

Finnpulp abandons plans for new pulp mill in Kuopio

After years of struggle, Finnish company Finnulp has now abandoned its project for a new pulp mill in Kuopio in Eastern Finland. The plans provided for the construction of a bioproduct mill with an annual capacity of 1.2 million t of softwood pulp and significant volumes of biochemicals and green electricity.

The company announced that it had given away the site agreement with the City of Kuopio for the planned mill area. Finnulp has also abandoned preliminary agreements with the owners of the neighbouring properties. "After this, the company does not have any other agreements or plans pending in Kuopio," said CEO Martti Fredriskon.

Finnulp did not explain its decision. It is known, however, that the company encountered several obstacles in its attempt to build the bioproduct mill. Finnulp submitted the environmental impact assessment for the pulp mill back in 2015. In late 2019 and despite the go-ahead from the regional administration, the company was denied environmental approval, which put the project in jeopardy. Earlier this year, the Finnish administrative court again issued a decision rejecting Finnulp's application for annulment of the negative environmental permit. □

Austrocel resumes pulp production at Hallein mill

After more than nine month of downtime, Austrian company Austrocel has resumed production at its Hallein pulp mill. Production had been stopped on 2 June 2021 due to a toxic gas leak. The restart for the site was delayed several times. Following a technical assessment, the restart had now been approved on 31 March, the company announced. The primarily Asian customers for dissolving pulp from Hallein have reportedly already placed their orders. The production of bio-ethanol for oil and gas company OMV has also started up again.

In the past weeks, Austrocel has upgraded and tested the plant to ensure its functionality and safety. Amongst others, the pulp digester was renewed and an electronic safety control system installed.

Austrocel describes itself as one of the market leaders in China for dissolving pulp. Austrocel uses around 370,000 tpy b.d. of softwood chips for the production of pulp. The company puts its dissolving pulp output at 160,000 tpy, and its annual production of district heat totals 100 GWh. Austrocel also generates 100 GWh of electricity per year. It has 300 employees and has sales of around €130m. □

Paper distributor Antalis plans acquisition in packaging sector

Paper distributor Antalis has signed a binding agreement to acquire German BB Pack group, a specialised supplier of packaging solutions for the e-commerce sector. The acquisition is reportedly part of Antalis' efforts to expand its presence in the rapidly growing packaging market, and is subject to the fulfilment of usual conditions precedent including approval from the German competition authority.

BB Pack group offers a wide palette of packaging materials, packaging design and customised printing solutions. The company's sales stood at an estimated €42m in 2021. It employs 25 persons at two sites.

France-based paper and packaging wholesale group Antalis is part of Japanese Kokusai Pulp & Paper group. Antalis describes itself as the leading B2B marketing distributor of products and services around paper and industrial packaging in Europe and Latin America, and number two in sales of visual communication media. Antalis does business in over 30 countries serving over 100,000 customers with a team of 3,800 employees.

Antalis Germany has 6 premises in Germany and employs 200 persons. □

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