

PRESS RELEASE

EU ALGAE STAKEHOLDERS RELEASE GROUND-BREAKING AGENDA TO DEVELOP THE INDUSTRY

OLHÃO, 11 April 2016 – The Conference “European Roadmap for an Algae-Based Industry” was successfully held on 6-8 April in the Algarve region of southern Portugal.

Co-organised by the European Algae Biomass Association (EABA) in a partnership with the EU projects Miracles, FUEL4ME, Splash and the Algae Cluster (InteSusAI, BIOFAT and All-gas), the event brought together over 100 leading European microalgae researchers from academia and industry.

After three days of discussions, the experts worked together and identified the essential needs of the sector, pointing-out the direction of the European algae strategic research agenda for the upcoming years, which will soon be published as a White Paper. The document will cover the following key points:

- The developments of the last years in the algal field have been significant. Operational pilot and demonstration scale production facilities of up to 1 ha have been realized. The knowledge on fundamental biology develops rapidly, the technology for production matures and biorefineries that process algal biomass into multiple high quality products have been implemented.
- Further developments should be product driven. The development of marketable algae-based products is important for industrialization of the area.
- Algal strains should be further industrialized as sustainable green cell factories via strain improvement programs, allowing both GMO and non-GMO strategies.
- Advances in regulatory and standardization issues have been developed but still barriers remain for final applications of microalgae based products.
- More demonstration projects for specific markets at a production size of approximately 5 ha should be developed to push the field.
- Technological bottlenecks such as fouling and culture contamination need to be solved.
- Harmonisation is needed in terms of measurements and unit expression.
- Collaboration between algal and other industries should be enabled.
- Industrial and academic collaboration, education, communication to a wider audience about sustainability of the technology, consumers’ acceptance and legislation about products with algae inside need to be stimulated.

The Conference sessions covered topics such as strain development, biorefineries, residual streams, up scaling, life cycle assessment and techno-economic analysis. A high-level panel



discussion on the last day summed up and debated the received input, which served as a basis for the White Paper.

“We are glad to see so many interested experts joining forces to identify what Europe needs in order to develop a fruitful algae-based industry”, said René Wijffels, Co-Chair of the Conference.

Microalgae have the potential to produce high-value nutritional elements, bio-based plastics and energy while keeping pressures on land and resources low, including enhancing the sustainability of other conventional processes, thus contributing to a safer and healthier society, mitigating climate change and promoting innovation. Research into this area is key. The White Paper intends to provide European policy makers with insights into today’s research needs, key questions and crucial issues that need to be tackled in order for Europe to stay at the top of the research landscape.

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