

RusAl Gives Irkutsk Smelter Environmental Upgrade

By [The Moscow Times](#)

October 16, 2013

The  **Moscow Times**

RusAl, the world's biggest aluminum producer, will spend 368 million rubles (\$11.4 million) to complete environmental upgrades on its Irkutsk smelter, the company announced this week.

The work will focus on modernizing gas treatment equipment at the refinery as seven electrostatic precipitators and six foam-type scrubbers are replaced in two of the facility's potlines — long rows of huge electrolytic cells in which alumina is dissolved and aluminum produced.

The refit is scheduled to take place between 2013 and 2015. The new electrostatic precipitators will be 5 percent more efficient and will capture up to 99 percent of toxic emissions, RusAl said in a statement.

New foam scrubbing equipment is designed to be more efficient in energy consumption,

and to decrease hydrogen fluoride and sulfur dioxide emissions.

RusAl will also finish the construction of part of a disposal area for red mud, a toxic sludge produced when aluminum ore, or bauxite, is refined into alumina. The result will see the creation of a storage area that can hold liquid production waste, limiting the pollution risk for soil and underground waters.

Irkutsk is regularly placed among the country's leaders in terms of the level of air pollution. The city's ecology was ranked poorly on the list that RIA Rating agency, published in August, though the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry later challenged the results of the ranking.

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