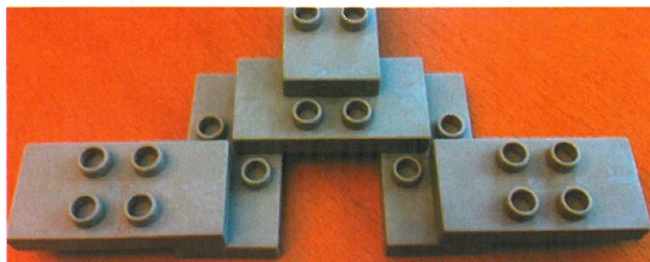


SustainComp products combine bioplastics and wood fibre

APPLICATION The EU-funded SustainComp project has been completed after four years of work in which partners developed demonstrator products made from bioplastics reinforced with wood fibres.

The project involved 17 partners from eight European countries within the EU Seventh Framework Programme. It had a budget of €9.5m, of which €6.5m was funded by the European Commission.

The demonstrators designed and produced in SustainComp were: a cushioning system for electronic devices (created by SCA in Sweden); an extruded bus seat component



Polykemi made toy blocks from PLA reinforced with wood fibre

(Elastopoli, Finalnd); toy building blocks (Polykemi, Sweden); an advertising display panel (3A Composites, Switzerland); and a compostable cutlery set for catering applications (Novamont, Italy).

For all these items, except the cutlery set, the companies

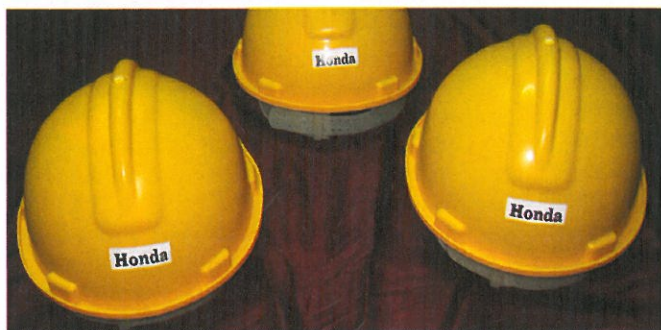
developed composites made from starch-based bioplastic PLA filled with wood fibres. In the cutlery application, Novamont used its own bioplastic with the brand name Mater Bi reinforced with wood fibres.

Sustainability assessments of new materials developed for

the different applications were carried out by Itene packaging institute, based in Valencia, Spain, Innventia, based in Sweden and Novamont.

Two highlights mentioned by the company were the replacement of glass fibres with wood fibres in the bus-seat demonstrator, ensuring its durability, and the degradable nature of the cutlery, which is a disposable application.

The SustainComp partners were: Innventia, 3A Composites, BASF, Borregaard, CNRS, Elastopoli, EMPA, EPFL, Aalto University, Itene, K-Tron, Novamont, PFI, Polykemi, KTH, SCA and Sintef.



Cereplast resins used for Indian helmets

APPLICATION Bioplastics manufacturer Cereplast says it has started selling its first Hybrid resins for safety helmets in India.

The company is selling its resins in the country through partner A.R.M.Y. Group and the first commercial application will be safety helmets made of Sustainable Biopropylene H-101.

Frederic Scheer, chairman and CEO of Cereplast, said: "India is a market with a rapidly growing demand for bioplastic alternatives to conventional plastics, and we are poised to take advantage of this opportunity in the second most populous country in the world. We anticipate that this will become a major market for Cereplast."

Biofoambark project wins industry prizes

MATERIALS A project at the Freiburg Materials Research Center which aims to produce insulating foam using extracts from tree bark has won prizes for the scientists involved.

Leader of the project professor Marie-Pierre Laborie, from the Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences of the University of Freiburg, has been named "German High Tech Champion," by the Fraunhofer Association in the category "Green Buildings".

The Freiburg centre says that Laborie's research team makes hard foams using tannin, a compound found in tree bark, typically left over as a waste product in the lumber industry.

Since the foams have good insulating and flame-resistant properties, they can be used predominantly as insulating material for buildings and moulded automobile parts, claims the centre.

Also they could be used as catalysts or filters for heavy metals and as a replacement for packaging materials like styrofoam. And Freiburg claims they will "even be useful after the products themselves are worn out", since a further goal is to convert the foams into biofuel.

The Biofoambark work is being supported by the Agency for Renewable Resources with funds from the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Consumer Protection.

Project focuses on panels for trucks and buses

TRANSPORT A new European project is developing panels for trucks and buses using the by-products from the cellulose manufacturing industry.

The Brigit Project, which started in August this year and will last for 48 months, will look at developing PHB (polyhydroxybutyrate) and PBS (polybutylene succinate)

from the waste from cellulose pulp manufacturing.

The new bioplastic will be used to produce sheets reinforced with flax or hemp natural fibres, instead of the

standard glass fibres. The sheets will form 3D panels that will be installed in trucks and buses but the project will also look at applications in trains, boats and vans.