



INDUSTRIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY IN SLOVAKIA

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INTRODUCTION

Industrial biotechnology is very limited in Slovakia today although the country has a very long tradition in biotechnology research and a good level of education in the field. The Slovak Government understood the importance of biotechnology and its potential in terms of economic growth and is now slowly allocating resources to its development. As an example, the Government is increasing its investment into research and development and has recently adopted the National Science and Technology Policy which aims at increasing direct R&D support to 1,8% of GDP in 2015. In the same time, the Slovak Republic is the only new Member State where industrial biotechnology actors are gathered together in a national association with the objective to further develop this sector at national level.

I. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Modern industrial biotechnology is a relatively new discipline, with major areas of knowledge still to be explored. Public support to research as well as the establishment of pilot and demonstration facilities to scale-up individual processes will therefore help in the development of a European bio-based economy.

A. Public research funding

Biotechnology projects in Slovakia are supported by:

- the Slovak Grant Agency for Science²
- Slovak Research and Development Agency³
- National Development Programme for Science and Technology⁴
- Structural Funds-Operational Programme for Research and Development⁵
- Norway Financial Mechanism Grants⁶.

No specific budget is allocated to biotechnology projects. Biotechnology belongs to supported priority topics in all these schemes but none of them have declared industrial biotechnology as a separate topic of interest.

B. Pilot and demonstration plants

There is no pilot or demonstration plant in Slovakia to develop industrial biotech processes.

² <http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?rootId=416>

³ <http://www.apvv.sk/en/>

⁴ <http://www.nis.gov.jo/st/mainat.html>

The National Science and Technology Policy lay down Slovakian long term objectives in terms of R&D by 2015. It focuses on 12 priority themes of which one is biotechnology. The Science and Technology Policy strategy also aims at increasing the direct R&D support to 1,8% of GDP in 2015 and encouraging private investment into R&D (2/3 of overall expenditures in 2015 should come from private sources).

⁵ <http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?lang=en&rootId=53>

⁶ <http://www.eeagrants.org/id/93>

II. POLICY

Public authorities can promote the quick take-up of industrial biotechnology innovations by implementing a number of “instruments” or policy initiatives. This can be the improvement of the regulatory framework; the integration of specification for bio-based products in public procurement; the establishment of standardisation, labelling and certification schemes to overcome perceived uncertainty about product properties and weak market transparency; the development of financial instruments and supports to increase investments into research, technology development and innovation as well as the elaboration of communication and information campaign to communicate the benefits of bio-based products to users.

A. Policies and regulations

There is no national action plan for industrial biotechnology and bio-based products.

Slovakia has implemented almost all European directives regulating biotechnology and no additional specific national legislation is planned.

B. Public procurement

There is no specific public procurement programme including bio-based products.

C. Standardisation, labelling and certification

There is no standardisation, labelling or certification scheme for bio-based products.

There is no voluntary certification and labelling developed by the industry.

D. Access to finance

There is no existing support for bio-based products research and demonstration plants.

SMEs can find support by addressing themselves to the National Agency for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises which manages projects and programmes that support SMEs and participates in the set up of loan and guarantee systems for the establishment, stimulation and development of SMEs in collaboration with other financial institutions.

E. Communication

Industrial biotechnology enterprises and researchers active in the field of industrial biotechnology are represented through the Slovak association for Industrial Biotechnology⁷.

⁷ <http://www.slovbiotech.sk>