
nova-Institut GmbH (www.nova-institute.eu)

PRESS RELEASE

Renewable Materials Conference announces Six Nominees for the Innovation Award, Final Programme and High-Level Expert Panel

The leading global event on the renewable carbon economy from 22-24 September 2026 in Siegburg/Cologne (Germany) will showcase the latest advances and future prospects in bioeconomy, CCU and recycling for the defossilisation of chemicals and materials

Hürth, 11 June 2026: The Renewable Materials Conference (RMC) will once again be the outstanding international meeting place for innovators, companies and brands, investors and policymakers to come together to develop and shape the future renewable carbon economy. As in previous years, the conference organiser nova-Institute expects 400-500 participants from around the world.

This year's focus topic is "**Defossilisation through innovation**" and comprises the following subtopics: defossilisation of the chemical industry, fossil-free plastics, setting the frame for renewable carbon and biodegradation. The sessions are complemented by the high-level panel discussion "**Quadruple system shock as catalysts for industrial transformation**".

The final programme with speakers, titles and the agenda can be found here: www.renewable-materials.eu/program/

RMC 2026 covers the entire value chain from alternative carbon feedstocks, the chemical industry, the materials sector, product manufacturers to brand owners, as well as investors and policy makers. The last conference attracted 410 participants from 29 countries, 90 % of them from the industrial sector. In 2026, 75 presentations, 20 panel discussions, more than 16 workshops and a two-floor exhibition will offer comprehensive networking opportunities.

Detailed information on the conference can be found here: www.renewable-materials.eu

Watch the RMC video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=r68EeAd4T_k

Make use of the 10 % discount on the conference fee by registering until 16 August: www.renewable-materials.eu/registration/

Six Nominees for the Innovation Award “Renewable Material of the Year 2026”

The conference’s advisory board faced an exceptionally difficult task in selecting the six most promising materials from this year’s list of many excellent submissions for the innovation award “Renewable Material of the Year 2026”, which is sponsored by Covestro (DE). During the conference, the audience will elect the winner from the following six nominees:

AeoniQ Holding (CH): New Cellulosic Man-made Filament Yarn

AeoniQ™ is a revolutionary new cellulosic man-made filament yarn designed as viable alternative to polyester and nylon, retaining all of their positive physical attributes while eliminating their negative impacts. The fibre is made from renewable cellulose sources, such as wood pulp, textile waste or non-valorised agricultural waste. AeoniQ™ uses 100% renewable energy and has a 99.5% closed loop manufacturing process.

In addition to being environmentally sustainable, AeoniQ™ is also biodegradable, and has been confirmed to fully degrade within 12 weeks in soil at the end of its lifecycle. AeoniQ™ is suitable for performance, fashion, home textiles, automotive, and technical applications. The first blue print industrialised production plant will be up and running in Portugal in Q4/2026. <https://www.aeoniq.org>

Far Eastern New Century (TW): First Commercially Realised CO₂-based Non-Isocyanate Polyurethane

TOPGREEN® AirTek PU: As the world’s first commercially realised CO₂-based Non-Isocyanate Polyurethane (NIPU), this breakthrough transforms captured CO₂ into high-value elastomers while eliminating toxic phosgene and isocyanates.

Using Far Eastern Group’s advanced carbon-capture technology, industrial emissions are converted into intermediates with over 50% CO₂ content, and polymerised into NIPU elastomers, achieving permanent carbon fixation and a 58% reduction in emissions compared to traditional TPU.

TOPGREEN® AirTek PU delivers exceptional performance for membranes, shoe materials, elastic fibres, and artificial leather. Protected by 22 patents, TOPGREEN® AirTek PU has earned global recognition, including ISPO Textrends “Best Product” and Second Place in the Innovation Award “Best CO₂ Utilisation 2025.” <https://www.fenc.com/>

Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia (ES): Chitin Becomes Stronger in Water

AquaChitin is the first biomaterial shown to become stronger in water. Built from unmodified chitosan sourced from crustacean processing byproducts and urban organic waste streams, it replaces the plastic logic of isolation from the environment with a bidirectional relationship: Water enters and exits the material as part of a dynamic nickel-mediated network, increasing mechanical strength rather than degrading it. The result is a water-stable, biodegradable material platform for films, containers, and wet-use products, produced through water-based, zero-waste chemistry that recovers nickel. Because its biomolecular identity is preserved, AquaChitin is seamlessly integrated in Earth’s ecological cycles without special treatment, recovery infrastructure, or human intervention. <https://jgfermart.com/>

