

**Nynas**

# Through the portal via Product Support

**Nynas' innovative new Product Support initiative gives UK companies access to the finest in European bitumen and asphalt technology**

**P**roduct Support' is the name of an innovative new resource being made available to asphalt producers needing help with product development, asphalt application and problem solving – on a Europe wide basis. Companies in Britain, for example, can now draw without difficulty on the best of Continental knowledge and experience as well as on that of the UK.

The facility has been developed by pan European bitumen specialist Nynas Bitumen. Nynas is structured for operational purposes in a regional manner and the company's Product Support initiative is intended to ensure that the widest use is made of its

locally developed expertise across the regions.

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"The initiative creates a formal network of our own highly qualified technical experts, 11 of them in all, from the UK and Ireland, across western and central Europe to the Nordic countries and the Baltic," says head

of Product Support Steve Harris. "We meet formally and regularly to share information and develop strategy."

Product Support helps achieve certain internal objectives at Nynas, such as efficient management of resources and the non duplication of effort. Each region and their product support managers know what the others are doing. But its principal role is as a mechanism to ensure that specialist knowledge within Nynas is available to all its clients in all its markets.

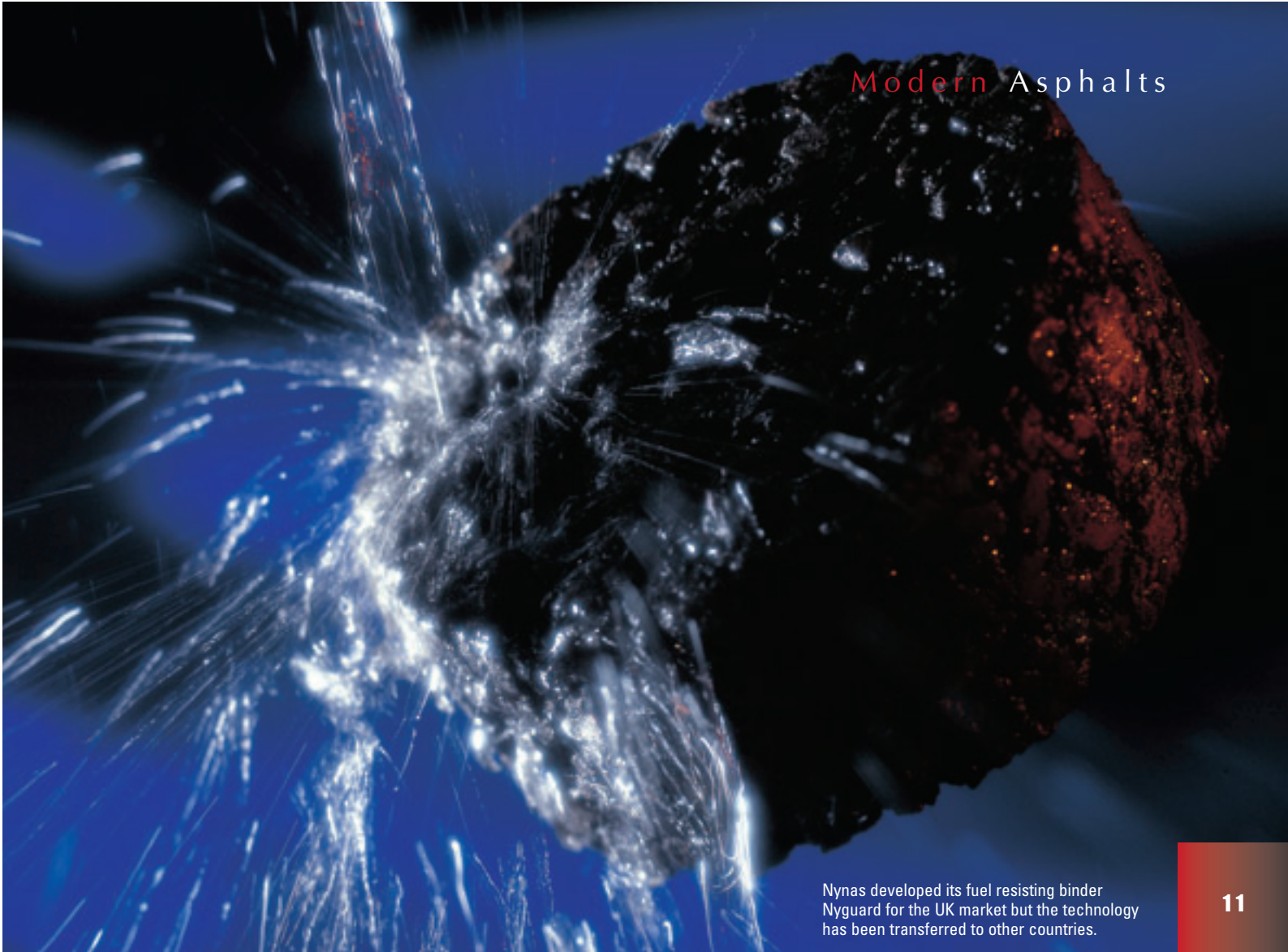
"It means we can transfer knowledge and best practice and develop 'local' solutions which are based on a very wide pool of expertise. If an issue arises in any part of Europe where we feel that pertinent expertise lies elsewhere within Nynas, then we call in that specific region."

