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From Lab to Commercialization

Thesis Chemistry partners with EPC firm to build first biorefinery

By [Bryan Sims](#) | July 25, 2011

Deploying technology from the laboratory to demonstration- or commercial-scale can be a challenge for any emerging biorefining firm, but Thesis Chemistry is finding that, with determination and calculated haste, the process is achievable. The Ohio-based biotechnology firm selected Smet Construction Services as its design/build partner for the construction of its future commercial biobased chemical biorefineries.

According to Chris Forslund, CEO of Thesis Chemistry, partnering with Smet was an ideal choice for his company because of Smet's proven track record of executing large industrial projects.

"That's a key for not just for a stand-alone biorefinery," Forslund says, "but also [Smet] is a partner we can look to for the long-term as we build our first biorefinery and also subsequent facilities thereafter."

Since 2007, Thesis Chemistry invested in the development of cutting-edge technologies that allow for the conversion of lignocellulosic biomass into biobased chemicals, such as benzenes, phenols and creosols that can be used in the pharmaceutical, agribusiness, fragrance, plastics and food production industries.

According to Forslund, Thesis Chemistry is conducting its due diligence of site selection for its first biorefinery, and a site should be officially identified later this year. The facility is projected to come online in 2013 with an estimated annual chemical output of about 2,500 tons once it achieves full production by 2014, he says.

—*Bryan Sims*



Fine Tuning: Concentrations of crude oxo-aromatic products undergo testing at Thesis Chemistry's laboratory in Cambridge, Ontario, Canada.

PHOTO: THESIS CHEMISTRY