



Session 1	Start-ups/SMEs looking for finance - pre-seed/angel/seed funding
Pitch Title	Vegan melanin for your sunscreen
Company	Oxyco
Speaker	Simone Savino
Keywords feedstock	Agriwaste
Keywords technology	Biofermentation
Keywords End-Product	Melanin
Amount investment needed	250k

Abstract:

Sun protection is fundamental to reducing skin ageing and improving skin health. While more people are becoming aware of this, concerns have been raised about traditional UV filters, often damaging both to us and to the marine environment.

The development of novel UV filters is a process many companies are already undertaking, but it requires time, as the molecules must meet both safety and performance requirements. A much better option would be to make use of an existing molecule that is a natural UV filter present in living organisms. Luckily this molecule already exists and is present in our own skin: we are talking about melanin. As a naturally occurring black polymer produced by cells (especially upon sun exposure) and responsible for tanning, melanin combines the properties of a sun protection factor (SPF) with the maximum level of biocompatibility and biodegradability. This is an ideal solution to protect our skin and do not harm the environment.

At Oxyco we produce melanin via biofermentation, using our proprietary bacterial enzymes to synthesise a pure, completely vegan molecule, which can be produced from different carbon sources and is scalable. What is more important, since we do not use animal material or chemical synthesis, we are not only more sustainable, but also more affordable than other alternatives. Indeed we can finally produce melanin at a price fitting the sun care market, unlocking its huge potential in sun protection.

