

## **Press release: NanoforumEULA catalyses EU-Mexican-Latin American nanotech cooperation**

Utrecht, 4 September 2007. The EU funded project NanoforumEULA brought together researchers, industrialists and policy makers from Europe, Mexico and other Latin American countries in a fact finding mission along nanotechnology research organizations in Saltillo, Leon/Guanajuato, San Luis Potosi and Mexico-City, from 24 to 30 August 2007. In some 90 presentations, nanotechnology research and interest in future collaborations was explored in Mexican, European and Latin American universities, research centres and companies. 200-300 people attended at least one of the events during the fact finding mission. Round table discussions explored the key challenges to be addressed, in order to focus the available resources on the needs of the Mexican research community and broader society.

During the mission, Peter Versteeg, the Political and Cooperation Counsellor of the representation of the European Union in Mexico announced a €20 million European-Mexican nanotechnology research fund, to which both the EU and the Mexican government will contribute half. This agreement will be signed before end of 2007. Furthermore, Mexican as well as other Latin American researchers can participate in all EU funded projects under the European Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technology Development. Under this Framework Programme, €475 million euros are dedicated to research in nanotechnologies, materials and production processes in the period 2007-2013. European researchers looking for partners in Mexico can benefit from the full report of the mission reviewing Mexico's nanoresearch and a who's who identifying potential partners which will be published soon at the NanoforumEULA website [www.nanoforumEULA.eu](http://www.nanoforumEULA.eu).

### **Mexican research strengths and weaknesses**

Many Mexican nanotechnology research groups demonstrate good quality research, and are well equipped. Nanoscience and nanotechnology research takes place in most Mexican states, but there are particular strengths in the states Coahuila and Nuevo Leon in the North, Guanajuato and San Luis Potosi in the Middle, and Mexico State in and around Mexico City.

There is excellence in silver, gold and other metallic, oxide and mineral nanomaterials, plastics and composites, nanotubes and related materials and applications. A national nanoelectronics lab is being built in Puebla, south of Mexico City.

The scientific community is working hard to build new nanotechnology research networks. Metrology and standardization of nanotechnologies as well as potential risks of nanomaterials are a concern of the standardization institute CENAM. The Universidad de las Americas de Puebla (UDLA) is the first to offer a nanotechnology bachelors education curriculum, since 2006. Social and human scientists collaborating in the RELANS network are also interested in the economic, societal and environmental aspects of nanotechnology, and advocating broad interdisciplinary nanotechnology cooperation including natural as well as social researchers.

Main weaknesses include the lack of networking and coordination between researchers and the lack of investment in R&D in industry, as well as academic-industrial research relations. Until now, several dozens of nanotechnology patents have been registered in Mexico, including only 12 by Mexican innovators. The patenting organization IMPI is stimulating

awareness among the country's scientific and industrial research community about the need and ways to protect inventions.

### **Industrial interest**

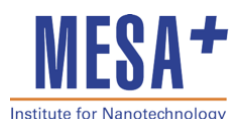
Several large and small companies in Mexico are interested in innovation using nanotechnology research results. The companies Peñoles (mining), Coyotefoods Biopolymer and Biotechnology and Palau Bioquim (life sciences), Nemak de Mexico (automotive components), Nanosoluciones (innovation support consultancy), Meccano de Mexico and Interplan (low cost housing), MABE Electrodomestics, A Shulman de Mexico (plastics and composites), CEMEX (cement), and FEI Company (research instruments) presented their nanotechnology research interests.

### **Societal needs**

Especially in poorer rural areas, there is a great need for innovative water treatment technologies where nanotechnology can play a role, according to the Mexican Institute of Water Technology IMTA. Several building and construction companies are interested in using nanotechnologies for innovative cheap housing. The national Oil industry PEMEX may benefit from new nanomaterials and devices for improving its oil production and refining activities. Mexico can benefit most from developing products based on the countries rich resources of Silver, Gold and other metallic, oxide or mineral nanomaterials, and bionanotechnology products based on cactuses and other biodiversity products. Furthermore materials and devices for solar photovoltaics and fuel cells is a key topic of interest. The Ministry of Economy is currently developing a national nanotechnology strategy, which will be finalized beginning of 2008. Identifying niches for Mexican nanotechnology development is the next task to tackle in this process.

### **About NANOFORUMEULA**

This Specific Support Action Nanoforum EU Latin America is funded by the European Union under the Sixth EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development; Nanotechnologies and Nanosciences, Knowledge Based Multifunctional Materials and New Production Processes and Devices (FP6, NMP). See <http://cordis.europa.eu/nanotechnology>. The project aims to foster lasting research relations between European research organisations and research organisations in Latin America specialising in nanotechnology. Exchange visits for some twenty Latin American researchers to four European research organisations specialising in nanotechnology (MESA+ institute, University of Twente, Netherlands; MINATEC, Grenoble, France, Fraunhofer Institute for Materials and Beam Technology, Dresden, Germany and Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Spain are being subsidised. Two workshops and subsequent fact finding missions are being organised in Mexico and Brazil enabling European researchers and industrialists to identify opportunities for establishing working relations. The project has a budget of €500,000 and lasts 18 months (1-12-2006 to 31-5-2008). Check the website for updates: [www.nanoforumela.eu](http://www.nanoforumela.eu) or contact Ineke Malsch: [postbus@malsch.demon.nl](mailto:postbus@malsch.demon.nl)



**Malsch**  
**Techno**  
**Valuation**



Ministry of Development, Industry  
and Foreign Trade

