

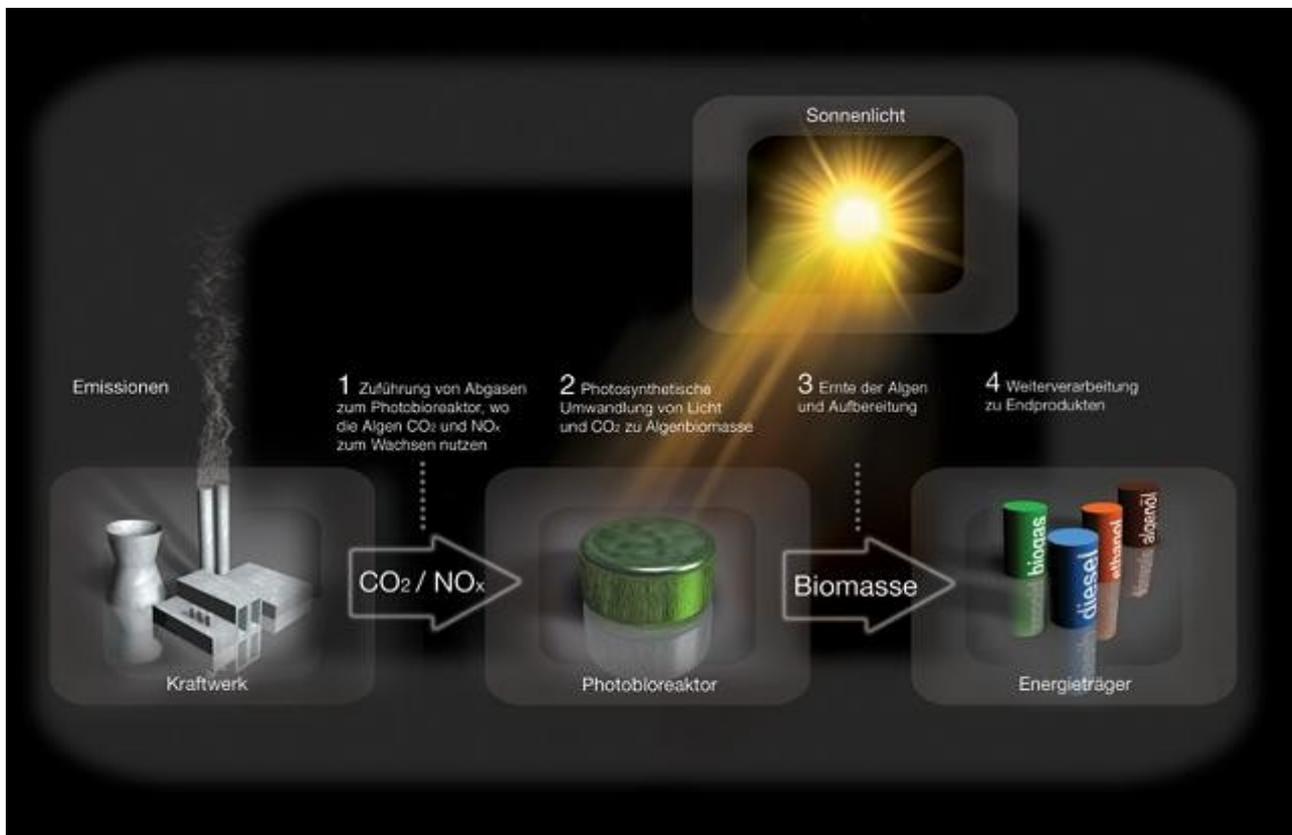
Hezinger Algaetec: Bio-diesel should soon become cheaper

The Kornwestheim-based system exporter Hezinger GmbH wants to act in future as a global supplier of photobioreactors for the breeding of algae, in order to promote the extraction of biofuels from the vegetable oil of algae as an alternative to the use of wheat, rapeseed and maize. In cooperation with renowned partners, a process-optimised reactor plant for the mass breeding of algae has been developed that will significantly reduce the costs of the manufacture of bio-diesel. Hezinger Algaetec GmbH, founded at the end of last year, intends to bring the new system onto the market in the coming autumn.

System export, motor racing marketing and now renewable energies – the entrepreneurial spirit of Steffen Hezinger, Managing Director of Hezinger GmbH Plant Export from Kornwestheim near Stuttgart, appears to be unlimited. For his latest project, in which everything revolves around the breeding of algae for the manufacture of bio-diesel, the motto is: ‘Production of biomass not on a laboratory scale, but on a grand scale’.

“Our goal is to make the industrial breeding of micro-algae significantly cheaper than has been possible up to now,” says Steffen Hezinger. Although algae can be bred using current systems, such as tube or flat-plate reactors, the economic quantities necessary for the manufacture of bio-diesel cannot yet be achieved. “If I have to fill 40 football pitches with reactors, then the system is simply not efficient to operate. Profitability is indispensable if I want to achieve long-term success in the bio-diesel market.”

Hezinger Algaetec GmbH banks on mass breeding of algae.



Conversion of carbon dioxide to biomass
 © Hezinger Algaetec GmbH

In his search for an efficient solution, the business graduate is therefore banking on concentrated competence in the fields of plant construction, design and lighting technology. To this end he has brought internationally-renowned and global market-leading partners in the fields of algal biology and system planning on board. He found support for market research and staff recruitment at BioRegion STERN Management GmbH. The result of the cross-industry cooperation is a photobioreactor with which production areas can be utilised not only horizontally, but also vertically. The core idea is to bring light into the system and to the algae, instead of the other way around. Steffen Hezinger admits that the idea is not really new, but the decisive point is the process optimisation. "The key factor is the innovative lighting technology that makes it possible to operate a reactor with a height of six metres and an internal diameter of 30 metres virtually without external energy."

Hezinger Algaetec GmbH cannot provide exact figures at the present time, but the prototype test under series conditions was successful; meaningful results are expected from the middle of the year onwards. A decision will then be made as to how Hezinger Algaetec will continue: both the raising of external capital and a strategic cooperation are conceivable according to Steffen Hezinger. In the long run he is aiming to offer entire reactor systems to cover everything from the breeding of algae and the utilisation of biomass from algae to the finished product bio-diesel. Consideration is already being given in Kornwestheim to cooperations with companies offering appropriate peripheral systems.

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Renewable energy from Kornwestheim
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