

Case Study: Dismantling of chemical plant called for scientific approach

In 2011, the world's largest chemical company BASF commenced the dismantling and demolition of its Kaipiainen polymer production facilities in Finland. The activity was part of a strategic consolidation to allow the company to focus its attention on alternative worldwide manufacturing, following its acquisition of chemical company Ciba in 2009.

To project manage the complex process, BASF appointed UK-based specialist engineering consultants RVA Group. A team from RVA spent five months helping BASF prepare for the project before overseeing the safe execution of the works.

With their extensive expertise of diverse decommissioning projects, RVA directed the full tender process, assessing submissions from contractors across Europe. After appointing a Finnish team of experts to carry out the demolition work, RVA remained on site throughout the entirety of the three month project execution to ensure it ran smoothly and safely.



But this was not just a straightforward site clearance exercise. Whilst major redundant plant items were dismantled for recycling, some external and internal elements of the production area were also cherry-picked by a new company that will store and distribute chemicals from this site going forward. RVA therefore had to ensure the safety, protection and integrity of these valuable assets which included large storage vessels (in a tank farm only metres from the demolition area), and a two-storey building with two process areas separated by a large warehouse. Vessel removal took

place in both process areas, but a significant number of reactors were also retained.

As the next occupants moved onto the site before the project's completion, RVA used their sector-specific experience to ensure that appropriate safety standards and methodology were applied.

Working closely with the appointed contractor, RVA also safeguarded the activity of the three industrial companies that shared the BASF site. Whilst there was no fenced boundary separating the operational companies from the demolition works, it was essential that minimum disruption was caused and exemplary safety standards were maintained. Central facilities such as a boilerhouse, waste water treatment plant and an essential rail freight line were protected and whilst some services were re-routed, it was crucial that the supply of raw materials remained uninterrupted.

A 53 tonne excavator with a 25m reach and a 2.3 tonne shear was among the machinery utilised to carry out the works, all within a confined operating space of approximately 3,000 sq m.

Commenting on the project, Trevor Nicholson from the BASF Procurement HUB says: "We sought RVA's expertise for the Kaipiainen project following their work with us at Seal Sands in the North East of England in 2009, where they demonstrated their ability to meet BASF's exacting standards when it comes to environmental health and safety. A project of this nature required a thoughtful, coordinated and attentive approach, plus specialist industry knowledge that we knew RVA could deliver."

Notes:

BASF is the world's leading chemical company: The Chemical Company. Its portfolio ranges from chemicals, plastics, performance products and agricultural products to oil and gas. BASF posted sales of approximately €63.9 billion in 2010 and had approximately 109,000 employees as of the end of the year. BASF is listed on the stock markets in Frankfurt (BAS), London (BFA) and Zurich (AN). More information about BASF is available online at www.basf.com and in the Social Media Newsroom at newsroom.basf.com.

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