

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Option Agreement between the University of Michigan and Ecovia Renewables LLC

Action Requested: Approval of Option Agreement

Preamble:

A statutory conflict of interest situation was identified by the Office of Technology Transfer while reviewing the technology transfer agreement that then triggered a review by the UMOR Conflict of Interest Review Committee. A plan for management of the possible risks associated with the conflict of interest was then developed and approved by this Committee and agreed to by the parties involved in this plan.

This proposed option agreement ("Agreement") falls under the State of Michigan Conflict of Interest Statute because Professor Xiaoxia (Nina) Lin and Dr. Jeremy Minty are both employees of the University of Michigan ("University") and partial owners of Ecovia Renewables LLC. The law permits such an Agreement provided it is disclosed to the Board of Regents ("Regents") of the University of Michigan and approved in advance by a 2/3 vote.

Background:

Dr. Xiaoxia (Nina) Lin, a Professor in Chemical Engineering, and Dr. Jeremy Minty, a Research Fellow in Chemical Engineering, are the partial owners of a for-profit company called Ecovia Renewables LLC (the "Company"). The Company was formed recently to commercialize gamma-polyglutamic acid generated from microbial processes and desires to option from the University of Michigan the University's rights associated with the following technology:

UM OTT File No. 6244, entitled: "Co-Cultures for Producing Poly-Glutamic Acid (PGA)" (Inventors: Jeremy Minty, Xiaoxia (Nina) Lin, Marc Singer)

The Office of Technology Transfer selected the Company as a University partner and negotiated the terms of the proposed Agreement in accordance with University policy and its accepted licensing principles.

Parties to the Agreement:

The Regents of the University of Michigan and Ecovia Renewables LLC.

Agreement Terms Include:

Agreement terms include granting the Company an option to obtain an exclusive license with the right to grant sublicenses. The Company will pay an option fee and reimburse patent costs.

The University will retain ownership of the optioned technology and may continue to further develop it and use it internally. No use of University services or facilities, nor any assignment of University employees, is obligated or contemplated under the Agreement. Standard disclaimers of warranties and indemnification apply, and the Agreement may be amended by consent of the parties, such as adding related technology. University procedures for approval of these changes will be followed and additional conflict of interest review will be done as appropriate.

Pecuniary Interest:

The pecuniary interests of Dr. Xiaoxia (Nina) Lin and Dr. Jeremy Minty arise from their ownership interest in Ecovia Renewables LLC.


Net Effect:

The Office of Technology Transfer has negotiated and finalized the terms of an option agreement for patents related to UM OTT File No. 6436 for all fields of use. Ecovia Renewables LLC will obtain use and commercialization rights to the above listed University technology.

Recommendations:

This matter has been reviewed and approved by the UMOR Conflict of Interest Review Committee. In light of this disclosure and our finding that the Agreement was negotiated in conformance with standard University practices, I recommend that the Board of Regents approve the Agreement between the University and Ecovia Renewables LLC.

Respectfully submitted,



S. Jack Hu  
Interim Vice President for Research

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