

Greenhouse gas 'coup' at Bangor

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A NEW facility at Bangor University will revolutionise the way greenhouse gases are utilised by business.

The BioComposites Centre, which specialises in the research, development and commercial application of bio-based alternatives to synthetic materials in manufacturing and industry, has taken a crucial step towards developing the wider use of sustainable green solvents, such as supercritical carbon dioxide.

The element could serve as a replacement for conventional solvents used by the chemical industry, such as acetone, hexane and dichloromethane, in the future.

The latest investment of £345,000, from the Welsh Government's European Funded Academic Expertise for Business (A4B) programme into new equipment makes the university's facility unique in the UK in terms of flexibility of operation and scale, and will offer businesses a testing capability from laboratory through to pilot scale.

It will be working to develop strong links and collaborative partnerships with a range of companies from Welsh SMEs to major multinational organisations, with access to research and development capabilities that will support this emerging sector in Wales.

Business Minister Edwina Hart, said: "This innovative project is another example of how our Academic Expertise for Business programme is unlocking the commercial potential of Wales' higher and further education institutions.

"I am determined to see our academic institutions make the most of



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their knowledge and expertise to benefit the Welsh economy."

The new equipment will provide a unique opportunity for Bangor to develop the wider use of sustainable, green solvents such as supercritical CO₂ that will boost the confidence of companies, in working with this

type of technology.

This will allow them to carry out large-scale extraction trials, and help to attract more commercial support for projects, encouraging funding of near-market and applied research.

Dr Adam Charlton from the BioComposites Centre described re-

cent developments as a "major step" towards something special and unique that will place Wales "at the forefront of innovation".

He added: "This new facility is a real coup for Wales and the opportunities it will present to industry are great."