

Evonik pioneers industrial-scale manufacturing of biosurfactants

- Production of biobased, fully biodegradable rhamnolipid surfactants
- Strategic partnership with Unilever
- Next step in the transformation of Evonik's life sciences division Nutrition & Care

Essen, Germany. Evonik will begin building the world's first industrial-scale facility for manufacturing sustainable rhamnolipid biosurfactants at its site in Slovakia. The triple-digit million-euro investment will establish Evonik as a pioneer of high-quality, sustainable biosurfactants on a commercial scale. Construction at the Evonik site in Slovenská Ľupča is scheduled for completion by end of 2023. The new plant will meet the rapidly growing market demand for biobased, biodegradable surfactants, and will leverage the biotechnology platform of Evonik's life sciences division, Nutrition & Care. Evonik's rhamnolipids are exceptionally high quality and provide Evonik a unique position in the market due to the IP-protected manufacturing process. These biosurfactants are manufactured and sourced sustainably and play an essential role in transitioning the Nutrition & Care division to become a provider of system solutions.

Furthermore, Evonik and Unilever have entered a strategic partnership for the supply of rhamnolipids for use in hand dish washing liquid and other Home Care applications. The recently signed long-term agreement represents an important step for the commercialization of this biosurfactant technology and opens opportunities for other companies wishing to offer sustainable solutions to their customers.

“This is a game changer for cleaning and personal care products. With this investment we are pioneering a new market and we believe that this will transform the way the world cleans. We are proud to collaborate with Unilever for a cleaner, more sustainable

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future,” says Johann-Caspar Gammelin, President of the Nutrition & Care division.

The increased production capacity of sustainable biosurfactants and the partnership of Evonik and Unilever demonstrate a major portfolio shift for Evonik’s life science division Nutrition & Care, as it expands its offering of system solutions. Characterized by high growth prospects and above-average margin potential, Nutrition & Care aims to increase the share of system solutions it offers from 20 percent today, to more than 50 percent by 2030.

“Rhamnolipids are an important part of our Clean Future initiative which has set the goal to exclude fossil carbon in all cleaning products by 2030. We want to make sustainability easy for everyone that uses our products. The partnership with Evonik helps move our brands away from fossil fuels without compromising on performance or affordability,” says Peter Dekkers, Executive Vice President Middle Europe, Unilever.

Evonik and Unilever have partnered since 2019 to market a new hand dishwashing detergent based on Evonik’s rhamnolipids. The investment project at the Slovenská Ľupča site in Slovakia, and the latest strategic partnership reflect a culmination of these efforts and is the first step to providing industrial quantities of rhamnolipids to a broad range of customers.

The new plant in Slovakia is leveraging the biotechnology platform of Nutrition & Care and will support the growth ambition of the division and the Care Solutions business line.

Evonik Fermas GmbH situated in Slovenská Ľupča in Slovakia was established more than 25 years ago as Evonik’s scale-up and launch platform. Now a strategic location for Evonik’s biotechnology activities, the site is a key biotech hub for growing and developing Evonik’s offerings of system solutions. Expansion

of the facility will benefit from the highly skilled biotechnology competencies of the local workforce.

Rhamnolipids are a class of biosurfactants which can be sustainably manufactured via a fermentation process using sugar as the main raw material. This use of biogenic carbon requires no petrochemical raw materials or tropical oils. Rhamnolipids are fully biodegradable, and their low-impact life cycle means they are a sustainable alternative to conventional surfactants. Their exceptional foam-forming properties make them suitable for use in household cleaners and personal care products like shampoos and micellar waters. Their pleasant taste also enables the formulation of oral care products such as toothpaste without strong taste masking components.

With its well-established biosurfactant portfolio, the Care Solutions business line firmly cements its position as a sustainable specialties partner, while also further strengthening Nutrition & Care's broad technology platform. The portfolio includes RHEANCE® One for personal care applications and REWOFERM® RL 100 for cleaning solutions.

Company information

Evonik is one of the world leaders in specialty chemicals. The company is active in more than 100 countries around the world and generated sales of €12.2 billion and an operating profit (adjusted EBITDA) of €1.91 billion in 2020. Evonik goes far beyond chemistry to create innovative, profitable and sustainable solutions for customers. More than 33,000 employees work together for a common purpose: We want to improve life today and tomorrow.

About Nutrition & Care

The focus of the business of the Nutrition & Care division is on health and quality of life. It develops differentiated solutions for active pharmaceutical ingredients, medical devices, nutrition for humans and animals, personal care, cosmetics, and household cleaning. In these resilient end markets, the division generated sales of around three billion euros in 2020 with about 5,300 employees.

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