

## **New European Circular Bioeconomy Fund is ready to invest in Europe's transition to a more sustainable economy**

- Launch of the European Circular Bioeconomy Fund (ECBF), the first venture fund exclusively dedicated to the bioeconomy and the circular bioeconomy in Europe
- The ECBF closes its first round with €82 million in commitments from EIB, PreZero, Corbion, and the Hettich family office, to provide financing to innovative growth-stage companies and projects
- First investments made: PeelPioneers B.V. is valorising orange peel, whereas Prolupin GmbH is focused on plant-based protein and dairy-alternatives.

Bonn (Germany), October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 - ECBF Management GmbH today announces the first closing of the European Circular Bioeconomy Fund (ECBF). ECBF is the first venture fund exclusively focused on the bioeconomy and the circular bioeconomy in Europe. With a target size of €250 million, to which the European Investment Bank (EIB) has committed €100 million, ECBF will be an important financial instrument in achieving the European Green Deal goals of making Europe climate neutral by 2050.

ECBF starts operation today with € 82 million from its cornerstone investor EIB and three private investors: PreZero International GmbH, which operates in waste and recycling; Corbion NV, a global market leader in bio-based chemicals and polymers; and Hettich Beteiligungen GmbH, a successful investor in sustainable business and services. ECBF's shared public-private investor base is a testament to the opportunities in the European bioeconomy.

ECBF is also pleased to report the first two investments in two innovative growth-stage companies, PeelPioneers BV and Prolupin GmbH. Both investments will support the growth and expansion of the respective businesses in Europe, thereby encouraging Europe's transition towards a more sustainable economy. [PeelPioneers](#) uses pioneering technology to provide a one hundred per cent circular solution for orange peel, turning it into products like orange oils, dietary fibres, and animal feed. From regionally grown Lupines, [Prolupin](#) produces high-quality plant-based proteins, which are being formulated into non-dairy alternatives being marketed on the European market under the brand "Made with LUVE".

The ECBF's primary objective is to stimulate additional private and public capital investment to scale up innovative bio-based companies and projects. More specifically, ECBF provides equity investment to growth-stage bioeconomy and circular bioeconomy companies with high potential for innovation, favourable returns, and sustainable impact. ECBF is based in Luxembourg and managed by Hauck & Aufhäuser Fund Services S.A.

**Michael Brandkamp**, Head of ECBF, said: *"We appreciate the trust the private LPs, the European Commission, and the EIB have given ECBF's team. In a transforming economy, we invest and partner with ambitious and visionary entrepreneurs to accelerate late-stage companies. Our fund will drive the scale-up of innovative bioeconomy companies to have a significant impact on sustainability, thereby providing attractive returns for its investors. It will be a privilege and honour for us to play an active role in the European Bioeconomy's ecosystem working together with other investors and pan-European as well as regional bioeconomy networks. Currently, we see significant interest in our fund, which remains open for new investors until August 2021."*

**Olivier Rigaud**, CEO of Corbion, said: *"To be a true leader in the circular economy, we need to lead by example and do our part to achieve the Paris Agreement. Joining the ECBF fits perfectly in this effort. We are already leading the way with Corbion's ambitious science-based targets to reduce our carbon emissions, and we encourage others to join. Imagine what is possible if strong players turn their collective attention and resources towards circular bio-economy innovations. For us, the returns we expect from investing in ECBF are not primarily monetary; this really is about driving change through excellence in innovation, that will help us preserve our planet, together."*

**Bas van Wieringen**, co-founder of PeelPioneers: *"We are extremely pleased to have ECBF on our side. This shows that sustainability and a healthy business performance can go hand in hand. With this investment, we will scale up our production capacity to process more peels into functional ingredients for the food industry, which would otherwise be incinerated."*

**Malte Stampe**, CEO of Prolupin commented *"The ECBF funding will make an important contribution to accelerate the growth of Prolupin within B2B and B2C. The research & development, marketing and distribution we are now able to deploy over the coming years will put our unique Lupine Protein Isolate (LPI) as well as the vegan Made with LUVE brand center stage for customers and consumers aiming for a healthy, sustainable ingredient and lifestyle."*

## **Background information**

The European Commission's **2018 Bioeconomy Strategy** highlights the role of bioeconomy in tackling today's key environmental challenges. **Bioeconomy** includes primary production - such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture - and industries using / processing biological resources, such as the food and pulp and paper industries and parts of the chemical, biotechnological and energy industries. Managed in a sustainable manner, bioeconomy can sustain a wide range of public goods, including biodiversity and ecosystem services, reduce the environmental footprint of primary production and the supply chain as a whole, increase competitiveness, provide jobs and contribute to rural development.

