



Press Release **under embargo until June 21st, 2017 at 9am CET**

Europe, Flanders, the Province of East-Flanders and the City of Ghent invest €9,36 million in the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant

ERDF Flanders and Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant (BBEPP) signed an agreement for an investment of €9,36 million within the framework of the IMPACT project. This investment is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Flanders, the Province of East-Flanders, the City of Ghent and the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant. This will be used to build up new research infrastructure specifically for gas fermentation and Down-Stream Processing.

Gas fermentation is an innovative and sustainable technology with enormous potential in terms of carbon footprint reduction. It uses micro-organisms to convert waste gases such as CO₂ and syngas into a wide spectrum of chemicals. Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant will build a unique scale-up facility for gas fermentation to become a global reference for gas fermentation and to turn Flanders into a testing ground for this sustainable technology.

Down-Stream Processing comprises the isolation and purification of a product after a biotechnological or chemical conversion step. This investment will also enable Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant to enlarge its Down-Stream Processing capacity at high TRL (Technology Readiness Level) level, allowing the pilot facility to use the full potential of its 15m³ fermenters.

Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant offers access to state-of-the-art pilot infrastructure to companies and research organisations active in the biobased economy. As such, the pilot plant enables Flanders to remain a frontrunner in terms of industrial biotechnology and to deliver a significant contribution to the European Innovation Agenda. Therefore, this investment will stimulate economic growth in and far beyond the Flanders region.

Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant is a pilot facility for the biobased economy. It assists companies with the risky and expensive scale-up of laboratory processes into industrially viable processes for innovative biobased product such as bioplastics, biodetergents, biosolvents, biochemicals, biomaterials... The Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant has been operational since 2011 and currently employs over 60 staff members. So far, it has conducted more than 180 projects with companies from Flanders and abroad. Through collaboration with this pilot facility, their innovation got considerably closer to the market and these new developments have already created many jobs. Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant was also involved as a partner in 26 public consortia with 123 partners.

In a brief period of time, the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant grew into a key player for the biobased economy in Flanders and Europe. With the financial support of Europe, Flanders, the Province of East-Flanders and the City of Ghent, it will be able to support even more innovative projects that will lead to economic growth and employment in Flanders and beyond.

Prof. Wim Soetaert, CEO of the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant: *"The Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant is a factory of the future that is growing very fast. We are currently overdemand, which necessitates the building of additional equipment. With the help of this new equipment, we will be able to continue our growth and help more companies with their innovation processes."*

Minister Philippe Muyters, Flemish Minister for Work, Economy, Innovation and Sports: *"Flanders has taken up the climate challenge to fight global warming. The best way to do this is to make full use*

of innovation in close cooperation with our companies and knowledge institutions. We try to reduce CO2 emissions but also seek ways to use CO2 as a raw material for making useful products. Through our support to the Bio Base Pilot Plant, we strengthen the Flemish pioneers in this area and accelerate the transformation of research into practice. This will be good for the climate as well as create jobs in our steel and other industries."

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Links and information

Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant: www.bbeu.org

Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant YouTube kanaal:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAv0dDY6GAErMkW5eLQkKgA>

EFRO: www.efro.be

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