27/Mar/2017 - **The BioBase4SME project** (co-financed by Interreg NWE)**, offering bio-innovation support for SMEs, herewith proudly announces its** Natural Fibertastic Workshop **hosted at the Natural Fiber Application Center (NAC, The Netherlands) on April 5th, 2017.**

The theme of the day is natural fiber application development focusing on thermoplastic composites. Delegates will benefit from an update on application advances, inspiration for new developments and gain experience from knowledge exchange between entrepreneurs through networking in a first-class atmosphere. The workshop will be a good opportunity to learn about the services NAC offers and how they can be accessed by SMEs via fully funded BioBase4SME Innovation Coupons worth 4000 €.

In 2014, the Natural Fibre Application Centre was founded to develop new business chains on a pilot scale (100 kg) in the areas of the development of paper and board recipes and thermoplastic composites. NAC is equipped for biomass treatment* and paper/board experiments on lab scale*. Likewise, NAC offers technologies for paper making* and for physical and mechanical testing*. Finally, NAC owns a pilot paper machine, unique in the Benelux, that can produce small paper rolls of 30 cm width and 25 kg. Besides processing wet biomass, investments were made to obtain dry fibres applications for the bio composite market with e.g. a pilot scale compounder (20-70 kg/h).

During the workshop at NAC, SMEs can visit the center, learn about other SMEs active in the natural fibers sector and get the opportunity to promote their technology at the technology market. Furthermore, the workshop will provide information on the **BioBase4SME innovation coupon** scheme and other support mechanisms the project offers to SMEs innovating in the biobased economy.

Stapper Duurzaam Advies (SDA), a Dutch company developing indoor biobased construction material for fairs and exhibitions was recently granted a **BioBase4SME Innovation Coupon** for performing application testing at NAC.

Esther Stapper, director of SDA testifies on how the coupon brought her innovation closer to the market:

“During the cooperation with the Natural Fiber Application Center I entered an environment

with a high innovating DNA in which all employees thought along and surprised me with their creative solutions. The collaboration enabled us to enter into the next phase of our biobased development."

The BioBase4SME network, representing leading bio-based economy experts, support SMEs and start-ups across North-West Europe on how to develop new ideas into marketable products. The BioBase4SME expert network organises workshops on specific topics, diverse training events and an innovation bio-camp. Furthermore, SMEs and start-ups can apply for **bio-innovation coupons** with a value up to €100.000 when looking for technical (process development, scale-up…) and non-technical support (LCA, application testing, market research, business plan coaching, social acceptance…). For more information on the project: www.nweurope.eu/BioBase4SME .

For more information on the workshop and registration: http://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/bio-innovation-support-for-entrepreneurs-throughout-nwe-regions/events/ or contact Roel Koevoets, tel: +31 (0)6Â 226Â 639 34, r.koevoets@rewin.nl .

** grinding, wet refining, fractionation and compacting • pulp and fiber testing: zeta potential, cationic demand, Schopper Riegler, consistency, microscopic fiber analysis and fiber distribution by Clarck method • technologies for paper making: hand sheets, Rapid Köthen lab scale, size press sheets and rolls •*
physical and mechanical testing: tensile strength, roughness, grammage, thickness, porosity, Cobb and printability.