



Bio Base Europe
Pilot Plant

Press Release
19 February 2018

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Europe, Flanders, Province of East-Flanders and the City of Ghent inaugurate an investment of €9,36 million at the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant

Loudly encouraged by 700 attendees, Flemish Minister for Innovation Philippe Muyters, Ghent's Alderman for Innovation Christophe Peeters and CEO Wim Soetaert rode a cycling race to start up a new investment at the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant. East Flemish Deputy Martine Verhoeve fired the starting gun and Agnes Lindemans of the European Commission assured fairplay during this festive cycling race. All five financing partners thus presented for the first time the new research infrastructure for gas fermentation and downstream processing that will make Flanders the worldwide testbed for these innovative and sustainable technologies.

No less than seven hundred participants gathered today at the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant, a pilot facility for biobased products and processes, located in the Port of Ghent (Belgium). Thanks to a new investment of 9.36 million euros, the organization can offer new state-of-the-art infrastructure and equipment to companies that want to scale up biobased processes at an industrial scale. Seven hundred participants, a nice confirmation that there is a high need for such facilities. This is not a surprise, as the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant helps industry to develop more environmentally friendly and efficient processes. It plays a key role in the further development of the bio-economy, a sustainable and circular knowledge economy that does not only offer an answer to climate change, but also stimulates economic growth and job creation.

The IMPACT investment provides new equipment for industrial biotechnology, specifically for gas fermentation and downstream processing. Gas fermentation is an innovative technology for converting waste gases such as CO₂ and syngas into a wide range of chemicals using micro-organisms. It is a sustainable technology with great potential to stop global warming. A new process hall for downstream processing is also being built to host new equipment for purifying the end products after the biotechnological or chemical conversion step.

Prof. Wim Soetaert, CEO of the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant:

Our society is facing enormous challenges in terms of sustainability and such major problems require major solutions. Thanks to this much-needed investment in new research infrastructure for industrial biotechnology, the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant can sustain its growth and build a sustainable economy through innovation.

Flemish Minister for Economy and Innovation Philippe Muyters:

The need for this new scale-up infrastructure was clear: companies are anxious to work with the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant. Understandably, as this pilot plant lowers barriers for companies in two ways. They are a key factor for developing innovative processes at an industrial scale, helping companies to avoid risky investments. Even better is that they are also an ideal promoter of cooperation: companies, research centers and other partners meet in the pilot plant and are encouraged to think together about sustainable solutions for the biobased economy.

Werner van der Stockt, ERDF Managing Authority: *From ERDF Flanders, we are pleased that we can invest through European support in the construction of this new research infrastructure, which will*

ensure the continued growth of both the Flemish biobased economy and the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant itself.

Christophe Peeters, Schepen voor Innovatie van de Stad Gent:

The Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant is an important link in the biobased ecosystem of Ghent and is crucial for the further development of Ghent as a knowledge region and the expansion of our very strong cleantech and biotech cluster. The conversion of waste materials into raw materials and the closing of production loops are cornerstones for a sustainable innovation policy: in view of the importance of this pilot facility, the City of Ghent is happy to co-invest in its expansion.

Martine Verhoeve, Gedeputeerde van de Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen:

From the very beginning in 2009, the provincial government strongly supported the construction of the pilot plant. We strongly believed in the potential of pilot infrastructure for the biobased economy. Today, it is fantastic to see how the pilot plant is supported by many partners and realizes unique collaborations. We have every reason to be proud of such a state-of-the-art research infrastructure in our region.

The IMPACT investment is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (3.742.800 EUR), Flanders (1.248.224 EUR), the Province of East-Flanders (311.588 EUR), the City of Ghent (311.588 EUR) and the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant (3.742.800 EUR).

Note to editors:

Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant is a pilot facility for the biobased economy and ensures that companies and research centers have access to state-of-the-art pilot infrastructure and expertise for the biobased economy. The pilot plant helps companies with the risky and expensive scale-up from laboratory to industrial processes for biobased products such as bioplastics, biodetergents, bio-solvents, biochemicals, biomaterials etc. The Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant was founded in 2009 and today employs 70 staff members. Since it was founded, more than 200 projects have been carried out in collaboration with a wide variety of companies. Thanks to this pilot facility, their innovations came closer to the market. New products and processes were developed that created jobs and triggered substantial investments. In addition, the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant is a partner in more than 30 consortium projects.

This unique research facility enables Flanders to remain at the forefront of industrial biotechnology and to make an important contribution to the European innovation agenda. In a short time, the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant grew into a shining example and a pioneer for the biobased economy in Flanders and Europe.

Links and Information

Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant: www.bbeu.org

Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant YouTube kanaal:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAv0dDY6GAErMkW5eLQkKqA>

EFRO: www.efro.be

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