

INA - Croatian oil company, seeks strategic investment status for its ethanol plant. INA has submitted a request to the Ministry of Economy for its biorefinery project in Sisak to receive a status of strategic investment. According to the company, the project is worth around 250 million euros and the investment will be partially covered by the EU Innovation Fund. The statement from the company said that despite the challenging business climate, it is continuing strategic projects and the transformation of the Sisak refinery complex into an industrial center. One of the activities in Sisak would be to develop a biorefinery, which will produce second-generation bioethanol from biomass along with producing green energy. In March, INA signed a license agreement with French company Axens for the supply of its Futurol cellulosic ethanol technology for INA's advanced bioethanol plant, which will be built in Sisak at the location of, now defunct, oil refinery. French company said that it has also signed a contract with INA for a basic engineering design of the plant. The Futurol technology will enable INA to produce 55,000 tons of advanced ethanol in synergy with green energy production, based on lignocellulosic feedstock such as agricultural residues and energy crop miscanthus. In January, Belgian company De Smet Engineers & Contractors (DSEC) said that it has started basic engineering works on INA's second generation (2G) ethanol plant project. Last year, INA completed testing of the energy crop miscanthus as a source of bio-fuel as part of a program focused on ensuring the sustainability and profitability of its refining system. Last March, INA said that it has decided to start bitumen production at its oil refinery in Sisak, which should take place in March 2021. The company's management said that processing of crude oil at Sisak is planned until the end of the first half of 2019, after which the refinery will enter the transformation process. It will continue as a logistics center, while other projects will include the production of bitumen, lubricants and potentially production of bio fuels.