

### Scientific leader

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NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE  
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### ABSTRACT

Polysaccharides (like cellulose or starch) are by far the largest amount of all polymers produced in the world. Fully biodegradable, they are made by Nature. They are the sustainable polymeric materials of tomorrow, when synthetic polymers coming from oil will become expensive and rare. To organize now the EU scientific community in a network in order to integrate the resources of the partners to promote the use of these renewable raw materials as industry feedstock for the manufacturing of advanced, multifunctional materials is the purpose of this proposal. It fits the Knowledge-Based Multifunctional Materials part, with a clear centre of gravity on the 3.4.2.3 sub-topic, addressing several objectives of Priority 3 and of Priority 6. Fighting a highly fragmented area, its objectives are of long term importance, its partnership is of proved excellence, and its research plans are very ambitious. An already established extensive connection with the industrial community ensures a lasting character.

The European Polysaccharide Network of Excellence is composed of 16 large and small world class research groups from nine countries, covering all needed expertise (polysaccharide types and scientific disciplines). To allow a full integration and give the reality of a "super-laboratory", an independent, non-profit, private, single administrative and legal entity called «EPNOE Association» was established in December 2007. It will couple the 16 partners and industry. The ambition and objectives of the European Polysaccharide Network of Excellence are also to train scientists in academia and industry, to spread knowledge, results and excellence and to attract the interest of citizens for science.

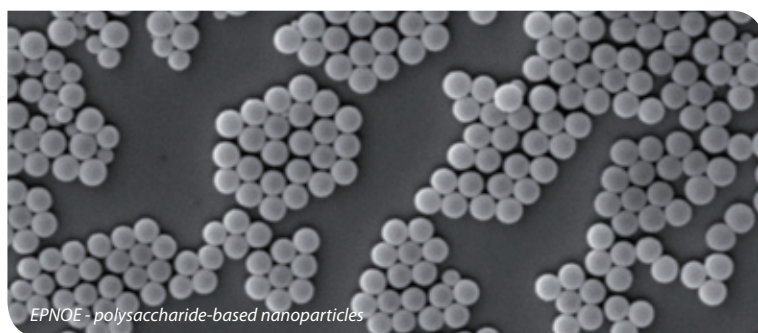


European Polysaccharide  
Network Of Excellence

[www.epnoe.eu](http://www.epnoe.eu)

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To build a real collaborative research and education network with 16 laboratories from institutions as different as Fraunhofer, VTT or universities subject to various rules and sometimes incompatible legal constraints is a challenge that can only be met if there is a very strong will from the leading scientists.

Two factors seem to me the most critical for the success of such a network, first to establish an area of trustiness (networking scientists are competitors in science and search of R&D contracts) and second to have time, a lot of time, in front of you. EPNOE success shows that not only the establishment of such networks is possible, but that it boosts basic research, collaborative R&D projects with industry and education for its members. The incredibly large efforts devoted to inventing and establishing EPNOE are paying off.

*Patrick Navard, EPNOE Coordinator*