

Repsol and Iberdrola leading research into using microalgae for energy
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The petroleum company, Repsol, and the electricity utility, Iberdrola, are focusing efforts on producing energy using microalgae.

Repsol has acquired a 20% stake in AlgaEnergy, a leading R & D company in microalgae research. This agreement complements and strengthens Repsol's research program for the production of next generation biofuels from algae, and its purchase of a stake in AlgaEnergy accelerates and diversifies Repsol's R & D strategy.

With this participation, Repsol will take part in a technology-based project of high quality to select, improve, cultivate and market various products derived from microalgae, including CO2 capture and fixing, and the production of biofuels from raw materials. Simultaneously, Repsol continues to develop alternative research projects in this field.

Repsol's 20% stake in AlgaEnergy was carried out by the Repsol New Energy unit. The company acquired 10% through a capital increase and the remaining 10% through direct purchase from AlgaEnergy's co-founder, Augusto Rodriguez-Villa. Repsol will actively cooperate with the company as a technology partner and will have two representatives on the Board of Directors.

Meanwhile, through the CENIT project (Innovation Project for the Promotion of Biodiesel in Spain) coordinated by Repsol, the company's research has revealed that using algae to produce fuel oils serves a dual purpose: They absorb carbon dioxide emissions and produce green energy without interfering with food crops, helping to combat two of the greatest challenges facing today's society.

Iberdrola joins forces with Repsol

Iberdrola is also working to develop new sustainable microalgae technologies as part of the CENIT programme.

The VIDA project (the Spanish acronym for advanced technologies in the integrated recovery of algae), spearheaded by Iberdrola to develop new microalgae-based energy technologies, among other objectives, has been selected in the sixth call for projects by Spain's Ministry of Science and Innovation as part of CENIT.

With a total investment of €20 million, this initiative aims to generate and create the knowledge and technology necessary to recover and fully harness algae in a sustainable way. Through its engineering subsidiary, the company's tasks will include selecting, cultivating and recovering microalgae for carbon capture and biofuel production.

IBERDROLA will conduct the VIDA project from this year until 2013 in conjunction with another 15 companies, including major corporations such as Repsol and other smaller state-of-the-art technology companies such as Alga Energy, and 25 research centres in 10 autonomous communities.

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