

# Bavarian Biotech News

February 2021



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## Dear Reader,

It is 2021 and the world is still in crisis mode. Not a day, not an hour without reports on the corona pandemic. Three vaccines are currently approved in Europe, with more to follow. And while politicians are making vaccination plans and constantly adopting new measures, the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries are working to develop new, improved test systems, to ensure the effectiveness of vaccines even with mutants and to bring the urgently needed therapeutics against COVID-19 onto the market.

In this issue of Bavarian Biotech News you will find an overview of Bavarian activities to combat the crisis, from entrepreneurial successes to the Bavarian Therapy Strategy, which is funded with EUR 50 million, to the creation of a pandemic research center and to other exciting news from Bavaria and beyond.

Stay confident and healthy!  
Your Bio<sup>M</sup> team

## Bavaria is funding the development of COVID-19 therapies with EUR 50 million

Since Bavaria started its EUR 50 million funding program for promising research approaches to drug development against COVID-19 on December 22 with the Bavarian Therapy Strategy, the federal government is now following suit. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has published a new funding announcement for the development of drugs and other therapeutics against COVID-19.



As part of the **Bavarian Therapy Strategy**, EUR 50 million will flow from the "Corona Pandemic Special Fund" in order to accelerate the development of drugs and therapies. Funding is intended primarily to take effect where promising research projects are not implemented fast enough due to market failure or difficult, protracted funding. The aim is to raise the diverse potential that Bavaria has as a biotechnology and medical location with an international top position. Both entrepreneurial and academic therapeutic approaches are to be supported. 25 innovative concepts have been submitted within the context of the funding program 'BAYTHERAPIE2020'. The intention is to fund around ten projects.

In a licensing procedure with a technical individual examination, implementation-related approaches should be prioritized. A targeted and fast funding is ensured by processing already existing funding programs of the Bavarian State Ministry for Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy (StMWi). In Bavaria, numerous companies have been involved in corona research since the outbreak of the pandemic - in addition to developing diagnostics and vaccine candidates, they are also involved in drug development. Already in spring, Bio<sup>M</sup> called for project proposals and campaigned for the creation of Bavarian funding for the development of drugs and therapies that can be used to treat potentially life-threatening diseases caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

## Bio<sup>M</sup> COVID-19 platform

- Use the network
- Stay informed
- Find partners

Currently more than 100 offers & requests online

Use the network for current information and the search for cooperation partners on our COVID-19 platform.

The Bio<sup>M</sup> team continues to address individual questions directly concerning how to cope with the special challenges posed by the pandemic.

[www.bio-m.org/en/covid19](http://www.bio-m.org/en/covid19)

## New pandemic research center in Penzberg near Munich

A new campus for infection, immune and pandemic research is to be built in Penzberg near Munich. The planned new facility of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft wants to investigate the role of the immune system in infectious diseases in cooperation with Roche Diagnostics and the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU).

In a press conference in mid January, the future partners and representatives of politics presented the plans. As already announced in September, a total of around EUR 80 million are to flow into the implementation of the concept, in equal parts from the federal government and the State of Bavaria. At the end of the start-up phase of five years, around 50 scientists from the fields of medicine, microbiology and IT are supposed to work at the new location. In the next two to three years, a building is to be erected in the Nonnenwald industrial area, which is also home to Roche.

The strategic partnership with [Roche Diagnostics](#) and [LMU](#) fits well with the orientation of the [Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft](#). More than half of the Fraunhofer Institutes work in the four major areas of health research - Data, Diagnostics, Drugs and Devices. To strengthen the research portfolio of the largest organization for application-oriented research in Europe, further locations are to be established in Hamburg, Potsdam and Berlin.



The Roche Diagnostics location in Penzberg in Upper Bavaria © Roche



## SARS-CoV-2 testing and sequencing with new methods from Bavaria

Especially with regard to significantly more infectious coronavirus variants, it is becoming increasingly essential to contain and manage the incidence of infection by both testing and genetic analysis, each reliable and rapid. The Bavarian companies baseclick and GNA Biosolutions have developed innovative systems.

