

## PRESS INFORMATION

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# **Bio Base Europe is granted €21 million to become the first open innovation and education center for the biobased economy in Europe**

**Brussels, Belgium 18 December 2008** – On December 12, Europe, Flanders and The Netherlands have joined forces within the framework of an Interreg IV project and allocated €21 million to Bio Base Europe. Bio Base Europe is the largest Interreg project ever granted to the Dutch-Flemish border region. Bio Base Europe will build research and training facilities for biobased activities, in order to speed up the development of a sustainable biobased economy in Europe.

Bio Base Europe is the result of a partnership between Ghent Bio-Energy Valley and Biopark Terneuzen and their respective stakeholders. Bio Base Europe is an important building block for the development of the biobased economy in Europe and is expected to boost the current drive towards sustainable production processes and to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases such as CO<sub>2</sub>. Biopark Terneuzen in The Netherlands and Ghent Bio-Energy Valley in Belgium have each individually already built a strong reputation as biobased enablers in the Dutch-Flemish border regions. The new Bio Base Europe partnership project is now set to transform the region into the main bio-economy gateway in Europe.

The Bio Base Europe initiative is the first of its kind in Europe. Bio Base Europe will develop a unique platform for the advancement of sustainable biobased processes that aid the development of bio-energy and bioproducts from renewable biomass resources and cut reliance on non-replaceable fossil fuels. This transition from the current fossil-based economy towards a biobased economy is seen as one of the primary routes towards industrial sustainability. Biobased production is already transforming a broad range of industries, notably in the chemical, energy and agro-industrial sectors around the world.

Bio Base Europe consists of two parts: a Pilot Plant and a Training Center. The Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant will focus mainly on second generation technologies to convert agricultural waste products and non-food crops such as wheat straw, corn cobs, wood chips, Jatropha and algae oils into biofuels, bioplastics and other bioproducts. Whereas the potential of these technologies has already been demonstrated in laboratory trials, the difficulty lies in taking these processes to the production scale. Currently, many new processes are held up or even abandoned because of these difficulties. The Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant is set to eliminate this obstacle, by providing pilot facilities that permit scaling up new bioprocesses to an industrial level. The Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant is a flexible and diversified pilot plant, capable of performing the entire value chain in a single plant: from the green resources up to the final product. It will operate as an open innovation center, available for commercial companies and research institutions that are engaged in biobased activities throughout the world. The new €13 million facility, which will be located near Ghent, Belgium, is scheduled to become operational in the fourth quarter of 2009.

The second core part of the Bio Base Europe initiative will include a state-of-the-art Training Center to address the issue of an industry-wide shortage of skilled process operators and technical maintenance specialists, especially for the biobased economy. Representing a further €8 million investment, the Bio Base Europe Training Center will be located close to Terneuzen, The Netherlands. It will feature training facilities for biobased activities, and is operating according to an open education model. It will provide standard, as well as company specific, training and education focused on biobased processes. Bio Base Europe Training Center will also encourage networking activities, technological innovation and entrepreneurship and will develop a public information and communication program. The Bio Base Europe Training Center will be operational in 2010.

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### **About Biopark Terneuzen**

Established in February 2007, Biopark Terneuzen is an initiative that represents new thinking in the creation of biobased industrial sustainability. Biopark Terneuzen was initiated by the Zeeland Province, Zeeland Seaports and the participating industrial parties. Building on the economic and knowledge transfer advantages obtained through the co-location of associated businesses, Biopark Terneuzen raises the platform to a higher level. Its core mission is the development of the biobased industry in the Kanaalzone. One of the ways to pursue this goal is smart linking. That promotes and facilitates the exploitation of key synergies between its partner companies. Specifically the potential to exchange and utilise each other's by-products and waste streams as feedstock or utility supplements for their own processes. This contributes to their productivity, to the conservation of non-renewable resources and the reduction of environmental burden. For further information please visit: [www.bioparkterneuzen.com](http://www.bioparkterneuzen.com).

### **About Ghent Bio-Energy Valley**

Ghent Bio-Energy Valley is supporting the development of sustainable biobased activities in the region of Ghent, Belgium. Ghent Bio-Energy Valley is a joint initiative of Ghent University, the City of Ghent, the Port of Ghent, the Development Agency East-Flanders and a number of industrial companies that are active in the fields of the generation, distribution, storage and use of bio-energy and biobased products. Ghent Bio-Energy Valley is a leading European initiative for the development of the biobased economy of the future. Ghent Bio-Energy Valley promotes the development of the biobased economy through collaborative programs, joint initiatives and synergy creation between the partners in the fields of Research & Development, structural measures and policy, logistics and communication towards the general public. For further information please visit: [www.gbev.org](http://www.gbev.org).

### **About Interreg IV**

Interreg IV is a 2007-2013 programme funded by the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), to advance cross-border cooperation and stimulate sustainable social-economic development in European border regions. The steering committee of the Dutch-Flemish Interreg IV program that assigned the Bio Base Europe initiative among others consists of deputies for international cooperation of the eight Dutch - Flemish border regions as well as a representative from both the Dutch and Flemish governments. For further information please visit: [www.grensregio.eu](http://www.grensregio.eu).

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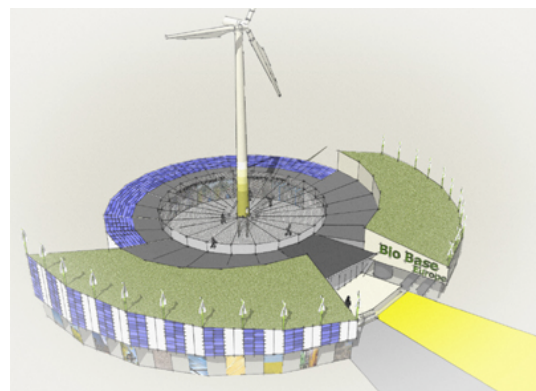
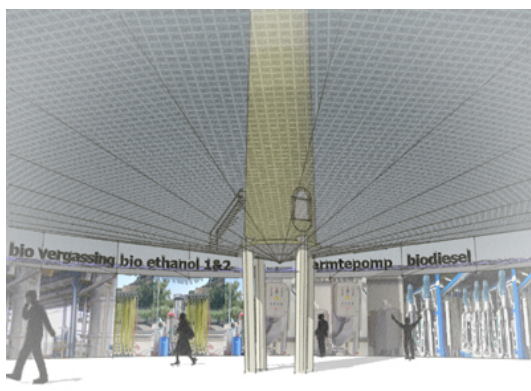
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Bio Base Europe Pilot plant.  
(Photo Bio Base Europe, PR001)



Bio Base Europe Training Centre.  
(Photo Bio Base Europe, PR001)