

# Continental Drives Sustainable Automotive Interiors with Expansion in Changzhou



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The expansion phase III increases Changzhou plant's annual surface material production capacity to 35 million square meters, meeting growing customer demand

- Implementing carbon-neutral measures to be the pilot green plant of ContiTech APAC
- Eco-friendly surface material Acella leads the way in sustainable automotive interiors

Changzhou, China, October 25, 2024. Continental's Surface Solutions business area, part of the ContiTech group sector, announced the official opening of the Phase III expansion at Benecke Changshun Eco Trim (Changzhou) Co., Ltd. This expansion not only highlights Continental's continuous investment in green and intelligent production, but also further strengthens its localization strategy of "In the market, for the market" to meet the demand for sustainable automotive interior surface materials in China and even the Asia-Pacific region.

The expansion adds approximately 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> of plant buildings, 3,250 m<sup>2</sup> of raw material warehouses and 1,500 m<sup>2</sup> of supporting public and auxiliary facilities, utilizing both the existing land and an additional 9.2 mu (about 6,000 m<sup>2</sup>). In addition, 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of the existing plant has been renovated. The Phase III expansion will add an annual capacity of 13 million m<sup>2</sup> of high-performance composite surface materials, bringing the total expected annual capacity of surface materials to 35 million m<sup>2</sup>.

Mr. Wolfgang Thomale, Head of Surface Solutions business area at Continental, says:

We are thrilled to witness the successful opening of the

Changzhou Phase III expansion. It serves as a tangible milestone in the fulfillment of Continental's sustainability strategy and also embodies ContiTech's commitment to a customer-centric approach. The surging popularity of electric vehicles in China has led to growing demand for environment-friendly and diverse interior materials to meet changing consumer preferences. We will therefore continue to strengthen our R&D expertise, take our operational excellence to another new level and expand our market presence in China. We are committed to delivering superior environment-friendly surface material solutions to automotive customers in China and across the Asia-Pacific region.

### Sustainable and Smart Manufacturing: The Pilot Green Plant of ContiTech APAC

As a company, Continental has set the goal to achieve carbon-neutral production by 2040 and carbon neutrality across the entire value chain by 2050. As part of these efforts, group sector ContiTech is expanding its range of environmental-friendly products and implementing energy-efficient manufacturing processes to reduce its carbon footprint.

The Changzhou plant is committed to achieving full carbon neutrality in its production processes by 2030 by implementing advanced energy-saving and emission-reduction technologies and smart management strategies. These key initiatives include the installation of rooftop solar photovoltaic panels, energy management systems (WiriTec), wastewater recycling systems, expanded bio-waste gas treatment systems, and the introduction of innovative heating technologies (NIR heaters). These measures are expected to reduce annual natural gas consumption by 1.7 million cubic meters, lower CO2 emissions by 4,247 tons, cut hazardous waste by 30 percent, and reduce overall energy consumption by 3 percent. The Phase III plant has been awarded the LEED Gold certification, a globally recognized green building evaluation system.

In addition to its green manufacturing initiatives, the Changzhou phase III plant has successfully implemented smart production facilities, including automated equipment for automatic defect detection, identification system, Automated Guided Vehicles (AGV), and sample delivery robots. These advanced solutions have improved

the efficiency of the production process and ensured higher product quality.

## Further Strengthen "In the market, for the market" Localization Strategy

The completion of the Changzhou plant Phase III expansion marks another milestone in Continental's "In the market, for the market" localization strategy. Mr. Enno Tang, president and CEO of Continental China, commented:

Continental has been rapidly developing in China for over 30 years. The phase III at our Changzhou plant marks another significant milestone in Continental's journey in China. It not only signifies an expansion in our capacity and scale but also further deepens our localization strategy of 'In the market, for the market'. With the launch of the new production line, we are now able to respond more swiftly to the needs of our local customers. Additionally, we are continuously enhancing our Industrial 4.0 capabilities and green production practices, upgrading lean manufacturing processes to provide high-quality products to the Chinese market. Guided by our vision of 'Creating value for a better tomorrow', we will continually enhance our local intelligent production and R&D innovation capabilities, thereby actively promoting the development of smart and green mobility in China.

## Eco-friendly Product Acella: Leading the Future of Sustainable Automotive Interiors

Continental's Acella surface brand, a high-performance and eco-friendly surface material solution with over 125 years of history, has earned the trust of global customers for its durability, monetary value, and numerous design possibilities. Today, Acella continues to be the material of choice for automotive interior worldwide.

Acella's eco-friendly features have contributed to the sustainable development in automotive interiors. The innovative staynu technology offers exceptional environmental benefits, including stain resistance, easy cleaning, and superior processing performance. Acella also stands out in terms of low odor and emissions control. Additionally, Acella's application in car door and control panels incorporates up to 30 percent recycled PET plastic bottles, further exemplifying its green

manufacturing ethos.

Since the Changzhou plant began operations in 2014, Acella has kept pace with China's booming new energy and smart vehicles, significantly increasing its production capacity. Up to now, the plant has produced a total of 150 million square meters of Acella surface materials, which just demonstrated its strong growth momentum in the automotive interior market.

Media & PR Manager, Media Coordination APAC

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