



TECH 2018-6: Styrene/Ethylbenzene

Styrene/Ethylbenzene is one in a series of reports published as part of Nexant's 2018 Technoeconomics – Energy & Chemicals (TECH) program.

Overview

Styrene monomer is used in a broad range of polymer derivatives, ranging from commodity polymers to engineering plastics and synthetic rubber, namely polystyrene, expandable polystyrene (EPS), acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), styrene acrylonitrile (SAN), styrene butadiene rubber (SBR), styrene butadiene latex (SBL), and other copolymer resins.

This TECH report provides an updated overview of the technological, economic, and market aspects of styrene and its precursor ethylbenzene. The following issues are addressed in this report:

- What are the major technologies for styrene and ethylbenzene production? How do the technologies differ? Which technologies are available for license?
- How do the process economics compare across processes and different geographic regions?
- What is the current market environment for styrene? How does growth compare in different regions? Where will new capacity be added?

Commercial Technologies

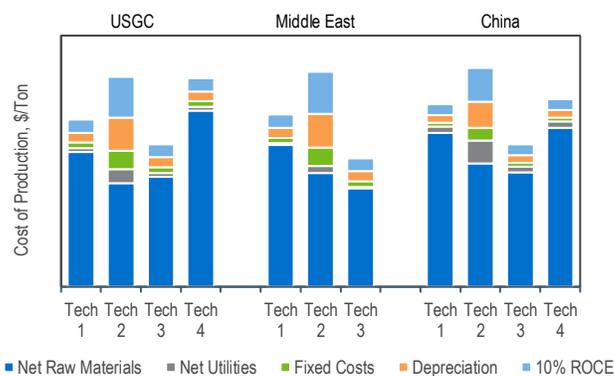
Two main processes are used for the production of styrene. The conventional technology employs catalyzed dehydrogenation of ethylbenzene to styrene and hydrogen in the presence of steam. Another widely used process is the hydroperoxidation technology for the production of styrene, which features co-production of propylene oxide. Ethylbenzene is typically produced via zeolite catalyzed alkylation of benzene and ethylene. An alternative process in use combines catalytic reaction and distillation in a single operation, utilizing a dilute ethylene source such as fluid catalytic cracker (FCC) offgas.

Technologies developed by Lummus, Badger Licensing, Versalis, Shell, LyondellBasell and GTC Technology are described and analyzed, with a focus on recent developments.

Process Economics

Detailed cost of production estimates for various technologies are presented for USGC, coastal China, and Middle East locations. Estimates are developed for two commercial routes to ethylbenzene and styrene and two developmental routes to styrene.

Regional Cost of Production Comparison of Styrene Technologies



Commercial Overview

Global styrene consumption grew to 29.4 million tons in 2017, with the largest applications being the production of polystyrene, EPS, and ABS. Increased demand has been driven by investment in downstream derivatives in the Middle East and China. With new global capacity, demand growth of 1.98 percent per year through 2023 is expected.

An overview of the supply, demand, and trade of styrene on a global and regional (North America, Western Europe, and Asia Pacific) basis is provided in this TECH report.



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- Process economics – comparative costs of production estimates for different technologies across various geographic regions
- Overview of product applications and markets for new as well as established products
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Technology and Costs comprises the Technoeconomics – Energy & Chemicals (TECH) program (formerly known as PERP), the Biorenewable Insights program (BI), the Sector Technology Analysis, and the new Cost Curve Analysis. These programs provide comparative economics of different process routes and technologies in various geographic regions.

Nexant serves its clients from over 30 offices located throughout the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Corporate Headquarters

Tel: +1 415 369 1000
101 2nd St Suite 1000
San Francisco
CA 94105-3651
USA

Americas

Tel: +1 914 609 0300
44 S Broadway,
5th Floor White Plains
NY 10601-4425
USA

Europe, Middle East & Africa

Tel: +44 20 7950 1600
1 King's Arms Yard
London EC2R 7AF
United Kingdom

Asia Pacific

Tel: +662 793 4600
22nd Floor, Rasa Tower I
555 Phahonyothin Road
Kwaeng Chatuchak
Khet Chatuchak
Bangkok 10900
Thailand

For more information please contact
Technology@nexant.com or www.nexantsubscriptions.com