

EU finances BioMara: biofuel produced from algae

Date published: Apr 8, 2009

The EU has recently allocated 4.87 million euro to a research project to study the possibilities of producing biofuel from algae. The project is named BioMara, and the subsidy is derived from the Interreg IVA programme. The EU aims to help reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, reduce CO2 emissions, and promote sustainable production of biofuels. BioMara will focus on the feasibility of the use of microscopically tiny single-cell organisms and seaweed. Researchers are looking to see if such organisms grow quickly, have a high yield, and do not compete with agricultural land for food crops.

Marine algae are the most important candidates. Seaweed generally grows very quickly, harnesses carbon dioxide, and has a simple structure, thus making it easy to convert into biofuel. However, there are several possibilities for cultivating algae, though there is still no sign of large-scale, industrial application. The extracted biofuels are barely competitive with fossil-based fuels.

Partners include Scotland's University of Strathclyde, Belfast's Queen's University and the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland, and the Dundalk Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology, Sligo in Ireland.

Sources: [BioMara](#) en [Cordis](#)