



## **EuropaBio calls on the Commission to fund white biotech research**

**Brussels, 8 November, 2002:** As part of the European Science and Technology Week (1) from 4-10 November 2002 and ahead of the launch of the EU's 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (2) next week in Brussels (11-13<sup>th</sup> November) EuropaBio calls on the Commission to invest research funds under the new research programme in sustainable industrial applications using white biotechnology and create centres of excellence comprising science, industry and services to help transfer white biotechnology solutions to meet cross sectoral environmental challenges.

Europe leads the way in white biotech applications such as laundry detergents or the production of penicillin and insulin. While these are still small-scale applications, the big sustainability breakthroughs have yet to come with large scale applications of the technology across the chemical and energy sectors such as providing alternatives to oxidation processes. A lack of research funds, however, is a main stumbling block.

“The trend towards biotechnology will continue and accelerate; an estimate shows that in 2010 about 20% of the chemical market will be affected by biotech with a total value creation potential of about Euro 160 billion,” according to Steen Riisgaard, President and CEO, Novozymes A/S (3) and Chairman of the Industrial Biotechnology Board at EuropaBio – the European Association of Bioindustries (4). “That has been enough to encourage the US to spend ten times more than the EU to learn how to copy nature and optimize our natural allies and invisible friends to make them suitable for industrial purposes.”

Industrial or white biotechnology has tremendous potential to transform energy production and lead to more sustainable processes (5). It has a very significant potential to reduce greenhouse gases, the use of fossil fuels and raw materials and lead to cleaner and more sustainable industrial processes (6).

White biotechnology tries to copy nature by using micro-organisms like moulds, yeasts or bacteria and enzymes as cell factories to make goods and services like antibiotics, vitamins, detergents and bio-fuels (7). “Future large scale applications of the technology will enormously contribute to the objectives of sustainable production and consumption on the one hand and wealth generation on the other,” says Steen Riisgaard.

For further information, contact

Adeline Farrelly

EuropaBio Communications Manager

Tel: +32 2 739 1174 (Direct) Mobile: +32 475 93 17 24

e-mail: [a.farrelly@europabio.org](mailto:a.farrelly@europabio.org) website: <http://www.europabio.org>

## Notes to editors

- (1) For further information on EU Science Week: [www.cordis.lu/scienceweek](http://www.cordis.lu/scienceweek)
- (2) 6<sup>th</sup> Framework programme: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/index_en.html)
- (3) Novozymes A/S: [www.novozymes.com](http://www.novozymes.com)
- (4) EuropaBio has almost 40 corporate members operating worldwide and 20 national biotechnology associations representing some 1200 SMEs involved in research and development, testing, manufacturing and distribution of biotechnology products. EuropaBio, the voice of European bioindustries, aims to be a promoting force for biotechnology and to present its proposals to industry, politicians, regulators, NGOs, and the public at large.
- (5) OECD report finds that biotechnology contributes to industrial sustainability  
Full report:  
<http://www.oecd.org/EN/document/0,,EN-document-27-nodirectorate-no-12-21620-27,00.html>  
Latest primer from the OECD (October 2002):  
<http://www.oecd.org/pdf/M00033000/M00033279.pdf>

For more information, contact:  
Iain GILLESPIE (STI/BIO)  
Head of Biotechnology Unit OECD  
Tel : +33 1.45.24.82.00 (general)  
Tel: +33 1 45 24 92 32 (direct)  
[iain.gillespie@oecd.org](mailto:iain.gillespie@oecd.org)

- (6) What is white biotechnology? [http://www.europabio.org/pages/module\\_17.asp](http://www.europabio.org/pages/module_17.asp)
- (7) Examples of white biotechnology uses

Biological Vitamin B2 production:

<http://www.europabio.org/upload/documents/vitamin.pdf>

Sustainable biofuels:

<http://www.europabio.org/upload/documents/biofuel.pdf>

Cleaner detergents:

<http://www.europabio.org/upload/documents/FINAL.DETERGENTS.pdf>

Naturally cleaner cotton:

<http://www.europabio.org/upload/documents/COTTON.pdf>

Stonewashing without stones:

<http://www.europabio.org/upload/documents/FINAL.JEANS.pdf>