

AER Sustainable Energy



Position:

Head of Business Development

February 2012

AER Sustainable Energy Ltd (www.aer.ie) is a dynamic Irish industrial biotech company. Through partnerships with leading global energy and chemicals players, we are commercialising a unique enzyme technology which has an important role to play in reducing production costs and unlocking new markets in biofuels and human nutrition. Ours is a start-up culture where flexibility, innovative thinking and dedication to results will be well rewarded.

Established in 2010 as a spin-out of the highly successful Irish fuel ethanol supplier Alternative Energy Resources Ltd, AER has assembled an experienced management team drawn from the energy, food and biotech sectors. The business is strongly capitalised, and will shortly close a follow-on funding round led by the AIB Seed Capital Venture Fund and supported by Enterprise Ireland and leading Irish high-net-worth individuals. The company was awarded High Potential Start Up status by Enterprise Ireland in 2010.

AER has strong research links to the School of Natural Sciences at NUI Galway. It has established R&D relationships with leading global companies in the energy and food sectors to take forward its commercialisation programme. The business is headquartered at the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT) in Dublin, Ireland.

Business overview

AER is commercialising a disruptive technology to extract biofuels and food products from algae in a low-cost, scalable way. Algae are aquatic plants such as seaweed and phytoplankton. Some algae species are rich in sugars and oils. These sugars and oils can be extracted and refined to make biofuels and food products. Traditional extraction methods use harsh chemical treatments, which are expensive, energy-intensive and produce toxic waste materials.

AER has proprietary enzyme technology, originally developed at the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG). These enzymes are the active ingredient which enables a new biochemical extraction process for algae. The AER-enabled process disruptively improves production economics for algae processors, while greatly improving environmental sustainability. Crucially, AER's technology is uniquely placed to deliver the disruptive reduction in processing costs required, for algae biofuels to achieve cost parity with other fuels.

AER's enzyme technology will be embedded directly in the production processes of its customers. Enzyme development is carried out by AER's technical team, through co-funded partnerships with major customers in the energy and food sectors. Manufacturing is subcontracted to a third-party 'toll' manufacturer.

AER's promoters include some of Ireland's leading entrepreneurs, with an exceptional track record of success in energy, aviation and hi-tech.

Market context

The international biofuels market in which AER operates has experienced explosive growth in recent years, growing at an annual compound rate of 14%. The factors driving this growth are strengthening, with high oil prices, environmental concerns, government regulations and technology advances expected to support continued strong growth in the market through 2020 and beyond.

The AER team has a proven track record of commercial success in the market for first-generation biofuels. AER is now building on its unique proprietary technology platform, to capture an even bigger opportunity in the emerging market for next-generation biofuels.

What are next-generation biofuels?

Next-generation biofuels offer the exciting prospect of ultimately providing 50% of the world's demand for transport fuel from abundant, low cost and sustainable sources of feedstock.

Current sources of biofuel are derived from food crops such as sugar cane, grain and oil seeds. These fuels create less harmful emissions and provide more energy output per unit of energy consumed than fossil fuels. However, increased use of food crops for biofuel production has inevitably led to pressure on global food supplies.

Next-generation biofuels use non-food crops as a feedstock. Materials with cellulosic and lipid content such as wood, waste and algae provide a feedstock that can be sourced at low cost and converted to biofuel. Next-generation biofuels can provide a truly sustainable platform for replacing fossil fuel consumption on a global scale, which does not require the use of land and fresh water resources currently used for food production.

The challenge now is to scale next-generation biofuel technology to commercial production volumes. AER provides a key enabling technology to meet this challenge.

Role Description: Head of Business Development

Overview

This is a rare & exciting opportunity for an experienced Business Development professional to join the team at a critical early stage in the company's development.

As a key member of our team, you will report directly to the CEO.

Your focus will be to build strong and lasting commercial relationships with global customers in the energy and food sectors, based on sharing the value created through the use of AER's technology in their production process. You will have primary responsibility for leading all revenue-generating activities with existing customers, and winning new customers.

You will also work closely with the CEO, CSO, Board of Directors and industrial partners to shape the company's product development and go-to-market strategies. You will continuously evaluate changing market conditions and position the business to take advantage of new opportunities as they emerge. You will maximise the commercial value of the company's assets through negotiation of joint R&D, technology licensing and product supply agreements with customers. The role will involve extensive travel.

The Head of Business Development must be able to:

- Influence customers to develop long-term partnerships with AER, which create value for both parties
- Identify new commercial opportunities by listening to customer needs & translating requirements into clear product specifications
- Work both independently and as part of the management team, to achieve ambitious revenue and value creation targets
- Identify strategic partnerships with appropriate third party organisations and build alliances which can accelerate the company's commercial goals
- Continuously adapt to evolving market conditions to prioritise BD investment across geographies and customers
- Interface with the technology team to develop realistic, well-costed customer proposals and ensure projects are delivered on time and to the satisfaction of the customer
- Manage online and offline marketing activities

Key areas of accountability

- Own the revenue generation targets for the company and manage the customer pipeline
- Be the primary point of contact for customers into the organisation and take overall responsibility for customer satisfaction
- Manage and develop the company's network of strategic alliances
- Support the CEO in developing the corporate strategy and fundraising from private and public sources
- Develop and implement a marketing strategy for the company
- Manage the business development budget

Candidate Specification

The successful candidate will have strong relevant commercial experience in B2B sales of high-value technically advanced products and services to multinational customers.

- Third-level qualification in business, law, science, engineering or similar. MBA is an advantage.
- 10+ years of experience in a sales or business development role, with track record of rapid progression & delivery of challenging targets.
- Experience in negotiating complex commercial agreements in a high-tech environment.
- Existing global network of influential contacts in the energy, food or industrial biotech sectors.
- Prior knowledge of industry dynamics in the enzyme, algae biofuels and/or nutrition sectors is a plus.
- Flexibility to undertake extensive global travel as required.

Personal Qualities

- Highly motivated, results oriented and looking for a new challenge in a market poised for explosive growth.
- Outstanding people skills, with the ability to rapidly establish personal rapport with customers and influence key decision-makers in the customer organisation.
- Strong networking and teamworking skills.
- Able to work independently and take initiative to deliver exceptional results with limited resources.
- Creative approach to negotiations and ability to find 'win-win' outcomes for all parties.
- Strong articulate communicator, with highly effective presentation skills.
- Strong time management and planning abilities, and an ability to multi-task effectively.

Compensation and Benefits

Starting salary:	Negotiable dependent upon experience.
Bonus	Package to include a substantial element of performance-related pay based on achievement of defined targets.
Share options	To reflect the senior nature of this appointment.
Hours of work:	As required to perform the role, typically 9am to 5pm Mon – Fri when in the office.
Holidays:	20 days annually.
Additional benefits:	Flexible working environment.