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Cellulose Valley: Accelerating the Shift to Sustainable, High-Performance Packaging in Europe

With the launch of its **2026–2030 cycle**, the **Cellulose Valley industrial research chair** is entering a new phase to **accelerate the development and industrialization of low carbon, cellulose-based packaging solutions**, in direct response to evolving **European regulations (SUP, PPWR)**. Renewed for **five additional years**, the chair is led by the **Grenoble INP Foundation** and builds on the concrete results achieved since its creation in 2021.

Cellulose Valley develops **recyclable, bio-based alternatives to plastic packaging,** leveraging the expertise of the **LGP2 laboratory*** and **Grenoble INP – Pagora, UGA**, two leading European references in cellulosic materials. The chair brings together a **unique industrial ecosystem covering the entire packaging value chain**, with partners including **Ahlstrom, Aptar, Chanel, Citeo, Decathlon and DS Smith**, and new contributors such as **ANDRITZ, Fibre Excellence and the Centre Technique du Papier (CTP)**.

“Cellulose offers a natural, renewable and recyclable alternative to plastics. The technical challenges are real, and only close collaboration between researchers and industry can deliver high-performance, industrially viable solutions,” emphasizes **Erkki Laiti** (Ahlstrom), Chairman of the Chair’s Scientific Board.

The new cycle focuses on solving **key industrial challenges**: improving **barrier properties** (water, grease, oxygen), **replacing PFAS**, ensuring **food-contact safety**, enhancing **recyclability in line with PPWR requirements**, lightweighting structures, and developing **innovative processes for molded cellulose and 3D materials**. The ambition is clear: **to move from laboratory breakthroughs to industrial demonstrators and market-ready solutions.**
Since 2021, Cellulose Valley has delivered **over 30 proof-of-concept projects**, many already tested on **pilot lines or under industrial conditions**, addressing high-impact sectors such as **food, luxury and sports**. Each year, around **40 projects** mobilize researchers, PhD students and R&D engineers at the interface of **research excellence, training and industrial innovation**.

By structuring a **European cellulosic packaging value chain**, Cellulose Valley aims to position **cellulose as a credible, high-performance alternative to plastics**, and to contribute to Europe’s leadership in **responsible and sustainable packaging**.

* CNRS / UGA / Grenoble INP - UGA

About

Launched in November 2021 and renewed in January 2026, the **Cellulose Valley Chair** has established itself as a **leading player in Europe** in the development of cellulose-based packaging materials. Supported by the **Grenoble INP Foundation** and hosted by the **LGP2 laboratory** and **Grenoble INP – Pagora, UGA**, it brings together a **unique industrial and academic ecosystem** covering the entire packaging value chain.

Its mission: **to accelerate the scaling up of cellulose-based solutions** capable of matching the properties of conventional plastics to meet growing demands for **performance, recyclability, and safety**, within a rapidly evolving regulatory landscape.

Supported since its inception by its **founding sponsors — Ahlstrom, Aptar, CHANEL Parfums Beauté, Citeo, Decathlon, DS Smith, Guillin, and Marie** — and strengthened by the addition of new industrial and technical partners such as **ANDRITZ, the Centre Technique du Papier (CTP), and Fibre Excellence**, the chair is now embarking on a **new phase of development.**

The **round of partner funding is currently being finalized**, offering long-standing partners the opportunity to **confirm their commitments** and allowing **new sponsors** to join a high-impact collective effort.

At the intersection of **cutting-edge research, excellence in education, and industrial innovation**, Cellulose Valley aims to **establish a strategic sector on a European scale** and make a lasting contribution to positioning Europe as a **leader in responsible packaging.**

Co-authors: **Julien Bras**, Professor at Grenoble INP - UGA and Researcher at LGP2; **Candice Rey**, Research Engineer at LGP2; and **Jérémie Viguié**, Research Engineer at LGP2

Learn more: https://fondation-grenoble-inp.fr/en/nos-actions/cellulose-valley/

Since 2010, the **Grenoble INP Foundation** has supported the development of the **8 schools, 41 laboratories, and 8,200 engineering and management students at Grenoble INP – UGA**, the Institute of Engineering and Management at the University of Grenoble Alpes.

Driven by a community of **more than 340 patrons and donors**, it supports and accelerates ambitious scientific, educational, and societal projects to strengthen the region's academic and technological excellence, both in France and internationally.

Thanks to **€22 million** in mobilized sponsorship, the Foundation has established **19 chairs of industrial excellence**, supported over **1,260 scholarships, 36 honor loans, as well as 159 student and student-led projects,** representing over **€3.54 million in direct aid.**

It brings together students, researchers, and companies around a shared ambition: to **put science and innovation at the service of a sustainable world.**

Learn more: https://fondation-grenoble-inp.fr/en/

About

Specializing in bio-based materials, paper, and print media, Grenoble INP – Pagora, UGA, a public engineering school, offers undergraduate and master's degree programs—both traditional and apprenticeship-based—with the support of major players in industry and research in France and internationally.

One of the eight engineering and management schools at Grenoble INP, the Institute of Engineering and Management at the University of Grenoble Alpes, Grenoble INP – Pagora, has been dedicated since its inception to the themes of sustainable development and plant chemistry. It **trains future professionals in sectors related to paper, printing, packaging, and bio-based materials** to become the leaders of tomorrow, capable of addressing environmental challenges. As a partner of universities in Europe and North America and a member of international networks, Grenoble INP – Pagora encourages international mobility through internships and semesters abroad, enabling students to develop their ability to work in an international context. The school also has its own research center, the Laboratory of Process Engineering for Biorefinery, Bio-based Materials, and Functional Printing (LGP2), under the supervision of the CNRS, Grenoble INP – UGA, and Agefpi. The LGP2 is composed of French and international researchers and doctoral students conducting research on nanocellulose, the valorization of plant biomass, and printing processes for surface functionalization.

Learn more: https://pagora.grenoble-inp.fr/en

The LGP2 - Laboratory of Process Engineering for Biorefineries, Bio-based Materials, and Functional Printing, conducts innovative research to address economic and societal expectations regarding sustainable development (green chemistry, biorefineries, clean processes, recycling, bio-based materials, renewable energy) and traceability and safety (functional materials, smart papers and packaging, printed electronics, 3D printing). Certified for Quality, Safety, and the Environment, this joint research unit (UMR 5518) brings together the CNRS and the University of Grenoble Alpes (supervising institutions), Grenoble INP (associated supervising institution), and Agefpi (private partner).

Find the latest news from LGP2 at the address below:
https://lgp2.grenoble-inp.fr/en