[GNA Biosolutions](#) based in Martinsried received special approval for its Octea SARS-CoV-2 rapid test system from the Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM) end of December 2020. With GNA Biosolutions' new technology, decentralized corona rapid tests can be performed in about 40 minutes without sacrificing accuracy.



The Neuried company [baseclick](#) has launched a new and highly efficient analysis method for SARS-CoV-2 mutations. It is also possible to identify all SARS-CoV-2 mutations within a COVID-19 patient, including those over the course of the disease. Baseclick is a spin-off of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU).

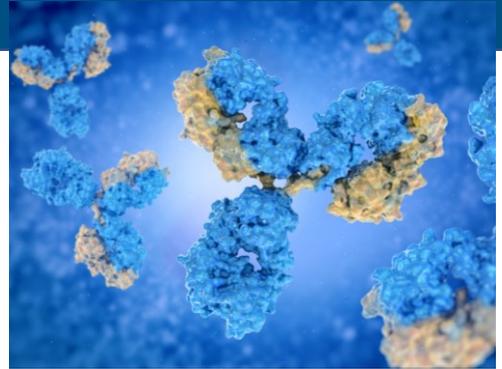


## Success of Formycon's SARS-CoV-2 Blocker

**Martinsried-based Formycon AG, together with its academic partners from the Technical University of Munich, has published promising results on its COVID-19 drug.**

Already at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe, the biotech company [Formycon](#) started the development of its ACE2-antibody fusion protein (FYB207). Here, the Martinsried-based company was able to draw on its experience in the clinical development of antibodies and antibody fusion proteins.

SARS-CoV-2 and other corona viruses use the surface protein ACE2 on human cells as an entry portal for infection of the respiratory tract. Formycon has therefore linked the human ACE2 protein to the constant portion of human antibodies to develop a SARS-CoV-2 blocker. Several variants of the viral blocker, ACE2-IgG-Fc, have been evaluated on a laboratory scale for manufacturability, stability and viral inhibition. According to Formycon, in vitro tests showed that ACE2-IgG-Fc effectively bound to SARS corona viruses and completely prevented cell infection. In addition, the ACE2 antibody fusion protein is also effective against mutational variants of the virus due to its biological properties and can also be used with other coronaviruses.



## GeneSurge in the final of the XPRIZE Rapid Covid Testing

**The Munich-based company GeneSurge has reached the finals in the international XPRIZE Rapid Covid Testing competition.**

As a non-profit organization, XPRIZE launched the USD 6 million XPRIZE Rapid Covid Testing competition for developing faster and safer COVID-19 tests. The 20 finalists include the Munich company [GeneSurge](#), which prevailed among 219 semi-finalists with its PCR test for the detection of SARS-CoV-2.

GeneSurge from Munich is the only company from continental Europe to be a finalist in the XPRIZE Rapid Covid Testing Competition. The GeneSurge assay has several advantages in terms of sample preparation, handling and running time. The company is currently in the process of obtaining CE certification.



genesurge

## Million funding for Kranus Health: via app for more men's health

**With seven-figure seed funding, Munich-based Kranus Health aims to further expand its men's health platform and launch a reimbursable digital therapy as a sustainable solution for erectile dysfunction. The capital comes from HTGF, A Round Capital, Venture Basecamp and Dr. Ralph Müller, in addition to existing business angels.**

Men's life expectancy lags behind women's by up to six years, thousands of men worldwide die too early due to unhealthy lifestyle and lack of preventative care and prevention. [Kranus Health](#), founded in 2020, aims to improve men's healthcare through digital solutions.

Kranus Health's digital offerings are designed to make it easier for men to lead healthy lifestyles. A reimbursable digital therapy for erectile dysfunction (DiGA as an 'app on prescription') aims to reduce the risk factors of serious cardiovascular disease associated with this condition.

