a clear strategy for investing in the research and development of renewable based chemical technologies as alternatives to complement our current product portfolio based on petrochemicals," Alexandre Elias, director of renewable chemicals at Braskem, said in a statement.

Genomatica said that the combined strength of current and future partners for its butadiene program, which now include Braskem, will help it deliver technologies for licensing to and use by the global chemical industry, using a range of feedstocks.

Braskem, which operates a 200,000ty/ ethanol to polyethylene (PE) plant in southern Brazil, said it would research with Genomatica the use of sugarcane to produce feedstock for butadiene. Depending on the results of this research, it would then build a demonstration plant.

Genomatica said that the supply of butadiene has been decreasing due to a long-term shift to natural gas at petrochemical cracking plants, and a scarcity of dedicated production processes and facilities.

"This has resulted in substantial pricing volatility, which in turn impacts butadiene-based products, including tires," Genomatica said.

"The butadiene process being developed by Genomatica and Braskem is expected to provide an economically competitive and environmentally-friendlier alternative, while providing a strategic alternative to the use of petroleum-based feedstocks."

SOURCE Business News America