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Green Biologics strikes deals in China

By Fiona Harvey, Environment Correspondent

A small UK company is to roll out advanced biofuel technology in China, where investment in [green know-how](#) is increasing rapidly.

Green Biologics, an unlisted company, has signed deals with two Chinese biochemical businesses – Guangxi Jinyuan Biochemical and Lianyungang Union of Chemicals.

Under the deals – expected to be worth about £10m (\$15m) over the next five years or more – fermentation technology from Green Biologics will be used in existing production facilities in China to produce biobutanol.

Biobutanol can be used as a substitute for petroleum-based n-butanol, a chemical used in the production of polymers and plastics, and as a solvent in paint. It can serve as a biofuel to replace petrol and is greener than alternatives such as ethanol because it is made from waste and byproducts rather than food products.

Green Biologics has been working in China for three years. Its deals were struck in conjunction with China-UK Low Carbon Enterprise, a venture backed by the UK's Carbon Trust, a government-funded body charged with helping businesses cut their greenhouse gas emissions.

Sean Sutcliffe, chief executive of Green Biologics, said: “[The Chinese partners] can provide a platform for the introduction of the next generation of our technology, which will see the roll-out of biobutanol as a low-cost advanced biofuel derived from sustainable feedstocks.”

He added: “The business approach in China complements our global strategy of offering technology for the retrofit of ethanol production plants so they can be turned into more profitable biobutanol facilities, and of offering advanced biobutanol plant designs and technology.”

Green Biologics, which was founded in 2004, has developed microbial fermentation technology that enables waste and agricultural by-products to be turned into high-value chemicals and fuels. It has received backing from the Carbon Trust, and a variety of venture capital companies including Oxford Capital Partners, Morningside Group, and Capricorn Venture Partners. The non-executive chairman of Green Biologics is Andrew Rickman, founder and chief executive of Bookham, the communications technology company, now known as Oclaro after a merger with Avanex last year.