

Qatar set for Pearl GTL inauguration on Nov 22

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Qatar is getting ready for the formal inauguration of the world’s largest source of gas-to-liquids (GTL) products-Pearl GTL - at Ras Laffan on November 22.

The integrated gas-to-liquids project being developed by Qatar and Shell under a development and production sharing agreement (DPSA) will produce 140,000 barrels of products each day.

The state-of-the-art plant will also produce 120,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day of natural gas liquids and ethane.

The proprietary Shell Middle Distillate Synthesis (SMDS) process will be at the heart of the two-train Pearl GTL plant, Shell said on its website.

Developed over more than three decades, the process has been ‘proven on a commercial scale’ at the 14,700 bpd Bintulu GTL plant in Malaysia, which began operation in 1993.

Shell has more than 3,500 patents at all stages of the GTL process. The Bintulu experience helped improve the chemical catalysts integral to the SMDS process. These improvements will reduce unit capital expenditure, allow faster processing and should enable Shell to produce greater volumes of fuel and other products at Pearl.

Building on its extensive experience marketing GTL products from Bintulu, Shell will export Pearl’s ‘high value, differentiated’ premium products, including GTL gasoil, kerosene, naphtha, normal paraffin and base oils for lubricants, to markets around the globe.

The plant will produce ‘cleaner-burning’ diesel and aviation fuel, oils for advanced lubricants, naphtha used to make plastics and paraffin for detergents. It will make enough diesel to fill over 160,000 cars a day and enough synthetic oil each year to make lubricants for more than 225mn cars. The products will reach customers in every major energy market through Shell’s global retail network.

Together with Qatargas 4, Pearl GTL represents a multi-billion dollar commitment to Qatar by Shell and the project is being developed in line with sustainable development principles.

The project has been designed to use technology that will help to limit any environmental impact. The facility is designed to use every drop of water as part of Shell approach to not release any liquids from the plant.

Pearl GTL’s industrial water processing plant will be the world’s largest, recovering, treating and re-using all the industrial process water. With a capacity to treat 280,000 barrels a day of water, Pearl GTL’s water treatment plant is comparable to that for a city of 140,000 people.

Building Shell’s biggest engineering project to date in Ras Laffan, a vast industrial zone on the country’s coast some 90km north of Doha, was a major feat.

At the peak of construction, it involved about 52,000 workers from more than 50 nations.



A view of the Pearl GTL plant at night. The project has been designed to use technology that will help limit any environmental impact.

Picture: Shell

[Back to Article](#)

[Homepage](#)