

PRESS RELEASE

BRAIN Research Alliance NatLifE 2020 started First Innovation Alliance to receive approval letter

Zwingenberg, February 28, 2013 – As the industrial coordinator of the innovation alliance, the biotechnology company BRAIN AG has announced that the Natural Life Excellence Network 2020 (NatLifE 2020) innovation alliance is the first alliance to receive the official approval letter under the “Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Initiative” scheme of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The approval letter has been transmitted today, after an intense analysis of the full application of the complete innovation alliance transmitted by end of September 2012 to the PtJ authorities in Juelich. With the receipt of this document the NatLifE 2020 alliance partners now are able to increase and to broaden their activities in Bioeconomy and their biologisation strategy with further innovative R&D programs described in the application.

The alliance partners, namely technology engineering companies, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and industrial corporations, join their forces in the NatLifE 2020 innovation alliance to drive forward the research, development and production of natural specialities for a healthier life. The NatLifE 2020 innovation alliance is set to receive funding for up to nine years (depending on two interim evaluations) and aims at delivering essential solutions for the sustainable biologisation of industrial processes.

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Innovation in the realm of “healthier living and ageing” is playing a central role in politics, economy and society in general. From a social as well as economic perspective, the food, nutrition, and health sector constitutes the most important area of the Bioeconomy. In collaboration with relevant actors from research and industry, the Bioeconomy Council therefore elaborated research recommendations designed to confront the increasing competition for biomass, to open avenues to increased sustainability in production, processing, and consumption habits, and to address the health aspects of food consumption and dietary habits.

Consumer trends in the “fast and convenience food” markets lead to an increase in lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity. According to an Eurostat study conducted in November 2011, up to two out of every three people in the western hemisphere are overweight. In the U.S. alone, metabolic disease treatment costs amount to some US\$ 150bn (or 75 per cent of the U.S. health budget) per year according to Lustig et al., an American team of researchers whose results were published in “Nature” magazine in February 2012. And roughly US\$ 65bn have to be added to this sum in the U.S. alone for a loss in productivity due to illness. Similar results and respective problems for the society have very recently been published in an article in the renowned medicinal journal “The Lancet” in February 2013 by Rob Moodie and co-workers.

These facts paved the way for the NatLifE 2020 innovation alliance’s joint approach. Based on a thorough understanding of biological systems and relying on biotechnological solutions, the alliance’s partners aim at developing and launching a new and competitive generation of natural, biologically active valueable components as specialities for the food and cosmetics industries. These will have a noticeable impact on the improvement of the nutrition, health and well-being of everybody.

“All NatLifE 2020 partner companies share one common goal – harnessing disruptive technologies in a synergistic way to drive forward the development of high-quality, healthy specialities and final products for the food and cosmetics markets,” states Dr. Holger Zinke, CEO of BRAIN AG. “In

this process, fundamental scientific and technical challenges have to be overcome. Individual companies, research institutes or smaller networks would not be able to do so on their own in an adequate period of time. The complexity of the challenges the economy and research organisations are confronted with require all players to work hand-in-glove to close technology gaps for their mutual benefit.”

“Being the alliance’s coordinator, we synchronise the efforts of the industrial consortium on the one hand, while on the other hand our own innovative technology portfolio, which will be jointly used by all partners as a foundation for their research and development initiatives, forms the core of NatLifE 2020,” explains Dr. Martin Langer, NatLifE 2020 coordinator and head of BRAIN AG’s Corporate Development department, after receiving the approval letter. “From our point of view, the distinctive hallmark of this innovation alliance and the approach we have chosen is that the partner companies within NatLifE 2020 innovation alliance closely cooperate as true partners along the entire value chain - driven by their own entrepreneurial interests, but pursuing a joint objective.”

The NatLifE 2020 innovation alliance was established in early 2011 and officially applied for public funding by submitting a declaration of interest in May 2011. NatLifE 2020 was one of a total of 15 alliances which were short-listed to submit an outline describing their plans. The project outline was then submitted on 15 December 2011. Subsequently, the project outline was reviewed and finally on June 18, 2012 was recommended for funding by independent experts chosen by the BMBF. In the next step a full application was sent out to the coordinating authorities, the “Projektträger Jülich” (PtJ), by the end of September 2012. This application was examined intensively. After a positive analysis of the document the alliance partners now received the approval letter. The innovation alliance program of the altogether 22 partners is documented as FKZ 031A206 and is planned for altogether 9 years with a total volume of 30 million Euro.

About BRAIN

BRAIN AG is an industrial “white” biotech company which discovers and develops novel bioactive natural compounds and proprietary enzymes for its partners and customers in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, as well as the food and cosmetics industries. With its unique approach to the discovery and production of new biological compounds and biocatalysts, the company achieves creative solutions by harnessing nature’s untapped biodiversity. Its success is built on its proprietary BioArchive comprising millions of genes, proteins and metabolic pathways from microbial isolates and metagenome libraries. Since its foundation in 1993, BRAIN has entered into over 80 strategic collaborations with nearly all the relevant companies within the chemical industry as e.g. BASF, Ciba, Clariant, Evonik Degussa, DSM, Genencor, Henkel, Nutrinova, RWE, Sandoz, Schering, Südzucker and Symrise, to name but a few. Currently, BRAIN employs 105 highly skilled people.

For their groundbreaking industrial biotechnology activities for a sustainable “biologisation of the chemical industry” using nature’s toolbox for industrial processes, BRAIN with its CEO Dr Holger Zinke received the “Deutsche Umweltpreis 2008” of the “Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt”, DBU.

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Pictures:



Automatic screening for valuable compounds using natural sources. Within the NatLifE 2020 innovation alliance the 22 partners aim to jointly develop such candidates as specialities for new markets.

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Industrial scaling of biotechnological manufacturing processes for valuable compounds and bioactive specialities.

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