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New European project develops innovative advanced sustainable wood-based composite materials using nanotechnology

The European Commission has decided to invest 6.5 million Euro into a large scale project dealing with the development of sustainable wood-based composite materials for a wide range of applications. The SustainComp project involves 17 organizations around Europe and is coordinated by the Swedish R&D company STFI-Packforsk AB.

In the wake of climate change and increasing oil prices, the demand for sustainable and light weight materials that can replace oil-based products has increased. At the same time, bioplastic production capacities are increasing. The combination of bioplastics and nanotechnology is an approach that meets the technical demands of replacing the oil-based materials with sustainable and renewable ones.

SustainComp aims at introducing several families of new advanced nanostructured wood-based biocomposites for a number of commercial sectors in society, such as the transportation and packaging sectors. The production of these new materials can integrate today's large enterprises on the raw material and end-use sides (e.g. pulp mills and packaging manufacturers), and small and medium sized enterprises on the composite processing side (e.g. compounders and composite manufacturers). This will generate opportunities for the existing wood-based industry to conquer new markets and also create openings for new companies, business models and areas. For the existing wood-based industry, it is also a step towards the transformation into a modernized industry, by fostering new concepts and materials in a broad and innovative perspective.

"It is very exciting that the European Commission has decided to fund this type of project. The targeted products in SustainComp open new possible business areas for the European forest based industry," says Mikael Ankerfors, Coordinator of SustainComp.

"SCA has sustainability high on its agenda. We expect that SustainComp will find new renewable cost effective materials that can be implemented in existing manufacturing operations", comments Folke Österberg, Director Research Program, SCA R&D Centre, one of the project partners.

"The SustainComp project offers a possibility for Novamont to obtain compounds where the combination of biodegradable matrices and wood-based products could result in synergistic properties of the final products, covering the lack of performance and increasing the field of applications for bioplastics as well as for wood-based products", says Cecilia Giardi, Strategic Projects - Project Manager, Novamont, also partner in the project.

For more information contact Mikael Ankerfors (mikael.ankerfors@stfi.se, Tel: +46 8 676 70 00) or visit the SustainComp website, www.sustaincomp.eu.

The SustainComp project will run for 4 years with a total budget of 9.5 million Euros, of which the EU contribution is 6.5 million Euros. SustainComp involves 17 European organizations and is coordinated by the Swedish R&D company, STFI-Packforsk. The other organizations are; Alcan Technology & Management, BASF, Borregaard, CNRS, Elastopoli, Empa, EPFL, TKK, ITENE, K-Tron, Novamont, PFI, Polykemi, KTH, SCA and SINTEF.