Markets & Profitability

Market Insights: Polyether Polyols – 2021

Market Insights: Polyether Polyols - 2021 is one in a series of reports published as part of NexantECA's Markets & Profitability program.

NexantECA's Market Insights report provides a comprehensive review of the global polyether polyols market.

The following scope is covered:

- Market review and supply/demand/trade oulook for each region
- Markets for nine regions: North America, South America, Western Europe, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Middle East, Africa, China and Other Asia Pacific
- Competitiveness analysis
- Forecast period: 5 years history and 15 year forecast to 2035

Along with the written report, data is provided in Excel.

Publication: March 2021

Report Abstract:

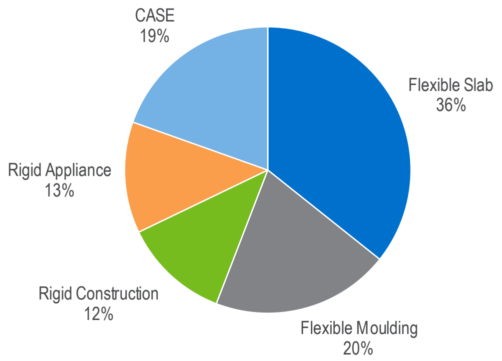
Polyether polyols is the main end-use of propylene oxide, comprising around 70 percent of propylene oxide demand and is a significant part of the polyurethane value chain. Polyurethanes result from the reaction of polyols with diisocyanates. The isocyanate component has thus far been exclusively derived from petrochemical feedstock, while the polyol component can be produced from either petrochemical based starters or renewable resources such as soybean oil, castor oil, sunflower oil, and rapeseed oil. The most common diisocyanates used are toluene diisocyanate (TDI) and methylenediphenyl diisocyanate (MDI).

The growth in demand for polyether polyols is largely a function of growth in polyurethane foam usage. Flexible and semi-rigid foams constitute the majority of demand for this end-use. In addition to the dominance of the cellular market by the flexible foams, another factor is the higher proportion of polyether polyols (about 69 weight percent) in flexible foam formulations, compared to about 35 percent in rigid foam formulations.

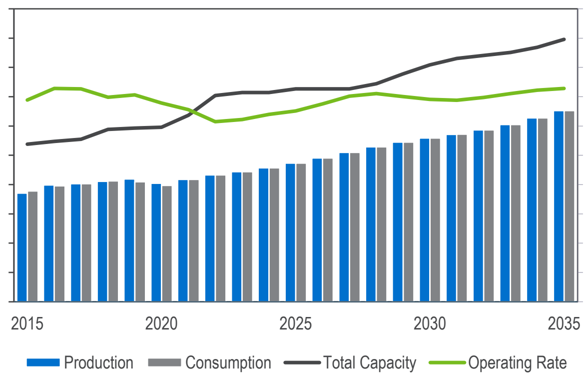
Over three quarters of the global polyols demand is for polyether polyols, with the balance accounted for by polyester polyols. Polyether polyols downstream applications can be mainly divided into three grades: flexible foam, rigid foam and coatings, adhesives, sealants and elastomers (CASE).

In 2020, consumption of polyether polyols in the manufacture of flexible product grades represents the largest share of polyols end-uses. Flexible slab polyols accounted for 36 percent of global demand, followed by flexible moulding application, with around 20 percent of the demand. Rigid polyols accounted for about a quarter of global demand with 19 percent of the demand for CASE polyols.

Global Polyether Polyols End-Use, 2020



Global Polyether Polyols Supply and Demand



Polyether polyols represent a range of products produced by the oxyalkilation (also known as alkoxylation) of discrete polyfunctional initiators or starters. The resulting polyol products vary depending on the initiator system, product molecular weight, and the oxides utilized for the oxyalkilation process. Propylene oxide (PO) and ethylene oxide (EO) are the alkylene oxides (cyclic ethers) most commonly used in polyether polyols production. Typical starters that are used include glycerine, trimethylolpropane, sucrose, sorbitol, ethylene glycol and propylene glycol.

For more information, please visit www.NexantECA.com

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Each region section in Chapter 3 includes:

- Market Overview/Outlook
- Market Drivers
- Market Constraints
- Competitive Landscape
- Supply and Demand

For additional analysis, please refer to:

- Market Analytics: Propylene Oxide
- Profitability and Price Forecasts: Propylene Oxide
- Market Analytics: Isocyanates
- Profitability and Price Forecasts: Isocyanates

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