[More...](#)

kranus health 

## Bavaria a TOP start-up location

In its Startup Barometer, EY (Ernst & Young) took stock: Despite the Corona crisis, more German start-ups received fresh capital in 2020 than in the previous year. In addition, Bavaria received the most capital in the health sector and is increasingly establishing itself as a top location with its own clear profile.

In the health sector, most of the investment capital in 2020 went to Bavarian start-ups: In 25 financing rounds they received a total of EUR 326 million - 50 million more than Berlin start-ups, which, however, had twice as many financing rounds (53). A total of 90 percent of the funding invested in the health sector in Germany went to young companies from Bavaria and Berlin. With 109 transactions and an increase of 27 percent, the health sector ranks second in terms of number of deals behind Software & Analytics (232 financing rounds). The investment volume that flowed into health start-ups even climbed 42 percent to EUR 670 million. [More...](#)



## EUR 1.5 million for better treatment of Parkinson's disease

EIT Health has selected the two winning teams of its 2020 Wild Card Innovation Program. The Munich-based start-up Orbit Health convinced with its idea to make the treatment of Parkinson's disease more efficient and individualized by using artificial intelligence. Orbit Health will receive EUR 1.5 million in funding for its implementation.

Parkinson's is the second most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's, affecting around 1.2 million people in Europe alone. The disease affects the ability to walk and talk, as well as being linked to mental health issues such as depression.

The integration of [Orbit Health](#)' technology "Neptune" into clinical practice is expected to allow physicians to monitor the patient's motor symptom status after each medication intake, thereby optimizing treatment and dosing. This should ultimately improve patients' quality of life. [More...](#)



m<sup>4</sup> Award 2021



create the future of medicine

m<sup>4</sup> Award - the Bavarian pre-seed funding program addresses Bavarian academic research projects with spin-off potential in medical biotechnology.

Up to five teams receive pre-start-up funding of a maximum of 500,000 euros for up to two years. The aim is to achieve follow-up financing.

Scientists at Bavarian universities, university clinics and non-university research institutions are eligible to participate.

Submission of the short descriptions: March 13, 2021



For more information click: [www.m4-award.org/en](http://www.m4-award.org/en)

## Bavarian-Ethiopian Initiative for Innovation and Start-ups

The Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs is supporting Ethiopia in setting up an innovation and start-up system. Therefore, a virtual seminar series was initiated to introduce the participants from various Ethiopian institutions (e.g. ministries, regional governments, start-up hubs and accelerators) to the building blocks of the successful Bavarian ecosystem on innovation and start-ups. This seminar series is under the umbrella of the Memorandum of Understanding between the respective ministries between Bavaria and Ethiopia.

TUM-Tech GmbH, a Munich based dedicated consultancy for technology transfer and innovation management, was mandated to develop and deliver the five seminars. Each seminar was dedicated to an individual topic, highlighting the Bavarian showcases, like start-up centers, business plan competitions and clusters. Experts from the various Bavarian institutions were invited to explain their activities and their important contribution to the successful ecosystem. For example, Bio<sup>M</sup> introduced their activities as a cluster organization and their virtual incubator. At the end there was a lively discussion on what joint activities could be initiated to support the development of the respective Ethiopian ecosystem.

Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs,  
Regional Development and Energy



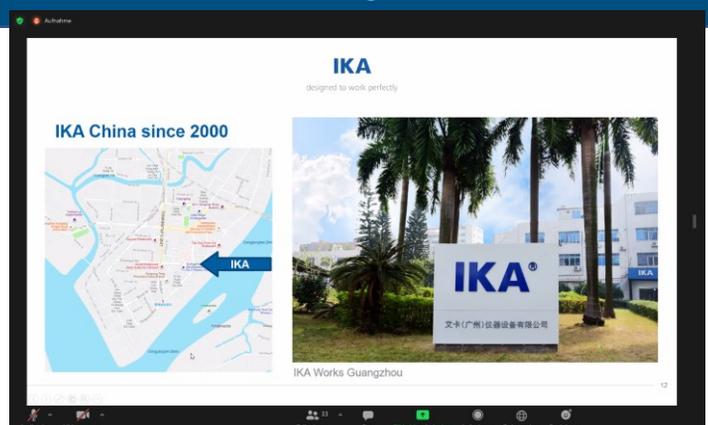
## Greater Bay Area (GBA) Healthcare Seminar Series - entering the Chinese market

