

Press release . Leiden, the Netherlands . 17 November 2006

First closing of BioGeneration Ventures Fund

BioGeneration Ventures announces the first closing of its new BioGeneration Ventures Fund at € 13 million. BioGeneration Ventures will specifically invest in Dutch start-up and early stage life sciences companies to bridge the current "equity gap", which hinders the development of new life sciences companies. The fund is financed by the Netherlands Genomics Initiative (NGI) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) in combination with the holding company of Leiden University and ABN-AMRO Capital Life Sciences as the lead private investors.

Lack of funds

A well-known problem in the Netherlands is the so-called innovation paradox. Universities and research institutes perform cutting-edge research, but the track towards commercialising that knowledge and generating economic value remains difficult. One of the key reasons is the lack of funds geared towards the needs of start-up and early stage companies. Although these companies generally do not require major investments in this phase, they are often unable to fulfil the demands of mainstream venture capital firms. BioGeneration Ventures – originally initiated by the Netherlands Genomics Initiative, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research and ABN AMRO Capital Life Sciences– has been established specifically to fill this present gap in funding. The scope of the fund will be broad within the life sciences, including applications in pharma, food, agriculture and industrial biotechnology.

Unique combination

Edward van Wezel, Managing Partner of BioGeneration Ventures, comments: "This fund is a unique combination of public and private funding aimed to support start-up and early stage companies in the life sciences in the Netherlands. We aim to offer more than just funding; we will actively support young companies in setting up and developing their business and raising additional funding. Together with our partners NGI, NWO, the holding company of Leiden University and ABN-AMRO, we have created the first fund of this size and focus in the Netherlands, supported by a team of experienced professionals with a proven track record".

Steady flow

"We know from experience that it is hard to get new life sciences companies firmly on their feet", says Diederik Zijdeveld, director of the Netherlands Genomics Initiative (NGI). "Generating a steady flow of new economic activities is a central objective of the NGI strategy and therefore NGI and NWO as governmental organisations have taken the initiative to set up this dedicated fund. As the fund will be managed by experienced professionals from the financial and life sciences world, we are confident that BioGeneration Ventures will prove to be of key importance in really pushing the Dutch life sciences field forward."

Stimulate business

Willem te Beest, executive vice-president of Leiden University emphasizes: "Early stage funding is essential for creating new companies based on university inventions. The development of new medicines and diagnostic tools requires significant resources before our society can enjoy the benefits. This fund will help to further stimulate life sciences development and business in the Leiden Bio Science Park. We are proud that the revenues of our holding company enable us to contribute to this important initiative."

Excellent position

Because of the excellent international position of Dutch life sciences research, there are numerous opportunities for developing successful, profitable initiatives. "Although Dutch universities are world-class, the Netherlands is still significantly below the European average in terms of the commercialisation of technologies. This represents a clear opportunity for a team with the experience and dedication of BioGeneration Ventures". Gerben Kuyper of ABN-AMRO Capital Life Sciences states.

Notes for the editor

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More information on partners

About BioGeneration Ventures
www.biogenerationventures.com

BioGeneration Ventures is a venture capital company based in Leiden, The Netherlands. BioGeneration Ventures provides venture capital for early stage life sciences companies in the Netherlands. The management of Biogeneration Ventures has a successful track record in creating, managing and investing in early stage life sciences companies and combines all skills and experience needed to successfully build value.

About Netherlands Genomics Initiative (NGI)

www.genomics.nl

NGI aims to provide an optimum combination of the opportunities offered by genomics research and the specific knowledge and expertise available in the field of scientific research in the Netherlands. This infrastructure is to be firmly embedded in society, while stimulating and facilitating the innovative research necessary to create a continuous supply of new business opportunities. Central to the Netherlands Genomics Initiative's strategy are 11 Genomics Centres. NGI was established at the end of 2001. NGI is an independent taskforce for the realisation of the national genomics strategy accommodated in the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research.

About Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)

www.nwo.nl

The task of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) is to advance the quality and innovation of scientific research, as well as initiate and stimulate new developments in this field. NWO's objective is to see the Netherlands its international prominence and in fact to further strengthen its position in the field of science. NWO also endorses more intensive use of scientific research by society, thus ensuring its continued contribution to prosperity and wellbeing.

About Leiden University

www.universiteitleiden.nl

Leiden University is an internationally oriented university offering a wide range of research inspired programmes aimed at talented and motivated students. Quality and renewal go hand in hand. Thanks to the quality of its education and research, Leiden University makes an important contribution to the common good, prosperity and culture.

About ABN-AMRO Capital Life Sciences

www.abnamro-lifesciences.com

ABN AMRO Capital/Life Sciences (AAC LS) is the venture arm of ABN AMRO Bank N.V. of the Netherlands. AAC LS builds and finances life sciences companies that develop world-class technology with a clear focus on products for major markets. Of particular interest are businesses capable of improving the diagnosis and treatment of disease, as well as companies with technologies that accelerate drug discovery and development. Over the past 7 years, through investments in more than 30 companies in both Europe and the US, the AAC LS team has achieved considerable success and above average returns. For further information, go to www.abnamrocapital.com.