

Evonik and BioAmber Partner on Catalysts for Sustainable Chemicals Made from Bio-Based Succinic Acid

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Contact person specialized press

Evonik Industries' Catalysts Business Line has recently agreed with US based BioAmber Inc. on a long term cooperation for the development and manufacturing of catalysts for making BDO (1,4- butanediol), THF (tetrahydrofuran) and GBL (gamma - butyrolactone) from bio-based succinic acid. BDO, THF and GBL are large volume industrial chemicals used in a wide range of applications including polymers, paints, adhesives and solvents. The global market for these products currently made from petrochemicals is \$4 billion.

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BioAmber is a leading manufacturer of bio-succinic acid from renewable feedstock. Bio-succinic acid is a platform chemical that can be used to make a number of products currently made from petrochemicals. The company licensed BDO hydrogenation catalyst technology from DuPont in 2010, which has been further developed with partners Evonik and the Center for Applied Catalysis at Seton Hall University (South Orange NJ / USA) to improve the technology. In parallel, BioAmber and Evonik have started to develop a new generation of BDO catalysts.

BioAmber operates the world's only dedicated production plant for bio-succinic acid in Pomacle, France with a 350,000 liter commercial scale fermenter. The company, together with Mitsui & Co., has broken ground in Sarnia, Canada on a 17,000 metric ton bio-succinic acid plant that will be operational in late 2013, with plans to expand capacity to 34,000 metric tons of succinic acid, and a 23,000 metric tons BDO plant in late 2014. BioAmber has plans to build additional succinic acid and BDO plants with Mitsui & Co. "Through our collaboration with Evonik, we have secured the expertise and capabilities we need to rapidly bring competitive BDO and THF technology to market," said Jean-Francois Huc, BioAmber CEO. "We are fortunate to have a partner of Evonik's caliber who can both optimize and manufacture our immediate catalyst needs and also develop with us a new generation of catalysts," Huc added.

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Evonik is a global leader in manufacturing and developing catalysts for a wide spectrum of reactions and processes in the industrial- / petrochemicals, and in the life sciences / fine chemicals market segments. It offers an extensive range of catalysts from a single source,

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as well as integrated services for its customers. “Chemicals from renewable feedstock for our daily life products become increasingly important as replacements for crude oil based products”, explains Dr. Wilfried Eul, Senior Vice President and Head of Evonik’s Catalysts Business Line. “The manufacturing of renewable chemicals very often entails biotechnological steps and catalytic conversion steps. Catalysts are not off-the-rack products; they need to be specially tailored to every individual synthesis reaction and process condition. Evonik is proud to innovate together with BioAmber as a leading company in the bio-based succinic acid field, supporting our growth strategy based on resource efficiency” comments Eul.

Company information

Evonik, the creative industrial group from Germany, is one of the world leaders in specialty chemicals. Its activities focus on the key megatrends health, nutrition, resource efficiency and globalization. Profitable growth and a sustained increase in the value of the company form the heart of Evonik’s corporate strategy. Evonik benefits specifically from its innovative prowess and integrated technology platforms. Evonik is active in over 100 countries around the world. In fiscal 2011 more than 33,000 employees generated sales of around €14.5 billion and an operating profit (adjusted EBITDA) of about €2.8 billion. For more information visit the company’s web site at www.evonik.com.

BioAmber is a next generation chemicals company. Its proprietary technology platform combines industrial biotechnology and chemical catalysis to convert renewable feedstock into chemicals for use in a wide variety of everyday products including plastics, nylons, food additives and personal care products. For more information visit the company’s web site at www.bio-amber.com.

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