

Press release

Presentation of IZB's innovation powerhouse in the context of BIO-Europe 2023

Participants experienced the impressive density of research institutions and companies at this Munich life science hub.

Martinsried near Munich, November 6, 2023 – The Innovation and Start-up Centre Biotechnology (IZB), one of the leading biotechnology centres in Europe with over 40 resident biotech start-ups, together with Bio^M Biotech Cluster Development GmbH yesterday presented the thriving biotech ecosystem in Martinsried to biopharma professionals from all over the world. The event took place in the Faculty Club, aptly named the "Gateway to Biotech" (G2B), where nearly 90 guests were welcomed by Susanne Simon, Head of Press and Public Relations at IZB, who presented the IZB, followed by presentations of Bio^M and the introduction of the recently established MAXL (Munich Accelerator Life Sciences & Medicine) incubator. In a panel roundtable, the following stakeholders presented their careers in the biotech industry that are closely linked to the site: Dr. Konstantin Petropoulos, CEO of Sterna Biologicals and CBO of Secarna; Dr. Michael Schaeffer, CBO Vivoryon Therapeutics GmbH and Dr. Holger Reithinger, General Partner at Forbion.

"The IZB is one of the most renowned biotechnology centres in Europe. We are proud of our life science location, which offers excellent framework conditions for scientific research and the development of new therapies. We are particularly pleased to be able to present our campus and its initiatives to such an internationally diverse and high-ranking audience today," commented Susanne Simon, Head of Press and Public Relations at IZB.

"At Bio^M, we work closely with partners from industry, research, clinics and politics to promote and advance the implementation of biotechnological innovations. We want to further strengthen the Biotechnology Cluster Bavaria and make it an internationally sustainable successful biotech hub. To this end, we act across industries and sectors to support our community in becoming a global leader. The promotion of start-ups is particularly important to us in this regard," declared Prof. Dr. Ralf Huss, Managing Director, Bio^M Biotech Cluster Development GmbH.

"We are thrilled to have the opportunity to establish an incubator in Munich for pre-seed teams and early-stage start-ups – with great support from the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs", stated Dr. Petra Burgstaller, Incubation & MAXL Co-Lead at Bio^M. "This will allow us to provide well-equipped lab space and co-working space alongside our established support programme, enhancing our ability to accompany biotech start-ups on their path to success."

The event was embedded in the program of BIO-Europe, Europe's largest biopharma partnering conference, which is expected to attract a record number of over 5,500 delegates this year. This pre-conference activity included a city tour of Munich, exploring some of the city's iconic landmarks, and ended in the heart of the life sciences and biotechnology industry, where participants learned from passionate innovators representing local startups and small to mid-sized companies about their field of research.

The panel discussion started off with a presentation by Dr. Konstantin Petropoulos, CEO of Sterna Biologicals and CBO of Secarna, who has been working for several IZB-based companies throughout his career. "The IZB, with a wide range of top-class institutions in the immediate vicinity, is an ideal environment to really drive 'bench-to-bedside' research and development of innovative medicines. In addition to a broad network of experts and research-based companies, a variety of service providers are also on site, allowing for fast and flexible development of the highest quality with very short distances."

Dr. Michael Schaeffer, a highly experienced entrepreneur with an over 20-year track record, provided insights from his time spent at CRELUX and on the successful acquisition by WuXiAppTec in 2016. "It is tempting to think that business transactions such as licensing or M&A deals are all about numbers. But I would argue that the critical ingredient in any successful deal is the people involved and the atmosphere they create during the negotiations. Try to connect with your counterparts and find solid common ground before you get into nitty gritty details of sorting out everyone's specific interests - usually a give and take."

Dr. Holger Reithinger, who is a General Partner at Forbion, a leading European venture capital firm managing around €3bn across 10 funds, and who has been Board Member of several IZB start-ups, including CatalYm, Exosome, Pieris and Rigontec, highlighted the importance of the IZB and its campus: "In Germany, one-of-a-kind: The Martinsried location with the IZB and the surrounding institutes of the Max Planck Society and the LMU serves as a prime example of a successful biotechnology campus. Networking events organised by the IZB and Bio^M promote communication between researchers and established companies. Innovative companies receive comprehensive support for all their needs. The success in Martinsried is attributed to its continuous development and improvement over the past 20 years, with all involved parties dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to its progress."

Following the insightful panel discussion, attendees engaged with key campus stakeholders in a networking session.

About the Innovation and Start-up Center for Biotechnology (IZB) in Martinsried near Munich

The Fördergesellschaft IZB mbH, founded in 1995, operates the Innovation and Start-up Centers for Biotechnology in Planegg-Martinsried and Freising-Weihenstephan and has developed into a leading biotechnology center. 40 biotech companies and five life science firms with over 700 employees are currently based on 26,000 m². Here, work is being done on developing drugs for the most serious diseases, such as cancer, Alzheimer's, and various autoimmune diseases. A key criterion for the success of the IZBs is the physical proximity to cutting-edge research on the Martinsried/Grosshadern campus and the Weihenstephan campus. The new infrastructure measures such as the Faculty Club G2B (Gateway to Biotech), the IZB Residence CAMPUS AT HOME, the Elhardt chemistry college, the two kindergartens Bio Kids and Bio Kids2 as well as the two restaurants SEVEN AND MORE, and THE BOWL Food Lounge are also location factors that are highly valued by the founders of the company. Successful companies that emerged from the IZB include Corimmun (today Janssen-Cilag), Crlelux (today Wuxxi AppTec), Exosome Diagnostics (bought by Bio-Tech), ibidi, Immunic Therapeutics, Medigene, Micromet (today Amgen), MorphoSys, Octopharma or Rigontec (now MSD) as well as SIRION Biotech (today Perkin Elmer). More information at www.izb-online.com.

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