

# Newcastle biotech firm lands £490k funding to develop sustainable ingredients for cosmetics industry

A Newcastle biotech firm has secured significant funding to develop its work manufacturing sustainable ingredients for the cosmetics, personal care and pharmaceutical industries.

HexisLab, which is based in the Catalyst building at Newcastle Helix, has been awarded £490,000 from Innovate UK as part of a collaboration with Teesside University and BiBerChem Research. Together, they will develop HexisLab's research in creating environmentally friendly ingredients as alternatives to synthetic or animal-derived products.

The firm brings together scientific expertise and technology, including its artificial intelligent (AI) discovery platform, HexisPro.X, to create its own products and deliver contract research for global brands. Its process can rapidly identify novel sustainable ingredients, reducing the time and cost of developing a new product, particularly for the skincare industry.

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Dr. Olusola (Sola) Idowu, founder and CEO of HexisLab, said: "We are thrilled to have secured this funding from Innovate UK, which will enable us to further advance our research into sustainable ingredients using synthetic biology. This collaboration with Teesside University, led by associate professor Dr M. Safwan Akram, an expert in synthetic biology and BiBerChem Research, led by Prof Bernard Golding, a synthetic organic chemist, brings together our complementary

strengths and expertise, and we are excited to see the results of our joint efforts in this important area.”

Dr Akram, associate professor at the National Horizons Centre at Teesside University, said: “We are delighted to collaborate with HexisLab on this project, which has the potential to revolutionise the cosmetics and personal care industries, it is our moral responsibility to move towards achieving the goal of net zero. This project demonstrates the importance of collaboration between academia and industry to develop innovative solutions that can have a positive impact on society businesses and the environment.”

The money allocated by Innovate UK will be used to scale up HexisLab’s manufacturing processes.

Dr Idowu added: “This project will support the economic prosperity of the Tees Valley region, allowing us to realise our goals as a manufacturer of high-value materials and help power the circular bioeconomy for international exports. The global beauty and personal markets are expected to grow from \$483bn to \$784bn by 2025, with nearly 70% of consumers demanding tailored and sustainable green formulation products. We see a significant gap in the market for developing new products that meet the consumers’ needs without increasing the carbon cost and risk to the environment.”

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