

Press release | 10 March 2025

CBE JU PROJECT SUSTAINEXT BRINGS THE WORLD'S MOST INNOVATIVE BOTANIC EXTRACT PLANT TO THE SPANISH RURAL REGION OF EXTREMADURA

SUSTAINEXT is the first FLAGSHIP project funded by the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU) that aims to revolutionise the botanical extracts industry with a unique model that will serve as an inspiration for other biobased industries

Natac's current production plant will be transformed into the most modern, digital, innovative and sustainable plant extracts factory in the world, placing the company and the Extremadura region at the forefront of the sector at a global level while arousing the support of European, national, regional and local authorities

The SUSTAINEXT project, funded by the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU), gathered on March 5 representatives of European, national, regional and local authorities to show them the first progress in constructing the FLAGSHIP plant. This plant, which once completed is expected to industrially deploy a versatile and multi-product digital biorefinery with a NetZero Carbon ambition, is set to become the most innovative in the world within the botanical extracts sector and an inspiration for other biobased industries.

The circular and disruptive model that the pioneering 54-month project SUSTAINEXT proposes is based on the DYANA concept, i.e. a smart, dynamic and analytical biorefinery that integrates the entire supply chain, from feedstock to end users, and enables cascading feedstock valorisation that is optimized by batches based on the initial feedstock composition to deliver maximum value with the dual objective of zero waste and zero emissions.

The event, which offered the authorities a tour of Natac's current plant facilities, and the progress of the new plant's construction works, also served to unveil a commemorative plaque. It was attended, in addition to representatives of the 20 European entities that make up the consortium, and local public figures; by the executive director of the CBE JU, Nicolás Giacomuzzi-Moore; the commissioner for the Circular Economy at the Ministry for Ecological Transition, and the Demographic Challenge, Alejandro Dorado Nájera; and the President of the Regional Government of Extremadura, María Guardiola Martín, among other authorities.

Each one of them agreed in highlighting the importance of a project as SUSTAINEXT having chosen an agro livestock farming region such as Extremadura, with the benefit that this

implies both in terms of job creation and opportunities, unlocking new value chains and developing the industrial and innovation network in the region.

SUSTAINEXT will be deployed industrially with six European feedstocks of sustainable and local origin. Three medicinal and aromatic crops (rosemary, chamomile and lemon verbena) will be grown in Extremadura in disused tobacco fields as an alternative towards healthier crops, and also between solar panels, enhancing land use. In addition, three agro-industrial side-streams (olive, artichoke/cardoon and pomegranate) will show how biomass upcycling represents an opportunity to give new life to certain under-exploited biological raw materials.

The consortium is made up of 20 partners spread across Europe: [Natac](#), TABACOEX, [CTAEX](#), [BIOPLAT](#), [Enel Green Power España](#), [ARRAM Consultores](#), INPRALSA, [Biomasa Peninsular](#), [Consejo Regulador Denominación de Origen Protegida Torta del Casar](#), [NutraResearch](#), [FUNDECYT-PCTEX](#), [Endesa](#) and [IRIS Technology Solutions](#), all from Spain; [Enel Green Power](#), [Star Industriale](#), [ACEL Pharma](#) and [Università degli Studi di Torino](#), from Italy; [ECODESIGN Company GmbH](#), from Austria; [MIAVIT GmbH](#), from Germany and [Mibelle Biochemistry](#), from Switzerland.

Nicoló Giacomuzzi-Moore, CBE JU Executive Director, remarks: *"SUSTAINEXT shows the power of collaboration in the circular bioeconomy, transforming a visionary idea into a future groundbreaking biorefinery that will drive sustainability, innovation, and economic growth in the Extremadura region. This flagship project not only showcases Europe's leadership in bio-based industries but also creates new opportunities for rural regions through zero-waste, zero-emission solutions".*

