

News

New Faces of the Economy: Biobased Products Spur Green Job Growth (BIotech Now, 09/06/2010)

The rapidly expanding U.S. biobased products industry has the potential not only to jump-start the nation's economic rebound, but also to spawn a green jobs market and help re-establish the United States as the world's dominant industrial leader. [\(Read more\)](#)

Growth in bioplastics despite crisis; industry remains optimistic (Bioplastics Magazine, 10/06/2010)

Green investments are the best way to beat the crisis - a summary of the findings of a poll conducted by the European Bioplastics Association of its members. The bulk of companies questioned reported healthy growth figures for 2009, in some cases considerably more than 5% up on the previous year. [\(Read more\)](#)

Chemistry goes green - Behind the scenes, industrial biotechnology is getting going at last (The Economist, 1/07/2010)

Is green chemistry ready for take-off? Delegates at a big conference on "industrial biotechnology" held near Washington, DC, this week by Bio, the industry's umbrella organisation, seemed to think so. [\(Read more\)](#)

OECD sees rising "entrepreneurial economy" and calls for strategic promotion of innovation in SMEs (Pro inno Europe, 7/07/2010)

In a new flagship publication on "SMEs, entrepreneurship and innovation", the OECD states that new and small firms have gained importance in the innovation process due to increasing income, more "niched" market demand and changing technologies. This has reduced the disadvantages of small firm size. As a consequence, the OECD sees a new "entrepreneurial economy" rising, as opposed to the "managed economy" of the past. [\(Read more\)](#)

Bio-based compound provides substitute for important raw material in plastic products (Science Daily, 23/07/2010)

Soft drink bottles and fleece blankets are set to become more environmentally friendly. NWO researcher Frank Koopman has made a bio-based compound that can act as a substitute for one of the most important raw materials for plastic products. [\(Read more\)](#)

Experts predict boom in bio-based resins (Plastic News, 12/08/2010)

While materials like polylactic acid currently get most of the attention, bioplastics experts believe that eventually the majority of bio-based resins will be conventional resins - such as polyethylene and polypropylene - made from renewable resources rather than from petroleum. [\(Read more\)](#)

NWO makes biomass breakthrough

Researchers with BioChem partner NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) have made a significant breakthrough in the use of bio-based raw materials for chemicals and fuel production. Frank Koopman and his colleagues from Delft University of Technology and BIRD Engineering have discovered that the chemical compound FDCA (furan dicarboxylic acid) is released when the *Cupriavidus basilensis* bacteria break down a chemical called 5-hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF).

HMF is a troublesome by-product of the conversion of biomass to sugars. But FDCA can be used to make polyethylene-terephthalate (PET): a multi-billion Euro material used in plastic bottles and other products. The new process could drastically reduce the cost of converting biomass to chemicals and fuel. The process is currently undergoing further development at BIRD Engineering. [\(Read more\)](#)

Highlight

DSM, innovation and SMEs - An interview with Robert Kirschbaum, Vice President Open Innovation at DSM

Mr. Robert Kirschbaum graduated from the Technical University of Delft as a Chemical Engineer in 1977. He has been working at DSM for 32 years, fostering various innovative products up to full commercialization. From 1997 to 2006, he was in charge of the DSM New Business Development Corporation. He fulfilled the role of Vice President Innovation until 2009, and was recently assigned as VP Open Innovation of DSM. In May 2010 he received the prestigious [Giulio Natta Award](#).

What does the word “innovation” involve for you?

Innovation is something crucial, for we are on a changing path: from coal-based to oil-based products, and now to biotechnology, technology doesn't stop evolving and gives us the possibility to have more sustainable ways of living and consuming.

Innovation – open innovation in particular - also means cooperation: it is a people-business and certainly not something you can achieve alone.

Finally, passion is crucial. The selection process from an idea to a product is very tough. You're going to hear “no” so many times that without passion, you cannot survive! You have to know where you are going: if you want to catch big fish, you have to choose the right pond. Of course it's not always obvious and innovation implies mistakes. But mistakes are the best learning opportunities you can have.

Innovation sounds like a buzzword nowadays. Have you noticed a real shift in the way policymakers consider R&D in Europe?

Yes, it has not always been like that. So far, most of the Framework Programmes were designed to turn money into knowledge, which doesn't guarantee you survive in a world where it is all about making money. Now, it is understood that it is also essential to turn knowledge back into money again. That's the reason why DSM put innovation at the top of its priorities, and despite the economic crisis, innovation budgets were not reduced.

DSM is a huge company. Do you think there are advantages in being a smaller company when it comes to innovation?

