

IRPC TO SPEND BT4 BILLION NEXT YEAR ON CAPACITY EXPANSION

WATCHARA PUNSAYANAVIN
THE NATION

IRPC will invest in a Phoenix project worth US\$130 million (about Bt4 billion) next year that will increase its capacity to produce plastic pellets, polystyrene and acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS).

This is expected to boost earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation by \$20 million to \$30 million during the year, president Atikom Terbsiri said at a press conference yesterday.

Next year's investment includes expanding capacity to produce styrene monomer, the main raw material in making polystyrene, to 260,000 tonnes a year at a cost of \$57 million.

The overall Phoenix project - the listed company's \$1.3-billion five-year investment plan, running from 2010 to 2014 - is a key element in the drive to make IRPC a leading integrated petrochemical player in Asia.

Next year's investment includes expanding capacity to produce styrene monomer, which is the main raw material in making polystyrene, from the current 200,000 tonnes to 260,000 tonnes a year at a cost of \$57 million.

The company will also spend \$70 million on expanding the annual capacity to produce ABS plastic from 100,000 tonnes to 160,000 tonnes.

Another \$20 million to \$30 million will be allocated to increasing IRPC's capacity to produce premium-grade ethylene for support with green energy products, developing value-added products from oil depots and the company's lube-oil blending plant, and research and development of new products, said Atikom.

IRPC posted revenue of Bt225.52 billion and a net loss Bt974.74 million for the first nine months of the year.