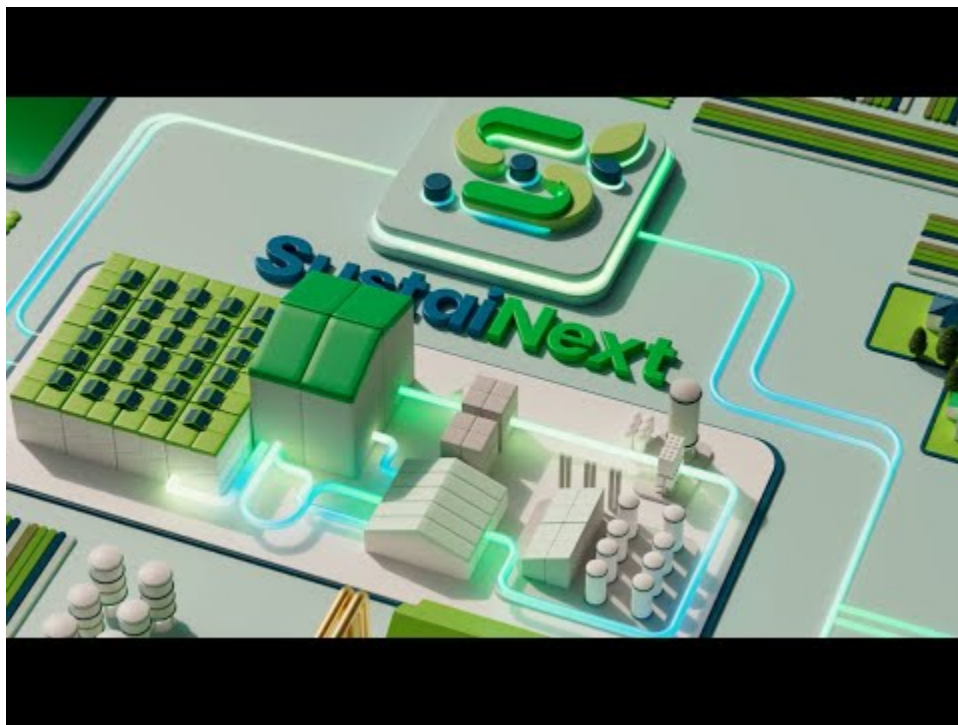
Alejandro Dorado, Commissioner for the Circular Economy of the Ministry for Ecological Transition, and the Demographic Challenge: *"Projects such as SUSTAINEXT show how the ecological transition, through decarbonisation, circularity or the conservation and restoration of ecosystems, is an agenda of opportunity. An environmental necessity, such as reducing the impacts of our unsustainable linear model of production and consumption, becomes an economic opportunity for the competitiveness of this region, for employment, for territorial cohesion and for the security of supply of other companies that are the backbone of the area, hand in hand with the circular economy. This virtuous link between minimization of environmental impacts, increased competitiveness, job creation and security of supply brought about by the circular economy is what makes it a priority for the Ministry and why we are promoting it".*

María Guardiola, President of the Regional Government of Extremadura: *"This is a pioneering project; we have a biorefinery that is transforming agricultural waste into high value-added compounds. It is an example of this new economic model in our region. Where before we only saw raw materials with practically no use, today we see innovation, science and qualified employment. Natac could have chosen anywhere, but it has chosen Extremadura and for that, we are very proud. Because Extremadura offers everything a company needs to grow".*

SUSTAINEXT's Introductory /Conceptual video

The event held on March 5 also served to officially launch the first video of the SUSTAINEXT project. Using the most advanced 3D animation techniques, the conceptual/introductory video summarizes in a couple of minutes the essence and scope of the project and the added value it represents, both at the European level, as a role model for the rest of the bio-based industries, and at the national and local level, revitalizing the rural area where its flagship plant is located.

The video, already available on YouTube and the project's social media, becomes the most sophisticated communication and dissemination tool in the hands of SUSTAINEXT's partners.



SUSTAINEXT's Introductory /Conceptual video.



The members of the consortium pose with Nicol  Giacomuzzi-Moore and other CBE JU representatives.



CBE JU Executive Director, Nicol  Giacomuzzi-Moore, during his speech at the institutional event.



Commemorative plaque in front of the construction works of the new flagship plant.

MEDIA CONTACT

Project Coordinators

Natac

José M^o Pinilla – jmpinilla@natacgroup.com

Alba María Ramos – aramos@natacgroup.com

Communication Manager

BIOPLAT – Spanish Biocircularity Technology and Innovation Platform

Margarita de Gregorio – com@bioplat.org

+34 629 485 629