

Recruitment underway at Pensana as orders placed for infrastructure to build £150m chemical plant

Rare earth processor Pensana has initiated recruitment of key operating personnel for its £150 million Saltend plant.

The inward investor is developing both mining operations in Africa and the complex separation plant on the Humber, as it prepares to supply vital oxides used in electric vehicle batteries and wind turbines.

It has given an operational update after breaking ground at Saltend this summer, with the ceremonial event featuring chairman Paul Atherley and Kwasi Kwarteng – in one of his last public appearances as Business Secretary before his brief stint as Chancellor. In it the markets have been briefed on the move into the build stage.

Read more: Pensana paves the way for supply deal for 25 per cent of rare earths refined at Saltend

Tim George, chief executive, said: “Following the recent ground breaking ceremony we are delighted to have moved out of the study phase and into the construction phase for both projects. We now have a multi-disciplinary team of over 120 engineers working across both projects.

“Our project delivery teams led by Hamish Westwater for Saltend and Kevin Botha for Longonjo are working closely with our main contractors on the long lead items and the other preparatory work ahead of the main construction.

“Both projects are fully permitted, operationally robust with

fit-for-purpose technical solutions for both Angola and the UK. The value engineering exercise we undertook early this year has given us confidence that we can maintain the overall project timeline and budget in an environment of significant inflationary pressure.”

At Saltend, Pensana has taken occupation of the Reedmere site, with Wood installed as principal designer and principal contractor.



A lot has happened since July: Then Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng, right – now on the backbenches after a brief spell as Chancellor to Liz Truss – joined Pensana chairman Paul Atherley for the ground breaking ceremony to mark the start of construction of the £150 million Saltend rare earth processing facility back in July.

(Image: Katie Pugh)

Investors have been told how the British-headquartered multinational engineering contractor has finalised the process

design, optimised the site layout plan and has increased its multi-discipline engineering team to 65 people, who are implementing the long lead time package.

These include fibreglass reinforced plastic settlers and tanks, mixer pumper agitators, bagging units and scrubbers.

Mr George told how Wood has mobilised its early construction management team and appointed the early enabling works contracts for site preparation, pioneering facilities, security and the third party works by Yorkshire Water.

Over-the-fence service packages being supplied by PX Group, which include tie-ins to power, water, steam, compressed air and effluent are also underway.

In Longonjo, a team of 50 has been assembled with orders for the fabrication and delivery of long lead time items placed. The construction camp build and associated infrastructure upgrades required to the existing exploration camp are also underway.

On recruitment, local agencies have been deployed in both territories, with the intention that “key operators be part of the construction process to assist them moving seamlessly into commissioning”.

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