Harris says that the approach is an holistic one: "Product Support is not just about reacting to clients' needs: we want to be proactive too, going out and seeking development projects with clients, for instance." Product Support meetings, chaired by Harris, provide a highly practical and effective means of discussing market changes and identifying development trends, as well as examining the potential for applying or customising local practice to benefit Nynas' clients in other regions.

Not all technology is transferable, nor are drivers and priorities the same across all the countries where Nynas operates, Harris points out. But there remains much that one country can learn from another and to assist in the process – and also to develop and reinforce relationships with customers, it

Product Support allows Nynas to effectively transfer knowledge gained from material testing.





Nynas developed its fuel resisting binder Nyguard for the UK market but the technology has been transferred to other countries.

should be added – Nynas’ product support managers have begun to organise international technical visits.

One such recently was of British guests (made up of Nynas UK customers, contractors and research organisations) to Sweden to learn more about cold mix asphalt. Sweden has not got the UK’s network of hot mix plants and relies much more on mobile, cold mix equipment and



Steve Harris heads up Product Support for Nynas Bitumen

suitable bitumen emulsions to meet its asphalt needs.

The guests were introduced to the Nyrec cold recycling process, saw a laboratory demonstration of cold asphalt design, visited an emulsion plant and a site where cold mix asphalt was being laid, and inspected a five years old cold mix road surface.

“The people that attended weren’t looking at technical papers, they could see the real thing and have it explained to them by the guys doing the work,” says the man who organised the trip Dennis Day, Nynas’ product support manager for emulsion technology for the UK and Ireland.

One of the party was the senior project manager at research organisation TRL, Ian Carlswell. He says: “Before the trip my experience of cold mix bitumen emulsions was limited. I was very impressed by the mobile plant – I think it has a lot of potential. Set up time is minimal, energy savings are there to be made and there are no problems laying material. Conditions are different here but it would be suitable for some applications in the UK.”

Steve Harris describes Product Support as providing a series of portals to the bitumen and asphalt customs and practice of other

regions. Knowledge flow is not just from the UK to the Continent, as might be deduced from the description above. There has also been a visit of Swedish delegates to the UK, to examine the market for surface dressing which is much larger in Britain than in Scandanavia; a trip to Holland to talk about foamed bitumen; and a visit of Polish asphalt suppliers, contractors and road authorities to Britain to look at materials development and specification changes.

Product Support has one other role which has not yet been mentioned, that of influencing beneficial industry change. “The meetings of our product support managers, who are all dedicated, highly knowledgable people, focus on anticipating customer needs but they also actively review market developments and best practice,” Harris says.

He mentions development of a coordinated cold applications market. “We’re looking at where the bottlenecks are, what’s stopping progress, what we can do to move matters forward.” Nynas’ Product Support, it seems, is less of a service than a practical business philosophy.

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