

Ghent, Belgium — 18 May 2026

B-COS raises €1M to develop next-generation bioactives through precision fermentation

B-COS receives support from AIF, VP Capital and Biotope by VIB to develop biological crop protection products using precision fermentation, enabling batch-to-batch consistency, and secured an early discovery program with the Japanese crop protection group Nichino Europe.



European farmers are being asked to produce more with fewer tools. Since 2009, roughly 50% of approved synthetic active substances have been withdrawn from the EU market. While biological alternatives exist, consistency remains a major challenge: most biopesticides are derived from natural raw materials through extraction processes that result in heterogeneous mixtures. For a farmer, this variability in performance carries real financial risk.

Ghent University spin-off B-COS aims to solve that problem. Today, the company announces the closing of a €1M pre-seed funding round backed by Agri Investment Fund (AIF), the venture capital fund of the group Boerenbond, the farmers' union of Flanders and eastern Belgium, and VP Capital, the long-term investment vehicle of the Van Puijenbroek family in the Netherlands and Belgium. Biotope by VIB, already provided pre-seed support and incubation from the outset. The €1M funding also includes a Research Project grant from VLAIO, the Flemish Agency for Innovation & Entrepreneurship, to further elucidate the mode of action of its crop protection product. The insights generated will directly inform field positioning and application strategies. In addition, the company benefits from support by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

B-COS develops biological crop protection products using precision fermentation. Through engineered bacteria grown on simple sugar feedstocks, the company produces chitooligosaccharides with pharmaceutical-grade batch-to-batch consistency, delivering identical molecular structures in every production run. The tightly controlled process ensures reliable product performance at a cost-effective price per hectare.

Their technology platform can be tuned to generate different chitooligosaccharide structures for different agronomic challenges, from drought resilience to nematode or fungal protection, providing B-COS a broad product roadmap built on a single core technology. With tomato as initial focus crop, the company will use the proceeds of today's round to advance scale-up activities, to navigate the European regulatory process, and to bring its first products to greenhouse and field trials.

B-COS has also entered into an early discovery agreement with Nichino Europe, the European subsidiary of the Japanese crop protection group Nihon Nohyaku. This collaboration will evaluate the agronomic potential of precision-fermented chitooligosaccharides across multiple crop protection applications. Furthermore, Stef Dierickx (business development manager) has joined B-COS's advisory board, contributing expertise in agri-tech commercialisation and industrial biotech scale-up. Together, these two achievements signal growing confidence that biological crop protection can meet the reliability standards expected by professional growers.

As Nichino Europe, we are continuously evaluating new crop protection solutions that could contribute to a sustainable food production. With this early discovery collaboration we want to analyse the solutions developed by B-COS. By doing this together with B-COS we aim to do this on an efficient way in order to shorten the time to market once the potential has been identified."

– **Stef Dierickx, Business Development Manager, Nichino Europe Co., Ltd**

B-COS was founded in June 2025 as the first company launched through Ghent University's Fast Lane spin-off program. The company was established by CEO Chiara Guidi and CTO Wouter Demeester, both doctoral graduates from Professor De Mey's laboratory, together with co-founder Maaïke Perneel, who brings commercial agri-tech experience to the team.

"What Europe needs is not just more biological alternatives, but better ones: products that deliver consistent, predictable results under real field conditions. This financing puts us in an excellent position to further unlock the potential of the technology platform"

– **Chiara Guidi, CEO and Co-Founder, B-COS**

"Agriculture is at a turning point, where the need for reliable alternatives is becoming increasingly clear. What convinced us in B-COS is not just the technology itself, but its potential to make biological crop protection a dependable choice in everyday farming practice."

– **Erica van Eeghen, Senior Manager Ventures, VP Capital**

About B-COS

B-COS develops biological crop protection products based on precision-fermented chitooligosaccharides. Its lead product targets tomato, offering protection against fungal disease and nematodes as well as improved drought resilience. The platform can be tuned to produce distinct chitooligosaccharide structures for other crops and agronomic challenges. b-cos.eu

About Agri Investment Fund (AIF)

Agri Investment Fund BV ("AIF") is the private equity and venture capital fund of the group Boerenbond (Farmers' Union) and wishes through its investments to contribute directly or indirectly to a stronger and more sustainable agriculture and horticulture in Flanders and German speaking Belgium. Its investments have a focus within the Ag-Tech and Agro-Food domains aiming at stimulating innovation and as such helping to build a stronger agriculture

of the future, allowing farmers and horticulturists to provide high-quality products at honest prices. More information can be found on www.aifund.be.

About VP Capital

VP Capital is a single family office based in Belgium and the Netherlands. The Van Puijenbroek family started their activities over 150 years ago. Our current strategy is an impact-first strategy that aims to contribute to biodiversity, climate, and social equality, by focusing on regenerative, circular, biobased, net-zero, toxicity free and inclusive solutions. Today we manage a diversified portfolio with an all-round team in various asset classes, including ventures. In our venture portfolio we focus on the domains energy transition, agrifood, clean technology, textile and built environment. VP Capital is B Corp-certified, and our CO2 reduction targets have been validated by the Science Based Targets initiative.

About Biotope by VIB

Biotope is a startup incubator and early-stage investor, launched in 2022 by VIB, a leading life sciences research institute in Belgium. It supports early-stage founders translating biotech breakthroughs into sustainable businesses that address planetary health challenges. biotope-ventures.com

About Nichino Europe

Nichino Europe Co., Ltd. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Nihon Nohyaku Co., Ltd., one of Japan's leading crop protection companies. Established in 2007, Nichino Europe manages the development, registration, and commercialisation of crop protection products and biostimulants across Europe. nichino-europe.com

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