The third volume of GBA Healthcare Seminar took place online, simultaneously in Heidelberg, Germany and Huangpu, Guangzhou, China.

In total, around 40 participants (~25 online from Germany) took part in the event. Among them, representatives of major German, European and Chinese biomedicine, and life science companies such as Merck, Ticeba, Link Health and European Institute of Technology and Healthcare. The event has attracted numerous European, biomedicine SMEs and start-ups, as well as biomedicine clusters and investment promotion organizations.

Also, representatives from leading German universities (Heidelberg and Würzburg) and law firms were among the participants. The keynote speakers provided important insights about specifics of healthcare industry in China, talked about present market and competition analysis, business model, financing and supportive measure possibilities and regulatory affairs aspects as well as details on recommended approaches and necessary processes for each presented case.

**Save the date:** The next online Seminar of the GBA Healthcare Series will take place on April 24, 2021



Event photo (Huangpu, Guangzhou, China)

## Internationalising in 2021 in EUROPE - opportunities for European SMEs to meet potential customers

Join an [Info Day](#) on 9<sup>th</sup> March, where the two EU-funded projects [Boost4Health](#) and [CE4BIG](#) present opportunities for European SMEs to meet potential customers in the EU virtually or physically.

In a compact online format from 2 to 3 pm you will learn about the Voucher Scheme and the B-2-B exchange support of the EU-projects, which enable you to continue with internationalisation activities in times of travel restrictions.

Moreover, three SMEs in the health sector will be presenting concrete suggestions for in-depth exchanges:

[Bicoll Group](#), [EpiQMax](#) and [Kaer Labs](#).

More information:

[Info Day "Internationalising in 2021 in Europe"](#)

### Introduction to Boost4Health and CE4BIG

9 March | 14:00 CET | 1 Hour | Online



- Support vouchers
- Success stories
- International connections

**Interreg**   
North-West Europe  
**Boost4Health**

## Opportunities in data-driven medicine - DigiMed Bayern Symposium

The consortium "DigiMed Bayern - Pilot Project for P4 Medicine in Bavaria " invites to the DigiMed Bayern Symposium with national and international key players on **March 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 15:00-17:00 CET. Digitally delivered.**

### Program Highlights:

#### Day 1:

Translation of cardiovascular research using digital approaches

#### Day 2:

Medical benefits based on clinical application of multi-omics approaches

#### Day 3:

Bioinformatics and digital solutions for translational medicine

**Registration is open!**

“

*The professional use of patient data can save human lives. That is why we have to get access to this data in Germany as well and as fast as possible.*



Prof. Dr. Horst Domdey, CEO Bio<sup>M</sup> Biotech Cluster Development GmbH



[www.digimed-bayern.de/symposium.html](http://www.digimed-bayern.de/symposium.html)  
digitally delivered, March 16 - 18

[BIO-Europe Spring Digital](#) March 22 - 25, 2021

[BioVaria Virtual](#) April 26 - 28, 2021

[BIO Korea](#), Seoul: June 9 - 11, 2021

[BIO International Convention Virtual](#) June 14 - 18, 2021

[Deutsche Biotechnologietage](#), Stuttgart: September 20 - 21, 2021

[BioJapan](#) October 13 -15, 2021

Please find current event information on our website [www.bio-m.org/en/events](http://www.bio-m.org/en/events).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, short-term changes can occur.

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