

Candidates Nominated for Evonik European Research Award

October 6, 2008

- Three international teams qualify with research on enzymes, proteins, and sugar
- Innovation Award for White Biotechnology, with €100,000 in prize money
- Dr. Alfred Oberholz, member of the Executive Board of Evonik: "The projects show the immense potential of white biotechnology."
- Dr. Arend Oetker: "This award bridges the gap between science and industry."

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Essen – Enzymes that open the way for new medicines, a process that produces acryl glass from alcohol or sugar, proteins that act as luminescent “reporters” in the fight against cancer tumors. No science fiction here, just the results of scientific research in the area of white biotechnology. For their work, three research teams have been nominated for the Evonik Science-to-Business Award: Dr. Thorsten Eggert, evocatal GmbH, Düsseldorf, and Dr. Thomas Drepper, Heinrich Heine University of Düsseldorf; Dr. Paul Dalby, University College, London; as well as Dr. Thore Rohwerder, University of Duisburg-Essen. The international jury will announce the winner of the award, which includes €100,000 in prize money, at the award ceremony on November 12, 2008 in Berlin.

“We are proud that young European researchers have taken part in the competition and are delighted about the innovative, future-oriented, yet practical projects,” said Dr. Alfred Oberholz, member of the Executive Board of Evonik Industries AG. “This exciting work shows the immense future potential of white biotechnology.” Oberholz commented on one further important aspect, adding, “The projects are all on the threshold of marketability or have already taken this step. They therefore meet an essential condition of the Evonik Innovation

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Award: converting scientific innovations into salable products—‘science to business,’ just as the name says."

Dr. Arend Oetker, president of the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft and patron of the award, said, "This award expresses the most important objective of the Stifterverband: bridging the gap between science and industry." The award is presented in cooperation with the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, and the Financial Times Deutschland, Germany.

For Evonik Industries, which launched the award in 2005, the science-to-business approach has long been a principle of its own research. "Today, potential marketing opportunities must be considered at the very outset of an innovation," said Oberholz. And the company follows these words with deeds. With the opening of the Eco² Science-to-Business Center (S2B Eco²) at the Marl site, Evonik now operates its third installation of this type, in addition to the Nanotronics and Biotechnology Centers. The centers all have the same objective. "Our claim is to convert the latest scientific findings into successful products fast and efficiently," said Oberholz.

With the presentation of this year's Science-to-Business Award, Evonik is pursuing its goal of collectively exploiting the unique opportunities of white biotechnologies in Europe and informing a broader public of their potential. This is all the more important since the rapidly growing white biotechnology supplies creative production processes based predominantly on natural resources and renewables. Experts are already predicting that as early as 2010, between 10 and 20 percent of all chemical substances will be produced by biotechnological methods. Not only the three nominated teams but also the numerous other teams who competed for the Science-to-Business Award demonstrated that this is possible.

Brief information on the three nominated teams

Dr. Thorsten Eggert, evocat GmbH, Düsseldorf, and Dr. Thomas Drepper, Heinrich Heine University of Düsseldorf, have developed new anaerobic fluorescent proteins that make it possible to track cellular processes, even in the absence of oxygen. These luminescent reporters allow, for the first time, a more extensive look at the oxygen-free

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processes of our life, and can be used as tumor agents or environmental markers.

With the biocatalytic process developed by Dr. Paul Dalby, University College London, enzymes can be combined and customized true-to-size for new tasks. This process makes biotechnology a more attractive approach to producing chemicals and can open up access to new medicines with the help of eco-friendly and energy-efficient processes.

Dr. Thore Rohwerder, University of Duisburg-Essen, has discovered an enzyme that can be used to convert a branched-chain petrochemical-based C4 body into a linear one. This enzyme, built into a sugar metabolism, can generate a precursor to methyl methacrylate. With this new environmentally safer and more efficient biosynthesis, the vision of manufacturing “acryl glass from sugar” could become a reality.

You can find more information on the nominated projects at www.evonik.com/award

Company information

Evonik Industries is the creative industrial group from Germany which operates in three business areas: Chemicals, Energy and Real Estate. Evonik is a global leader in specialty chemicals, an expert in power generation from hard coal and renewable energies, and one of the largest private residential real estate companies in Germany. Our strengths are creativity, specialization, continuous self-renewal, and reliability. Evonik is active in over 100 countries around the world. In its fiscal year 2007 about 43,000 employees generated sales of about €14.4 billion and an operating profit (EBITDA) of more than €2.2 billion.

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