

Press Release

MULTI-STR3AM towards bioeconomy: Innovation goes on and adapts to a new reality of a world pandemic

Lisbon, April 28th, 2021

2020 has been a world challenge, and it was not different to the innovation ecosystem. The MULTI-STR3AM consortium launched an innovative project, focused on a multi-products microalgae biorefinery, while their companies had to quickly adapt to this new reality.

The project officially started on May 1st, 2020, with no risks regarding a world pandemic previously mapped. This four-year long innovation project on biotechnology relies strongly on laboratory work besides the construction of a new demo scale biorefinery.

It is known that the COVID-19 caused a downfall on the world logistics. In addition, some industries had their effort changed towards the production of equipment like mechanical ventilators, masks, and other consumables demanded by all countries facing a lack of personal protective equipment needed not only for the hospitals but to protect their population. Besides all health care demand, overnight all offices were closed and the manufacture of all equipment incorporating electronic chips was affected as the demand by laptop producers rocketed due to remote work. These are just few examples of how the pandemics caused an overall impact across industries.

Nonetheless, the MULTI-STR3AM consortium overcame all difficulties such as, the delay on the orders of new equipment needed for the partners' laboratories, biomass production and biorefinery. Also, the transport and commissioning are taking longer than planned, but everything is moving on. All face-to-face meetings moved to online platforms, and the partners laboratories and industrial facilities have reduced the number of researchers and other employees circulating on the day-by-day business. Considering that, experiments were replanned and reinforced monitoring has been implemented to decide upon mitigation actions every six-months, in order to avoid further impacts.

Still, resilience is the word and the world has shown its capacity to adapt to a sudden unforeseen reality. The MULTI-STR3AM consortium has faced the challenge and will continue to support Europe towards a more sustainable and economically viable bioeconomy.

The Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking's project MULTI-STR3AM addresses the challenges of scale of microalgae-based products by integrating sustainable multi-strain, multi-method and multi-product microalgae biorefinery in industrial side streams. This EU-funded project is designed to help close the gap between research and industrial scale on microalgae cultivation.

The MULTI-STR3AM project is coordinated by A4F – Algae for Future (PT), and brings together the companies ForFarmers (NL), International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF, NL), Phycom (NL), UpField (NL), and the R&D institutions IMIC CAS - Centre Algatech (CZ), Instituto de Biologia Experimental e Tecnológica (iBET, PT), and Laboratório Nacional de Energia e Geologia (LNEG, PT).

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