Master Internship

Advanced NMR and MRI methods for the characterization of emulsions

A multiple emulsion is a colloidal system where droplets of a primary emulsion (such as water-in-oil) are dispersed in another continuous phase, forming water-in-oil-in-water (W/O/W) or oil-in-water-in-oil (O/W/O) structures. These emulsions are used in controlled drug delivery, the food industry (for encapsulating flavors and nutrients), and industrial applications such as pesticide release and alternative fuel formulation. However, large-scale development requires improvements to ensure long-term stability and controlled release of active ingredients. Stability depends on droplet size and the manufacturing process, and NMR techniques, particularly pulsed field gradient NMR, offer a non-invasive method to characterize emulsions, measuring droplet size distribution and molecular transfer between phases.

Double emulsions, such as water-in-oil-in-water, are produced in two stages, with the second stage—dispersing the primary emulsion into the external phase—being the most challenging, as it requires controlled shear to form stable droplets without leakage, making both formulation and processing critical for stability and encapsulation efficiency.

The long-term objective of the present project is to develop, instrument and parameterize a device and a methodology for monitoring the multiple emulsion manufacturing process by MRI, in particular the second stage of the process.

The internship will tackle the first step of this approach, focusing on the methodology for NMR and MRI measurements:

- First, stable simple emulsions with varying compositions and droplet sizes will be prepared at LRGP. These emulsions will then be characterized using multiple techniques, including conductimetry, microscopy, laser diffraction (LSD), dynamic light scattering (DLS), and rheometry, on LRGP's experimental platforms.
- Next, the emulsions will be analyzed under static conditions at LEMTA using NMR techniques described in the literature, particularly pulsed field gradient (PFG) NMR, to accurately measure droplet size and identify key measurable parameters. The NMR results will be compared with data from other characterization techniques to ensure reliability.
- Finally, the methods will be extended to flowing emulsions using MRI velocimetry, aiming to determine the same representative parameters as in static conditions.

The internship will take place at the University of Lorraine (60,000 students) in Nancy, within two research laboratories: LRGP and LEMTA. The LRGP (Laboratoire Réactions et Génie des

Procédés) specializes in chemical and biological reaction engineering, as well as the modelling and optimization of processes for energy, environment, and industry, with over 300 staff members, including 100 professors and researchers. The intern will join the Product Engineering team, which focuses on the formulation, characterization, and modelling of complex fluids, such as emulsions. The LEMTA (Laboratoire Énergies & Mécanique Théorique et Appliquée) has about 200 staff, including 80 professors and researchers, and specializes in heat transfer, fluid mechanics, and materials science, with applications in energy and complex systems engineering. The internship will take place within the "MRI for Engineering" team of LEMTA.

The internship lasts 6 months with a gratification of €670 per month. The estimated cost of living in Nancy (including accommodation, food, and social security) is around €900 per month.

Nancy (population 300,000, including 40,000 students) is a vibrant university city in eastern France, renowned for its Art Nouveau heritage and located just 1 hour 30 minutes from Paris by train.

To apply for the internship, send your CV and cover letter to

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Candidates will be good students of engineering or fundamental science (chemical engineering, energy, physics, fluid mechanics, chemistry, biology, etc.) with an interest in spectroscopic methods such as NMR and image analysis.