Absolutely, and that's one of the reasons that we started venturing activities at DSM. Smaller companies are more flexible and they can stop or change their course quickly, which is not the case with big tankers! We should also learn from the entrepreneurial spirit of SMEs: CEOs from small companies take much more risk. It is important that employees of larger companies are encouraged to take initiatives and to develop innovative ideas as well. It is what we call "intrapreneurship", and one of the key commandments that go with this concept is "rather ask for forgiveness than for permission".

What kind of relationship does DSM have with SMEs?

Up to 2005, our venturing arm has invested around 60 million euros in funds and start-up companies. For the next 6 years, 200 million euros were earmarked, so we must have done a reasonably good job. As of today, 60 of the 200 million have been already invested. Over-all, DSM has participated in around 50 start-ups. We have recently cleaned up our portfolio to fit our major priorities: climate and energy, health and wellness, functionality and performance, and emerging economies. There are now 12 or 13 companies in which DSM people have a board seat so we can try to steer those companies. It is a difficult exercise: you have to take off your DSM hat, and think about the best for that company.

Furthermore, our corporate research laboratory in Geleen has evolved in a campus called Chemelot: around 80 companies have settled down there, including small and medium-sized companies. We offer our analytical facilities to them at reasonable cost: they can talk to each other and share their experience.

Do you think the bio-based market is a sector in which Europe can take the lead, allowing us to catch up with "high-tech" economies such as the United States or Japan?

Undoubtedly, but we have to take the right decisions and to focus now. A lot of work has to be done. DSM has launched a first pilot plant for bio-based chemicals, together with the French company Roquette, in order to produce bio-succinic acid, which has many uses in the pharmaceutical and other industries. Thanks to this, we could use agricultural renewable raw material rather than fossil resources.

However, I think the bio-based product market is of crucial importance for the whole world, and countries should not compete to take the lead; instead, they should connect and cooperate. DSM is global and we source our competences everywhere.

What do you expect from FP8?

Social innovation is the way to go. Demonstration projects, links with global centers of excellence, less

bureaucracy, and above all public acceptance and good communication with society are key issues to be tackled through FP8.

Links

[DSM Innovation Center](#) [DSM Venturing](#) [DSM and the bio-based economy](#) [Chemelot](#)

Events

SusChem Brokerage event (20 September, Brussels)

2011 work programmes and calls for proposals are now available. On this occasion, a full Brokerage Day event is being organised on 20 September at the Hotel Bloom in Brussels. To prepare for the day participants can find on the [SusChem website](#):

- an updated brokerage file with expressions of interest and FP7 project ideas,
- an expression of interest file to describe your projects and submit them for assessment and partner search
- a draft agenda for the event
- a powerpoint template for presentations at the brokerage event

Registration is open.

BIOSPAIN 2010: 5th International Meeting on Biotechnology (29 September – 1 October, Pamplona, Spain)

For more information: <http://www.biospain2010.org/en/index.aspx>

Enterprise Europe Network International Conference & Emerging Technology brokerage event on “Waste to Resource” (27-28 September, Dublin, Ireland)

The International Conference will focus on trends in waste management practice, in terms of new legislation and business development. There will be parallel sessions to include presentations on specific emerging technologies, case studies, and calls for partners in R&D.

The technology brokerage event will provide opportunities for one-to-one meetings focusing on technology & business partnering. Organisations that wish to grow their business through licensing

technology (in or out), or through joint venture or other strategic partnership, can offer their specific resources, or select those of interest, by registering for the technology brokerage sessions.

For more information [click here](#).

BIOTECHNICA Partnering Event (5-7 October 2010, Hannover, Germany)

BIOTECHNICA PARTNERING is your route to arranging one-to-one meetings with scientists, research institutes and companies. You meet who you want, to discuss what you want.

For more information: http://www.biotechnica.de/partnering_e

2nd European Innovation Summit: “Tackling the grand challenges - Policy meets practice” (11-14 October, Brussels, Belgium)

For more information: http://www.knowledge4innovation.eu/k4i/intro_eis_2.aspx

BIOTECH2010: The International Event and Conference on Biotechnologies (26-28 October, Milan, Italy)

For more information: http://www.biotechexpo.eu/en_lfm/index_btc.asp

BIO-Europe: 16th Annual International Partnering Conference (15-17 November, Munich, Germany)

BIO-Europe is Europe's largest partnering conference, serving the global biotechnology industry. The conference annually attracts leading dealmakers from biotech, pharma and finance along with the most exciting emerging companies. Produced with the support of BIO, it is regarded as a “must attend” event for the biotech industry

For more information: <http://www.ebdgroup.com/bioeurope/index.php>