



Press Release

Paris, France - 18 November 2008

Seventure and INRA Transfert collaborate to create ABA Agro Biotech Accélérateur, a new company dedicated to maturing innovative technologies emerging from agronomic research

European venture capital firm Seventure Partners and INRA Transfert, the technology transfer arm of the French National Institute for Agronomic Research (INRA), have formed a partnership creating a brand new joint venture company, ABA Agro Biotech Accélérateur.

This new and original company will be dedicated to maturing innovative technologies resulting from research at INRA to create innovative start-up companies targeting future markets in Nutrition, Plants and Industrial Biotechnologies and Eco-technologies.

Seventure, the natural partner for ABA and INRA

As one of the best known players on the French and European venture capital markets, Seventure, a subsidiary of Natixis Private Equity (NPE), enjoys a solid reputation in the Life Sciences sector.

A pioneer in financing industrial biotechnologies, new fermentation technologies or innovations in nutrition, Seventure decided quite naturally to join the INRA to create ABA, whose goal is to contribute actively towards several of the important issues facing Europe and the world (eco-technologies, nutrition, industrial biotechnologies, agronomy) through the creation of strong companies and long-term employment.

Isabelle de Crémoux, who heads the Life Sciences investment team at Seventure and is Chairman of ABA, said: *"In addition to our financial support of ABA, Seventure is dedicated to make the selected projects benefit from our experience in this highly promising sectors, from our contacts throughout Europe in the industrial and financial communities, and from the support of our network of experts and entrepreneurs. This will result in the transformation of these projects into new businesses perfectly adapted to their environment, and we will actively support them in their search for future funding."*



The choice of Seventure as a partner in ABA, in addition to its skills and experiences, also relied on its membership of the NPE Group and on its experience as a local and regional investor in France.

Encourage and promote innovation, one of the key missions of INRA

INRA, a French applied research agency with over 8,500 researchers, technicians, administrators and with 1,200 PhD students, is focused on one of the major challenges of the 21st century: agronomy, which is at the convergence of agriculture, food and environment. Beyond its role to produce world-class basic and applied research in these areas, INRA also has a mission to provide society with practical solutions to important agronomic issues, and therefore to contribute to the creation of innovative start-up companies based on the scientific and technological discoveries of its researchers.

INRA Transfert SA is the technology transfer arm and a wholly owned subsidiary of INRA, and is responsible for managing the licensing of patents granted to INRA and for providing assistance to researchers wishing to start their own businesses.

Increased resources to support the maturation of the most innovative projects generated by INRA

The new company, ABA, has been created to complement INRA Transfert activities, primarily by providing financial and operational support to researchers during the final stages of validation for the most promising technologies and their applications. This is crucial for the successful launch of new businesses. ABA has received funding from its two founding partners, INRA Transfert and Seventure Partners, sufficient to support each year several projects emerging from agricultural research units, especially in France.

These funds will be used by ABA to finance the final stages of research and of proof of concept studies for selected projects, as well as for the recruitment of staff. This support will help these projects to reach the maturity required for the creation and success of new technology based companies.

Each year, a dozen of projects will be selected and studied. ABA will specifically take care of a few among them, always in close partnership with their original laboratory, with the aim of providing funding and support during an accelerated technology maturation phase, which could last for up to two years. ABA will provide each project with operational guidance needed to drive the project towards value creation. It will also make sure that the project benefits from access to technical platforms of the INRA and that required skills are recruited. ABA will also manage intellectual property activities and licensing agreements, and evaluate target markets.



About Seventure Partners

Seventure Partners is a leading European venture capital with more than €500 million under management. Founded in 1997, the firm invests in innovative businesses with high growth potential in Information & Communication Technologies and in Life Sciences across Europe.

Seventure is a subsidiary of Natixis Private Equity, the asset management company of the Natixis banking group, with over €3.6 billion in private equity investments.

In Life Sciences, Seventure focuses on four preferred sectors: Biotech & Pharmaceuticals, Medtech, Industrial Biotech & Cleantech, and Lifestyle Healthcare, products & services. The Company invests typically between € 500,000 to €10 million per round, and up to €20 million per company, from early to later stage.

www.seventure.fr

About INRA Transfert

INRA Transfert is a project management consulting company specialized in the field of innovating technologies arising from agriculture-related research. INRA Transfert's team manages the technology portfolio of INRA (French National Institute of Agronomic Research) and supports development of innovative start-up companies. Through its "European projects" activity, INRA Transfert assists the key players in Research and Innovation in setting up and managing their European research projects and networks.

Founded in June 2003 by resuming and expanding the activities of ATI (Agronomy Innovation Transfer) and chaired by Gerard Jacquin, INRA Transfert is a 100% subsidiary of INRA.

www.inra-transfert.fr

Press Contacts:

Seventure Partners Isabelle de Cremoux, General Partner and Director of the Life Sciences Department ABA Chairman of the Board of Directors Tél : +33 1 58 19 22 77 isabelle.decremoux@seventure.fr	Agro Biotech Accélérateur (ABA) Pascal Azadian Managing Director 12 rue Vivienne, 75002 Paris, France
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<p>HDL Communication (For French enquiries) Delphine Rouget Tel : +33 1 58 65 00 78 drouget@hdlcom.com</p> <p>Citigate Dewe Rogerson (For International trade press enquiries) Mark Swallow / Nina Enegren +44 20 7638 9571 mark.swallow@citigatedr.co.uk</p>	
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