

Evonik marks start of a revolution in cleaning and personal care with groundbreaking ceremony

- First commercial rhamnolipids production site worldwide
- Expands Evonik's biotechnology platform
- Portfolio transformation to sustainable solutions

Slovenská Ľupča, Slovakia. Evonik is celebrating the start of construction of the world's first commercial rhamnolipid production facility with a groundbreaking ceremony today. The new biosurfactant plant is a triple-digit million-euro investment in Evonik's biotech hub in Slovakia. This will establish Evonik as a pioneer of high-quality, sustainable biosurfactants on a commercial scale and further strengthen the site in Slovenská Ľupča as a strategic center for biotechnology. Rhamnolipids are biosurfactants and are essential constituents of cleaning and personal care products. Evonik's rhamnolipids are 100 % bio-based and 100 % biodegradable.

The new facility in Slovenská Ľupča will expand Evonik's biotechnology platform, which is an integral part of the company's life sciences division Nutrition & Care. Rhamnolipid biosurfactants are manufactured and sourced more sustainably and play an essential role in transitioning the Nutrition & Care division to a provider of system solutions. The division aims to increase the share of system solutions it offers from 20 percent today, to more than 50 percent by 2030.

The innovation power in Nutrition & Care stems from a clear focus on sustainability, which also drives its portfolio transformation. In addition to ingredients used in household, industrial, institutional, and vehicle cleaning as well as cosmetic products, Evonik's Nutrition & Care division uses fermentation technologies across a range of other high growth markets including sustainable animal nutrition, medical devices, advanced food ingredients and pharmaceutical drug products.

"Today is an important day for our partnership with Unilever, our employees in Slovakia, our Nutrition & Care division, and for our planet. We are delighted that the construction of our new

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biosurfactant plant is now underway,” says Yann d'Hervé, head of Evonik's Care Solutions business line.

Industrial biotechnology at Slovenská Ľupča is cutting edge. This offers interesting job prospects for biotechnologists, laboratory technicians, engineers, and many other professions.

“I am proud that our Evonik site in Slovakia will play a critical role in supplying the world with more sustainable cleaning and personal care products. This is not just pivotal for a sustainable future, our investment here in Slovenská Ľupča is also beneficial for our region – attracting highly qualified experts that have helped establish Evonik Fermas as a biotech hub for the global market,” says Miroslav Havlik, general manager of Evonik Fermas.

Rhamnolipids are a class of biosurfactants which are sustainably manufactured via a fermentation process using European corn sugar as the main raw material. This use of biogenic carbon requires no petrochemical feedstocks 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.

Evonik Fermas, which is located at Slovenská Ľupča in Slovakia, was founded in 1992 as a joint venture between Degussa AG and the Slovakian company Biotika a.s. Evonik Fermas originally used biotechnology to produce amino acids for animal feed but quickly became adept at manufacturing a range of fermentation-based products for applications in animal nutrition, pharmaceutical products and the cosmetic and personal care industry. Over the years that followed, the site continued adding new products and investments, improved technologies and infrastructure. In 2016, Evonik Fermas ran the first pilot plant for the manufacture of sustainable biosurfactants via fermentation.

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 €15 billion and an operating profit (adjusted EBITDA) of €2.38 billion in 2021. Evonik goes far beyond chemistry to create innovative, profitable and sustainable solutions for customers. About 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 €3.56 billion in 2021 with about 5,300 employees.

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