

Press release

Innovative pilot plant in Portugal will soon demonstrate a combined approach to produce sustainable microalgae

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02/06/2015 – European algae experts gathered together in the municipality of Olhão, in the Algarve region of Southern Portugal on 21 May 2015 to follow the ‘1st Workshop on Sustainable Microalgae Production’ organised by the Integrated Sustainable Algae (InteSusAl) project. The event marked also the first guided visit to the project’s one-hectare unit, which will optimise the production of algae by both heterotrophic and phototrophic routes and will demonstrate integration of these production technologies to achieve the microalgae cultivation targets of 90-120 dry tonnes per hectare by annum.

The workshop covered the main aspects addressed by InteSusAl, such as strain selection, flocculation as a harvesting process, life cycle assessment, heterotrophic and phototrophic microalgae growth. The event provided also an overview of the algae sector in Europe, focusing on current R&D activities and key industry players.

“We are glad that many participants expressed interested in our work by taking their time to come to Portugal and follow our presentations and the visit to our demo plant. We are currently planning to organise a bigger event in 2016 and we hope to attract key stakeholders to discuss how to further develop the algae sector in Europe”, said Andrew Kenny, coordinator of the project.

The project is integrating heterotrophic and phototrophic production technologies, using bio-diesel glycerol as carbon source to the heterotrophic unit and validating the biomass output for bio-diesel conversion.

The demonstration unit is located in the facility of the company Necton (www.necton.pt). The technology set *in situ* is composed of 4 m³ heterotrophic fermentation units, 60 m³ tubular PhotoBioReactors and 200 m³ raceways. Demonstration trials are expected to begin in July 2015.

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