**Circular Bioeconomy** is the application of the concept of circular economy to biological resources, products and materials. The circular economy is an economy where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste minimised.



A financing gap for innovative bioeconomy companies and projects at the stage where they enter demonstration or commercial phases was identified by the Innovfin Advisory study "Access-to-finance conditions for Investments in Bio-Based Industries and the Blue Economy in 2017". It recommended the creation of a risk-sharing financial instrument, leading the way to the creation of the ECBF.

The [European Investment Bank \(EIB\)](#) is the fund's anchor investor, committed a total €100 million to the fund, backed by InnovFin – EU finance for Innovators, an initiative of the EIB Group and the European Commission to facilitate access to finance for innovation and research. The EIB is the long-term lending institution of the European Union owned by its Member States. During the last five years (2015-2019), the EIB has provided about €2.5 billion of co-financing for the circular economy and €32.7 billion for the agriculture/bioeconomy sector.

[ECBF Management GmbH](#) advises the European Circular Bioeconomy Fund Management exclusively. The international team of very experienced people focusses on supporting the bioeconomy companies in Europe to fuel their growth. Having more than 40 years of investment experience and a significant network the ECBF's team will play an active role in scaling up the investments. ECBF is located in Luxembourg with an investment focus on the 27-European associated countries.

[Hauck & Aufhäuser Privat Bankers AG](#) (Germany /Luxembourg) is a leading German private bank with a focus on Private Banking, Asset Management, Financial Markets, Asset Servicing and Investment Banking. On the fund services side Hauck & Aufhäuser offers the full service range as a experienced custodian bank as well as fund administration for financial and real assets and also acts as AIFM for alternative investments.

[PreZero International GmbH](#) (Germany) which operates in waste and recycling management, is part of the Schwarz Group, one of the leading food retail companies in Germany and Europe. The company combines all the expertise along the value chain from waste disposal to recycling under one roof and positions itself as an innovation driver in the industry with the vision of creating a world in which resources are no longer wasted thanks to closed loops.

[Corbion NV](#) (The Netherlands) is the global market leader in lactic acid and its derivatives, and a leading supplier of emulsifiers, functional enzyme blends, minerals, vitamins and algae ingredients. We use our unique expertise in fermentation and other processes to deliver sustainable solutions for the preservation of food and food production, health, and our planet. In the Advance 2025 strategy, Corbion has chosen to focus on SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) as the goals on which it can create the most significant positive impact, given its business activities.

[Dr. Hettich Beteiligungen GmbH](#) (Germany) is the investment arm of Dr. Andreas Hettich, majority shareholder of the Hettich Group, 4<sup>th</sup> generation international leader in furniture fittings. Investment focus of Dr. Hettich Beteiligungen is in innovative and sustainable industrial businesses and services. The company provides strong financial support and international knowledge to their investments.

[PeelPioneers BV](#) (The Netherlands) is the first fully sustainable peel collector of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. PeelPioneers processes orange peels, which would otherwise be incinerated, into functional ingredients for the food industry. The company was founded in 2017 by Lindy



Hensen, Bas van Wieringen and Sytze van Stempvoort and opened the world's first orange peel factory in 2018 in Son, the Netherlands. PeelPioneers plans to expand into Europe with five new peel plants in the next years.

**Prolupin GmbH** (Germany) is a spin out from the Fraunhofer-Institut für Verfahrenstechnik und Verpackung (IVV) in Munich with deep scientific expertise and a patent protected process for producing protein isolates from lupines. The company produces and markets a range of purely plant-based non-dairy alternatives to yoghurts, milks, ice creams and cream cheeses to address the growing demand for tasty plant-based foods for consumers focused on health and sustainability.

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