

Aphea.Bio is awarded a 1.2Mi€ grant from VLAIO to further expand its activities

Gent, Belgium, January 9, 2019 - Aphea.Bio, a leading company developing the next generation agricultural products, today announced that it has received a 1.2Mi€ grant from the Flemish Government through Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship (VLAIO).

Aphea.Bio is exploiting natural microorganisms to increase in a sustainable way crop yields and to protect them against specific fungal diseases. Thus far, Aphea.Bio has been focusing on the development of biostimulant and biocontrol products based on bacterial strains. Aphea.Bio will use this VLAIO grant to collaborate with top expert research partners at University of Gent (Department of Applied Biosciences) and at Université Catholique de Louvain (Laboratory of Mycology) to expand the microbial field of interest towards the inclusion of fungal microorganisms.

Steven Vandenabeele, CSO at Aphea.Bio commented: “Based on scientific literature it is clear that fungi form an equally important source of candidates both as biostimulant as biocontrol agents. Moreover, evidence is building up that bacteria and fungi often depend on each other and can act as ‘brothers in arms’ to maximize the beneficial effects and to ensure broad efficacy.”

Aphea.Bio aims to continuously improve and innovate to secure its pioneering position in the development of the next generation agro-biologicals. This is the second time Aphea.Bio is awarded with non-dilutive funding from VLAIO. “We are very grateful with the financial support and are honoured with the trust VLAIO places in us” said Isabel Vercauteren, CEO. The first grant allowed Aphea.Bio to set-up an *in-house* technology platform for the isolation, identification and validation of candidate beneficial bacterial microorganisms and to build a portfolio of proprietary beneficial microorganisms. Aphea.Bio is now ready to take the next step and to start combining its unique bacterial collection with fungal strains, Vercauteren added.

About Aphea.Bio

Aphea.Bio, a spin-off of the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology (VIB), Ghent University and KU Leuven, specializes in researching microorganisms that closely interact with plants and their effect on agricultural crops. The company successfully raised 9 million euros of funding in 2017 following a successful Series A financing round and an R&D grant approved by Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship (VLAIO).