Kemira (FI): Renewable Polymer Technology for Wastewater Treatment

KemAlpha® is a breakthrough renewable polymer technology for wastewater treatment, enabling the replacement of fossil-based organic coagulants at industrial scale. Derived from alpha-glucan produced from renewable sugar feedstocks, KemAlpha is built entirely on biogenic carbon. Proprietary polymer design delivers the charge density, molecular weight and robustness required for efficient clarification and fine particle removal in demanding municipal and industrial systems. Supplied in liquid and powder

formats, KemAlpha integrates seamlessly into existing plants. Commercialised through a joint venture between IFF and Kemira, the technology has proven full-scale performance at a northern European dairy producer, demonstrating renewable materials deliver climate impact and reliability. <https://www.kemira.com/>

UPM Biochemicals (DE/FI): Bio-based Circular Renewable Black™

UPM Circular Renewable Black™ is the world's first bio-based, NIR-detectable, carbon-negative black pigment, enabling premium black plastic packaging that remains recyclable while improving sustainability performance without compromising aesthetics. Black plastic packaging has long challenged recycling because carbon black pigments block near-infrared (NIR) detection, making items invisible to sorting systems. Made from renewable lignin, it delivers a deep black while remaining NIR-detectable, enabling recyclable black packaging without compromising design or polymer performance. The feedstock is sourced from sustainably managed forests and supported by FSC™ (C210095), PEFC (04-31-3869) and ISCC PLUS certifications. The product is part of UPM's CO₂-negative solutions linked to its €1.3bn Leuna biorefinery. <https://www.upmbiochemicals.com/>

Viridi (UK): Anionic Surfactant Made Using Upcycled CO₂

Vireya™ is the world's first anionic surfactant made using upcycled CO₂. Anionic surfactants are ubiquitous in home and personal care but leave a heavy product carbon footprint. Containing up to 33% CO₂, Vireya™ shows a PCF up to 70% lower than the incumbents, supports compliance with the EU Deforestation Regulation by avoiding the use of oil palm derived materials, and provides the highest levels of skin mildness. It is all made possible by Viridi's unique proprietary catalyst technology that enables CO₂ to be utilised as a carbon feedstock in polymers. Their catalyst is readily scalable in existing chemical assets and is reuseable and recyclable. Vireya™ surfactants are being developed at major manufacturers and are on test at the biggest brand owners in the world. <https://www.viriditech.com>

Have a look at the winners from the previous conferences here: www.renewable-materials.eu/download/81003

Would you like to become a sponsor of the conference? Become exhibitor, perform a workshop? Or advertise in the conference journal? Gain all information here:

Sponsoring opportunities: www.renewable-materials.eu/sponsoring/

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Thanks to RMC Sponsors and Media Partners

The nova-Institute would like to thank UPM Biochemicals (FI) for supporting the conference as Platin Sponsor, Celluranics (CN), GS Biomats (CN), IFF (BE), Leaf Biotech (CN), L'Oreal (FR) and VERBIO (DE) as Gold Sponsors, as well as DIN CERTCO (DE), Peterson Solutions (DE) and TÜV Austria Belgium (BE) as Silver Sponsors. The innovation award "Renewable Material of the Year 2026" is sponsored by Covestro (DE).

The Renewable Materials Conference is supported by industry and trade associations, non-profit organisations, research institutions and interest groups that are thematically linked to the conference: AVK (DE), BCNP (DE), BIC - Bio-based Industries Consortium (EU), BioBase (AT), bündnis mikroplastikfrei (AT), C.A.R.M.E.N.(DE), ChemCologne (DE), ChemieClusterBayern (DE), CLIB (DE), CO2Value Europe (EU), European Bioplastics (EU), FECC - European Association of Chemical Distributors (EU), GO!PHA (International), IBB Netzwerk (DE), INAK (DE), kunststoffland NRW (DE), NRW.Energy4Climate (DE), ÖGUT - Österreichische Gesellschaft für Umwelt und Technik (AT), Plastics Europe (DE), Renewable Carbon Initiative (International).

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Since the mid-1990s, the nova-Institute has been dedicated to sustainability and today focuses primarily on renewable carbon cycles. As an independent research institute, it supports companies – particularly from the chemical, plastics, and materials industries – in the use of renewable carbon derived from biomass, direct CO₂ utilisation (CCU), and recycling.

With a multidisciplinary team of scientists, the nova-Institute participates in international innovation projects and provides science-based management consulting. The institute follows a holistic approach: its experts analyse which technologies and raw materials are suitable for specific products, in which markets their application is feasible, which regulatory frameworks apply, how sustainable the solutions are, and how they can be successfully positioned in the market.

Based on these analyses, the team develops tailored strategies to support the transformation from fossil to renewable carbon. Around 50 experts from various disciplines work together to drive the defossilisation of industry – for a climate-neutral future.

More information: www.nova-institute.eu – www.renewable-carbon.eu

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