

25 May 2021

**Press Release****The European Union boosts innovation in the plant protein and oil sectors  
with support for EcoXtract® from Horizon 2020**

**Dunkirk (F), Cloppenburg (D), De Waal (NL), New Holland (UK), Lohne (D), 25 May 2021.** Pennakem Europa, the developer of EcoXtract®, an innovative bio-based solution for the extraction of oils, proteins and natural ingredients, today is delighted to announce that it has been awarded a European Union grant to develop EcoXtract® as the extraction solution of choice for the global oil and protein sector.

The 2.8 million EUR grant is awarded by the European Commission's European Innovation Council under the Horizon 2020 Fast Track to Innovation programme. This great achievement is the result of a proposal submitted by a consortium of 5 partners. All are private-for-profit entities established within the European Union. Along with Pennakem Europa (France), an affiliate of Minafin Group, the consortium comprises Vivaorganic GmbH (Cloppenburg, Germany), De Wit Speciality Oils B.V. (De Waal, The Netherlands), New Holland Extraction Ltd (New Holland, United Kingdom) and Donal Murphy-Bokern (Lohne, Germany). The total project investment is nearly 4 million EUR. The project is coordinated by Vivaorganic GmbH.

Solvent-based extraction of vegetable oil is an essential step for many plant-based products, especially for vegetable oil and protein. Our ambition is to bring our biobased solvent EcoXtract® to the oilseeds processing market. This will provide an extremely safe and bio-based option for all involved in processing oil-rich seeds such as soybean, oilseed rape, sunflower, and the seeds from a large number of minor crops such as borage, hemp and evening primrose. EcoXtract® is a game-changing renewable upcycling technology: a 100%



The EcoXtract project (Delivering a new, efficient and biobased plant oil and protein extraction system) receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 970931.

biobased solvent made from crop by-product. Pennakem and New Holland Extractions in particular are focused on the core engineering challenge of upscaling the use of this new solvent. Parallel to this, Vivaorganic and De Wit will lead in the development of pioneering value chains in soybean processing and niche speciality oils. Donal Murphy-Bokern provides support in project management, communications, assessment of environmental and agricultural impacts, and liaison with policy agencies.

“We are thrilled with the European Commission’s decision to support our innovation plans. The grant enables us to combine the technologies, skills and ambitions of five partners in four European countries. This allows us to accelerate our technical development and access pioneering markets at the same time to develop a more reliable, healthier and more eco-conscious oil extraction sector for the food and feed industry” says Laurence Jacques, Managing Director at Pennakem Europa .

“Consumers’ expectations have dramatically changed over the last decades. Food and other products of nature must be truly natural. As the oil industry being one important player of the food industry, it appears essential to us to be part of this project to deliver a safer and healthier solution to the consumer” says Gertjan De Wit, Director at De Wit Speciality Oils.

“Leading this dynamic consortium is a great honour for Vivaorganic. All four industrial partners are new to the European Union Framework Programme. With this European Innovation Council grant, the European Commission is investing in us to make a significant contribution to the sustainable development of the oil- and protein-based sectors using a European invention and know-how. We are fully committed to giving Europe a good return on this investment, in Europe and world-wide” says Amos Ramsauer from Vivaorganic.



**About Pennakem**

Pennakem provides full service-manufacturing, pilot facilities, R&D, and worldwide sales and marketing focusing on renewable chemistry while developing new and innovative products and processes. EcoXtract® is a brand of Pennakem. Pennakem is an affiliate of the Minafin Group.

[www.pennakem.com](http://www.pennakem.com)

[www.ecoextract.com](http://www.ecoextract.com)

**About Minafin**

Founded in 2005, Minafin is a French private industrial company specialized in fine chemistry for the life sciences and the high-tech Industries. It generated more than €243 million in revenues in 2020 and has more than 900 employees. Its activities include industrial subcontracting, development of chemical syntheses, and industrial scale-up of custom-made processes as well as proprietary products with high added-value for the pharmacy, cosmetic, agriculture, and high-tech industries. The group has six manufacturing sites: two in the US, two in France, one in Germany and one in Belgium.

[www.minafin.com](http://www.minafin.com)

**About Vivaorganic GmbH**

Founded in 2018, Vivaorganic specialises in the processing of protein-rich oilseeds, especially soybean, for the organic food and feed sector. Through the development of organic protein-rich materials from soya, isolates, concentrates, flakes and flours, it contributes to the sustainable development of food systems with a wide variety of European-produced alternatives to animal protein. Vivaorganic also trades with protein-rich plant-based raw materials for food processing and animal feed production giving it access to the whole oilseed sector, including through its affiliated company, Agriprotein GmbH.

<https://vivaorganic.de/en/>



**About De Wit Speciality Oils**

De Wit is a family-own SME based in The Netherlands. It produces and markets a wide range of speciality plant oils for food, pharmaceuticals, non-food products such as cosmetics, and feed. There is a strong emphasis on quality, reliability and sustainability. Our products are sourced from (organic) seed growers that we select from all over the world. We have close relationships with all our seed producers. The seeds are processed in our production facility in the UK, New Holland Extraction Ltd.

[www.dewitoils.nl](http://www.dewitoils.nl)

**About New Holland Extraction Ltd.**

Founded New Holland Extraction is a UK-based specialist in the extraction of niche market oils from seeds including rosehip, evening primrose, borage and blackcurrant, various other products including wheat germ. The extraction plant has been subject to continuous innovation. These unique facilities provide the flexibility to produce seed oils by both cold pressing and solvent extraction. For cold pressing, a bank of small stand-alone mechanical screw presses specifically designed and set up for the cold pressing a range of specialist seeds. Large presses are used for processing large volumes of seed very quickly. and are often used to produce the initial stream of cold pressed oil prior to the pressed cake being automatically conveyed in a continuous extraction process into our solvent extractor.

[www.newhollandextraction.com](http://www.newhollandextraction.com)

**About Donal Murphy-Bokern**

Dr Donal Murphy-Bokern is an independent agricultural and environmental scientist based near Bremen in northern Germany. He specialises in the scientific support of public policy development, research strategy development, and research management in agriculture, food, bioenergy and land use. He works in the conception, direction and management of European Union framework programme research and innovation projects.

[www.murphy-bokern.com](http://www.murphy-bokern.com)



### **About the European Innovation Council**

The European Innovation Council was launched in March this year within the new Horizon Europe programme. It aims to identify, support and scale-up breakthrough technologies and game changing innovations to create new markets. The EIC was piloted in the previous European Union framework programme (Horizon 2020). This pilot included the Fast Track to Innovation (FTI) initiative which is the mechanism that supports EcoXtract. FTI supports international industry partnerships in scaling-up and accelerating the development of innovation. The scheme favours consortia partners with complementary backgrounds, knowledge and skills, in both new and established value-chains, who can turn ideas into world-beating products, processes and services that tackle societal challenges.

PR & Communications contact

Kim Vandevoorde

EcoXtract

Tel: +32 473 61 06 31

Kim.vandevoorde@ecoextract.com



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