



**Press release  
4 December 2024**

## **Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant Launches Scale-up Accelerator Network to Empower Young Biotech Innovators**

*Ghent, Belgium, 4 December 2024.*

**Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant (BBEPP), a leading bioeconomy pilot and demonstration facility, is excited to announce the launch of its groundbreaking Scale-up Accelerator Network (SAN). This innovative program empowers young innovators in the field of industrial biotechnology by connecting them with seasoned industry experts who can provide independent reviews and guidance on their scale-up ambitions.**

### **Derisk & Decrease time spent in the valley of death**

The SAN program addresses a critical challenge faced by many start-ups: derisk & decrease time spent in the valley of death! How? By empowering them technically towards scale-up of their processes. SAN links start-ups with experienced independent industry leaders, providing them invaluable insights and support and helping them navigate the complex technical journey required to accelerate their path to market.

*“When is the right time to start scaling up my process?” is always the most challenging question where everybody is circling back” says Hendrik Waegeman, Head of Business Operations at BBEPP. Scaling up a biotechnology process can be a daunting task for young innovators, who want to use their R&D budgets wisely whilst going to market faster. The SAN program aims to bridge this gap by providing access to independent expert knowledge and guidance.”*

### **Key Features of the SAN Program are:**

- **Expert Matchmaking:** Connect start-ups with leading industry experts whose expertise aligns with their specific technology and scale-up needs.
- **Confidential Consultations:** All interactions between start-ups and experts conducted in strict confidentiality.
- **Optimized Cost:** Expert consultations at a competitive cost, making it accessible to early-stage biotech companies.

### **Seasoned Experts on Board**

The SAN program launches with three highly respected industry leaders: Michael Helmut Kopf (formerly of BASF), Alex Patist (Geltor) and Ignace Debonne. But that’s only the beginning. BBEPP is actively building an exclusive and evolving pool of independent experts to ensure the best possible match for each start-up's needs.

### **Global Reach**

While expert matchmaking will initially focus on Europe and US-based start-ups, the SAN program aspires to connect with innovators from around the world. Interested parties can register for the program year-round. A selection process will be implemented, and a waiting list may be established based on application volumes.

**To Register Your Interest in the SAN program:** Contact Esthère Goure, Scale-up Accelerator Network Deployment Responsible at [esthele.goure@bbeu.org](mailto:esthele.goure@bbeu.org) or go to <https://www.bbeu.org/what-we-offer/scale-up-accelerator-network/>.

#### **Notes to editors:**

##### **About Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant (BBEPP)**

Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant (BBEPP) is an independent, open-access and state-of-the-art pilot facility for process development, scale-up and custom manufacturing of biobased processes and products from lab to multi-ton scale. A wide and flexible spectrum of modular unit operations combined with the experience of highly competent engineers and technicians enables BBEPP to translate biobased lab protocols into viable industrial processes.

Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant enables the conversion of renewable feedstocks into biochemicals, biomaterials, biofuels and other bioproducts by using technologies such as biomass pretreatment, biocatalysis, (gas)fermentation, green chemistry and product recovery and purification. For more information, visit [www.bbeu.org](http://www.bbeu.org), contact [busdev@bbeu.org](mailto:busdev@bbeu.org) or [follow us on LinkedIn](#).

##### **About Michael Helmut Kopf**

Dedicated and passionate, Michael believes in applying a holistic approach at the process development stage to not lose sight of the full value chain design. He engaged in more than 50 different projects and processes covering end-to-end process development for fermentative processes (yes, read DSP expertise to unlock end-to-end processes). His previous experience includes an extensive career at BASF as Director Alternative Fermentation Platforms and as responsible for process and apparatus development for chemical and biochemical processes at Peralisi Group. Based in Germany, Michael is an advisor for several bio and cleantech start-ups and a frequent speaker at conferences worldwide.

##### **About Alex Patist**

Grounded. Practical. Bold. Deliberate. Alex is our guy who knows how to make things work... on a big scale. He translates the magic of our science into industrial-scale and cost-effective reality – something he has done multiple times in the food, cosmetic, nutraceutical, biochemical, and climate tech industries. He holds a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Florida. His previous experience includes SVP PD & Manufacturing at Bolt Threads, Sr. Director of Bioprocess Technology at Genomatica, and Director of Technology at Cargill. Based in the US and originally from the Netherlands, Alex is your man if you want to learn more about development, scale-up, deployment, and full-scale manufacturing. He is an advisor for several bio and cleantech start-ups and a frequent speaker at conferences worldwide.

##### **About Ignace Debonne**

Ignace Debonne doesn't just understand fermentation – he speaks its language. Ignace has worked on over 90 fermentation processes as concepts at lab scale. Most of these made it to pilot scale and close to a dozen made it all the way to large industrial-scale production. His deep knowledge and passion for the field have made him a sought-after expert in the biomanufacturing industry. During 38 years, he has held several roles at CPC-Cerestar-Cargill as scientist/engineer/SME in more than 18 R&D and production facilities worldwide and going beyond his scope on developing and scaling-up processes, he has strong accomplishments linked to automation, instrumentation, data management, and data analysis topics. Ignace is known for his collaborative spirit and ability to translate complex scientific concepts into practical solutions. He thrives on sharing his insights and empowering newcomers – ensuring that the future of fermentation remains bright. Ignace believes in the power of fun and laughter while tackling even the most challenging projects.

**For more information, questions, applications or interviews, Please contact:**

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