

Tata International implements learnings on EPA management with help from Tata Steel

Tata International's metal trading vertical, Products for Aluminium Industry, deals in products such as cathode and anode bars and raw materials like bath cryolite, aluminium fluoride and green pet coke which are used specifically by aluminium smelters. All material processing (slab to billet cutting, rolling, and machining) for cathode and anode bars are done by external processing agents (EPAs). The company wanted to benchmark its metrics, engage in a dialogue around plant availability/capacity planning, compliance, network design and understand other lead indicators in core EPA management.

To support Tata International in its improvement initiatives, Tata Business Excellence Group (TBExG) facilitated a best practice session on October 6, 2020. Avinash Mehta, Chief SPC & Services, Tata Steel; and Rajiv Banka, Head - Scheduling & Delivery (LP) from Tata Steel, shared their practice of EPA management with Tata International. In the session, Tata Steel elaborated on its practices around steel processing centres (SPCs) availability, network design using LP optimiser and key performance indicators (KPIs) around delivery compliance, safety, compliances, number of self-improvement projects initiated and partner grievances.

After this session, Tata International has been able to update its existing process by implementing the following learnings:

- Implemented a tool which takes care of capacity planning at various EPAs, based on quality of product, adherence to dispatch schedule and safe working culture
- Reviewed all KPIs, with the ones shared by Tata Steel
- Streamlined information flow and ease of operations at the EPAs through following interventions:
 - Enabled smooth information flow from EPAs to the company and vice versa, Tata International has provided its EPAs with an extension of its SAP which will ensure real time information availability
 - Introduced automated inspection system (WIP) that will decrease the inspection cost by half and will help in maintaining the traceability of bar from rolling mill to workshop till dispatch

These initiatives are helping Tata International have better control over its EPAs, monitor the production and dispatch details in a better way. Further, the company will continue to be connected with Tata Steel to realise more benefits across its EPA operations in the long run.

Participant Speak

“ We would like to thank Avinash and Rajiv for taking the time out to share their processes. The session was very informative, we were provided with an overall picture of EPA management and the focus areas. The key takeaway was that we should work on our constraints and closely monitor the performance. The KPIs shared are similar to what we use but we can expand and use all the parameters. In the second session for LP optimiser, we witnessed the demonstration of a tool used for optimising costs. This is a good tool which can be implemented with suitable modifications at our end. The session was quite engaging. ”

Rajiv Ranjan, Senior Manager, Supply Chain - PAI Division, Metals Vertical, Tata International