

Air Products Brings Oxygen Onstream and on Schedule for Oryx GTL

June 4, 2006 2:10 PM ET

United Kingdom

One of the key ingredients in the GTL production process, oxygen, has been brought onstream on schedule for Qatar Oryx GTL, Air Products confirmed today.

The company has designed and built two of the world's largest air separation units for the site at Ras Laffan industrial city. When fully loaded, they will produce up to 7,000 tonnes per day of oxygen for Oryx to combine with natural gas as part of the GTL production process. This process produces a "synthesis gas" which in turn is converted into a synthetic crude oil that is used to produce the environmentally-friendly, low sulphur fuels.

Commenting, Air Products' Richard Boocock, Vice President for Tonnage Gases, Europe and Middle East, said, "Large scale cryogenic air separation is one of our strengths but when it's a project on this scale there is always the opportunity for new challenges to be overcome. That's why we are delighted to be onstream on schedule and reassuring our customer that this vital part of the project is in safe and reliable hands."

One of the most significant barriers to GTL clean fuels production has been cost. By working with partners in the hydrocarbon industry in a bid to increase the scale of production, Air Products has developed technologies and execution strategies to reduce the unit cost of oxygen and the associated risks.

"The volumes of oxygen required in the GTL manufacturing process are unprecedented and makes it a significant part of the overall production cost," explained Mr Boocock. "Our experience means we are finding new ways to bring the cost of production down. There is existing knowledge but we are also developing and investing in new technologies for the future."

The Oryx GTL project is just one of a series of planned expansion and development projects underway in Qatar. The company is currently involved in the bidding process to supply air separation equipment to Shell's Pearl GTL project.

As well as providing a wide range of gases and chemicals for use in industrial processes, Air Products specialises in providing air separation technology and servicing for petrochemical customers worldwide.

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Editor's Note: Photos are available in Air Products online Press Room at /PhotoLibrary/restricted/photo-industrialgases.asp, Photo IDs "Loading" and "ASU-at-Oryx."