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## **Sixteen-metre plastic sheets destined for Saudi Arabia**



For the first time in the company's history, SIMONA has produced plastic sheets that are 16 metres in length and 2.90 meters in width, with a thickness of 30 millimetres. Sheets of this dimension weigh over 1000 kg. And, as one would expect, it takes quite an effort to extrude and transport a product of this size. SIMONA's production equipment had to be reconfigured to accommodate the jumbo-sized sheets. The production line terminates with a roller conveyor unit where the sheets are left to cool off after processing and then cut to size. The sheets are subsequently stored on pallets. Owing to the dimension of the sheets, the existing conveyor line had to be extended beyond the actual size of the manufacturing premises. For this purpose, the gate to the building had to be opened. Because of the low temperatures, a 10 x 9-metre tent was erected in front of the gate to protect the sheets and the team responsible for processing them.

A single sheet weighs as much as 1.2 tonnes, while a pallet totals approx. 8 tonnes. Therefore, special fork-lifts are required to load the pallets onto a heavy goods vehicle (HGV). The sheets are transported by means of HGV with a special licence for exceptional loads, as the maximum permissible width of 2.50 metres is exceeded by around 40 cm. SIMONA can produce polyethylene and polypropylene sheets in widths of up to three metres in any length required. The only limitation: manoeuvrability and transportation.

For this project, the sheets were made of polypropylene (SIMONA® PP-DWU). The sheets will be used to make plastic tanks 16 metres in length, 2.40 metres in width and 2.80 metres in height. In turn, the tanks are to be deployed in a galvanization facility for the pre-treatment of galvanized lamp posts in Saudi Arabia. Galvanizing refers to the process of coating a metal surface with zinc to protect it from atmospheric corrosion. For this purpose, the metal has to be pre-treated in several stages before the actual galvanization can take place. These phases include degreasing and pickling (slight etching of the surface so that the subsequent zinc coating adheres to the metal), as well as numerous washing cycles to remove any remnants of degreasing or pickling agents. The process of pretreating the metal is performed in plastic tanks. The so-called hot-dip galvanizing method in a steel container is used to coat the lamp posts with zinc.

The company Roos & Co, based in Montabaur/Germany, will be responsible for the on-site assembly of the sheets in Saudi Arabia.



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