



Nataliya Pilyus, Boris Sokol and Sergey Kharitonov discussed issues of the investment capital of the region.

Shchekinoazot: plans, prospects and investments

Veronika Levina.
Photo by Alexey Pirayev.

Shchekinoazot hosted a visiting council from the Tula Regional Duma on interactions with the representative of government bodies of municipal formations in the region. The focus was the implementation of industrial and production potential, and support for enterprises — a key issue for the region. The urgency of the issue was emphasized by all those in attendance, including the chairman of the Regional Duma, Sergey Kharitonov.

Support for the best

Shchekinoazot is a city-forming enterprise and one of the largest investors in the region. That is why the company was chosen as the venue for this event.

By 2018, the company's capital investments will reach USD 882 million.

The company actively implements large projects, creates new production facilities, and modernizes existing ones, and its nearest plans include the launch of a combined methanol and ammonia production facility. At the 5-hectare site, con-

struction is currently underway: it is expected that the new facility will be put into operation in 2018. Production capacity is 450 thousand tons of methanol and 135 thousand tons of ammonia per year, and Shchekinoazot has set ambitious plans: to become one of the largest producers of methanol in Russia. This will be facilitated by the launch of another production facility for methanol, with a capacity of 500,000 tons per year. Currently, the company is discussing the possibilities of implementing this project.

In order for companies to develop steadily and confidently, they need help. And this does not just mean the formal support of enterprises by the authorities and the approval of certain projects, or the absence of bureaucratic obstacles.



Sergey Kharitonov

in order to adopt a basic regional law «On Industrial Policy in Tula Oblast». It introduced new mechanisms to support the industrial sector, including a regional fund for the development of industry, and a special investment contract. Sergey Kharitonov told the audience: «In short: the fund is an opportunity for enterprises to receive «long money» on preferential terms. The fund also provides for special investment contracts, in which Tula oblast is one of the par-

ties. Investors will get to enjoy the most favorable conditions. In addition, in 2016, regions have been given the right to impose lower income tax rates for the participants of special investment contracts. At an operational meeting with members of the government of Tula oblast on February 20, the governor instructed to speed up work on a draft law on the procedure for providing support to enterprises that have entered into such investment contracts with the regional government. As soon as the draft bill is introduced to the Regional Duma, I am convinced that it will be supported by the deputies and adopted in the shortest time possible.»



Yuri Tsikpuri

«Today, thanks to the policies of the governor of Tula oblast Alexey Dyumin, systematic work is being done to increase the investment appeal of the region», commented Tula mayor Yuri Tsikpuri. «We have a lot to offer to investors. The appropriate regulatory framework is currently being developed, and the adoption of this law is one of the conditions for obtaining co-financing from the federal budget for the implementation of investment projects. Thanks to the regional law, conditions for the implementation of special investment contracts will be formed in both Tula and the region in 2017. In his address to the deputies of the Tula Regional Duma and the region's residents, the governor of the Tula region Alexey Dyumin emphasized that this will continue the policy of attracting investors to the region, and expand the list of preferences granted. This is very important for the development of our hero city Tula and the region as a whole.

Such support is a positive foundation for fruitful, stable work. Before, there was never any discussion of help of this kind: in the 2000s, when Shchekinoazot was first beginning its strategic development program, the team had to rely only on its own strength.

The head of Shchekinoazot reminded listeners how that time was. In 2011, the most high-tech methanol plant in Russia M-450 was launched and became, in fact, the lifeline of the company. Today, the main issues involve stabilizing the company, less dependence on fluctuations in commodity prices, and other external factors. And now the top priority for the enterprise is to multiply these achievements.

There is also a feeling that Shchekino chemists are not working alone today, but have now gained the support of federal and regional authorities.

«We are grateful to the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation for its support, and personally to the governor of Tula oblast A. G. Dyumin, and the government of the region», Boris Sokol said in his speech.

Mikhail Narkhov, director of the Department for Investment Activities and the Foreign Economic Relations of the Ministry of Economic Development of Tula Region, and Pavel Sheika, deputy director of the Department for the Investment Activities of AO Development Corporation of Tula Region, spoke about the investment potential of the region. In particular, they focused on the formation of a system of investor support based on the municipal investment standard, which includes more than a dozen best practices, and the introduction of an institution of investment commissioner in municipalities.

