



Fuelling emerging technologies

How we are helping to ensure that Europe emerges as a centre of excellence for bio-based products

Challenge

The manufacture of many products relies heavily on petrochemical sources such as plastics, oils, lubricants and surfactants (substances that reduce the surface tension of liquids). There is a major risk that many essential chemical feedstocks could become unavailable either because they are scarce or too expensive as oil prices rise.

Solution

Adopting bio-based sources of chemicals, such as plants, fungi or bacteria, could provide a solution. Products manufactured from such sources are renewable and the European Commission wants to quicken the pace of their development, which is why it set up the Lead Market Initiative in Bio-based Products, to encourage innovation of industrial biotechnology through use of policy initiatives.

One of these policy initiatives concerned the development of standards to help accelerate innovation in this technology and to facilitate the emergence of Europe as a centre of excellence. To this end, we brought together

the UK's industrial biotechnology community. The aim was to ensure that the UK's voice was heard, as the European standards development strategy was established.

Representatives who lent their support came from such organizations as the National Non Food Crops Centre; government departments such as the Department of Energy and Climate Change and the Office of Life Sciences at BIS (the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills); major companies such as Croda and British Sugar; and trade associations such as the Confederation of Paper Industries, Association for Organics Recycling and the Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment.

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The involvement of such major stakeholders will ensure that a robust and acceptable standards strategy emerges from this initiative.

Outcome

The UK is one of the leading players in European standards developments in bio-based products and is active in all five CEN (European Standards) working groups.

We're also working on SME Guide to standards and regulation in bio-based products, PAS 600, which aims to help small and medium-sized business users of this technology comply with regulations and supply chain requirements.

European standards are also being worked on, including: *Bio-based products – Determination of the bio-based carbon content of products using the radiocarbon method*; *Bio-based products – Overview of available and possible methods and techniques for determination of the total bio-based content of products*; and *Bio-based products – Vocabulary*.

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