

TESS: Supplying SMEs with renewable building block information

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The European Commission outlined and accepted a new strategy to ensure the highest level of safety for chemicals through a system for the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals – the REACH regulation. The main objectives are to protect the human and animal health and the environment, as well as to increase overall transparency related to the production and use of chemicals.

The Specialty Chemicals Manufacturing SMEs Toolbox to Support Environmental and Sustainable Systems (TESS) project is intended to support European Speciality and Fine Chemicals Sector SMEs in moving to more sustainable supply chains by providing low cost advice and methodologies. The ultimate goal of the project is to develop an online interactive toolbox enabling SMEs to identify gaps in their current level of use of sustainable building blocks when moving to a bio-based economy.

The TESS project relies on a collaboration of 18 partners. Ghent University (BE) and the University of York (UK) are the research partners aiming at promotion of renewable building blocks. The main issues of the work are development of a methodology for seeking substitutes using acceptability criteria based on inherent properties, sustainability, cost & environmental impact and toxicity of chemicals; further, the development of flow charts for incorporation into the Toolbox for identification of substitutes for groups of chemicals under pressure, identification of suitable substitutes and using environmentally benign chemical modifications to obtain them and deployment of a life-cycle approach to help identify candidate substitutes derived from renewable resources.