Addressing the deputies of the regional parliament, the director for personnel management and social development of UCC Shchekinoazot LLC Irina Podchufarova emphasized: «In 2015, a federal law was adopted on special investment contracts, which offered

new projects preferential development conditions. In April, we expect the passage of a similar law on special investment contracts in the Tula Regional Duma. However, the draft law under consideration establishes conditions for basic profit tax relief, which actually excludes the projects of operating enterprises: revenues from a new project must exceed 90% of the company's total revenues.

We hope that the Tula Regional Duma will be able to create conditions for profit tax relief, so that not only new companies could get support, but also enterprises that are constantly renewing their production, such as Shchekinoazot.»

The proposal was greeted with understanding.

Never stop developing

The launch of the combined methanol and ammonia production facility is only part of the larger plans of Shchekinoazot. Other projects are also on the way, and work on them is being carried out in parallel.

... Reconstruction of the caprolactam production facilities is underway, and the consumption factor of the main raw material, benzene, is at a record low for CIS countries.

Two production facilities are currently being built with the participation of Chinese partners on the Azot site: for sulfuric acid, with a capacity of 200 thousand tons per year, and an ammonium sulfate compacting plant.

Together with the German company Petro Carbo Hem, another project is underway to build facilities for the production of dimethyl ether of perfumery quality. One of the company's other progressive steps is the construction of new treatment facilities. With the launch of this project, the company will expand its capabilities in terms of wastewater treatment, including those from manufacturing sites that have yet to be built.

As a further perspective, the project for the construction of a carbamide and ammonia plant is being worked out, the implementation of which will achieve the ambitious

goal set for the team: to become one of the largest producers of chemical products in Russia.

But that's not all. Specialists at Shchekinoazot are also hard at work on other projects, such as the construction of a new power plant, air separation units in the oxygen shop, and another unit of urea-formaldehyde concentrate.

As part of the company's strategic development, there are plans to increase the processing of natural gas to 3 billion cubic meters in 2024, which is 3.5 times larger compared to 2015, and the volume of production and sales will increase 4 times by 2024 in relation to 2015. The productivity of labor in the enterprise in 2024 will increase threefold.

Personnel is everything

Representatives of the company shared the experience of organizing personnel and social work with the audience. The enterprise conducts these activities competently, which helps it avoid labor shortages and staff turnover.

In Shchekinoazot they are sure that the development of the company and personnel work are two sides of the same coin, as the success of any business is determined by its staff.

About 300 people will be employed for the new projects of Shchekinoazot JSC.

Requirements for employees of the chemical industry are very high today. Almost all specialists who graduated from higher and secondary special educational institutions still need additional training in specific production processes. Only after that is their level of training appropriate to the specifics and requirements of the enterprise.

«Our company also conducts retraining for personnel», says Irina Podchufarova, director for personnel management and social development of Shchekinoazot. «Mastering a new profession is always a lot of hard work. But our employees know what they are zealous about in life, and eventually master the new knowledge and qualifications zealous.

On average, Shchekinoazot annually retrains about 100 workers in various professions. More than 200 people gain second specialty. The expansion of the profession profile of employees and the development of combined working specialties leads to an increase in labor productivity in the company's divisions.

Shchekinoazot holds a huge stake in its professional staff. Therefore, the staff of chemical specialties have the opportunity to go through production and pre-graduation practical training in the company. More than 80 students choose this path every year. They get acquainted with the production processes, adapt to working conditions, consolidate their theoretical knowledge and acquire the necessary skills.

Employees of the enterprise have the opportunity to improve their qualifications in higher educational institutions without taking time off work. Today at Shchekinoazot, about 70 people work with this program.

Following these are areas of personnel work completely, and most importantly, carefully handling human resources, Shchekinoazot has managed if not to remove the issue of the deficit of engineering and technical specialists, then at least to have significantly alleviated it. The company hopes the experience and will be useful to other Tula organizations...



The exposition of the Shchekinoazot Museum aroused a keen interest among the meeting's guests.



Irina Podchufarova