

## Press Release

May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### **BASF startup incubator celebrates second anniversary and faCellitate product launch**

- **Venture Team faCellitate develops new ways for Life Science research with first product line BIOFLOAT™**
- **Interactive surface coatings for advanced cell technologies**
- **Chemovator now supports 11 Venture Teams with innovative ideas**

Mannheim, May 28, 2020. Two years after the foundation of the Chemovator GmbH, the first Life Science Venture Team “faCellitate” is now ready to launch their first product line. BIOFLOAT™ are surface coatings for consumables in cell culture. The benefit: The cells can grow under conditions close to their natural environment, making laboratory results more reliable and reproducible than before. “In the long run, it is possible to increase predictability and efficiency of preclinical cell culture models, reduce animal studies and reduce the high costs for research, drug development, and toxicological studies.” reveals Dr. Véronique Schwartz, team leader and specialist in polymer chemistry. The new coatings enable the cultivation of cells for various areas of biomedical research such as toxicology, stem cell, cancer and drug research.

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## Imitation of natural cell environment

"Mammalian cells such as cancer, stem, or primary cells serve as basic research models when it comes to studying biological processes, disease patterns, and drug interactions. However, these cells are cultivated under conditions that do not reflect their natural environment well," explains Schwartz. The limited reliability of cell culture models narrows the potential of biomedical research.

"Our mission is to change this by creating biologically relevant environments that our customers can use to imitate the way cells grow in the human body." This is achieved by providing a synthetic polymer coating layer on which the cell culture conditions are adjusted.

faCellitate-surface coatings are conveniently applied to consumables such as microtiter plates, laboratory containers, or cell culture bottles. The BIOFLOAT™ technology creates a highly defined and cell-repellent surface that adapts to the shape of the consumables. Inert polymers enable cells to grow in a three-dimensional space and form uniform multicellular spheroids. With traditional two-dimensional cell culture methods, cells can only spread on the flat surface of laboratory materials.

## From laboratory to market readiness

The development of the new coatings started in BASF's Advanced Materials & Systems research. In 2018 the scientists successfully applied with their promising idea to the newly founded BASF incubator "Chemovator" and turned into the first Venture Team with

the name "faCellitate". Since then, Chemovator supports the team in developing a suitable business model. "The protected space of Chemovator proved to be a great platform for commercial validation and getting in touch with potential customers. On top, it was possible to work with BASF-experts, such as our colleagues from the Toxicology and Materials Research, but also with our external collaboration partners, researchers from the Leibniz Institute for Polymer Research at the Max Bergmann Center for Biomaterials and experienced external entrepreneurs from the Chemovator network. They helped us to quickly develop our technology to market readiness," says Dr. Tobias Mentzel, Venture Team member and specialist in biotechnology and drug development.

## **Chemovator supports quick market development**

The development continues: the researchers are already developing their second product line. "I am very proud that faCellitate is now taking this step. I am amazed at how quickly a research topic can get from laboratory to market. We were able to learn and develop a lot together with our first venture faCellitate. The Venture Team will soon move out of our incubator since the two year incubation period is over. Then we have more space for new innovative ideas.", emphasizes Dr. Markus Bold, Managing Director of Chemovator GmbH.

Since the foundation in 2018, Chemovator has built a portfolio of 11 Venture Teams and supports them in turning their ideas into investable and scalable business opportunities.



## About Chemovator GmbH

Chemovator is the business incubator of BASF – available for all BASF-employees with innovative ideas around chemistry. Complementary to the existing innovation landscape of BASF, Chemovator offers a protected space to test new business ideas, products or innovative services and turn them into investable and scalable business models.

The wholly-owned subsidiary of BASF New Business GmbH was founded in 2018 and is located in Mannheim. Here, Chemovator offers an unconventional startup environment with plenty of space for creativity. From early validation to successful commercialization, all Venture Teams receive support from experienced entrepreneurs and investors, who have built startups and new businesses from scratch. Their support ranks from coaching over mentoring to providing extended network opportunities.

Further information at [www.chemovator.com](http://www.chemovator.com).

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## About faCellitate

faCellitate is a Venture Team of Chemovator GmbH. It was created in 2018 from a BASF research project by an interdisciplinary team consisting of chemists and biologists with long-term experience in material design. The resulting product ideas have been developed to market maturity in the Chemovator, the internal business incubator of BASF. faCellitate specializes in the development of polymer surface coatings for laboratory consumables to create a fully synthetic, biologically relevant environment for cell-based assays. The highly defined and standardized products are used in areas of biomedical research such as cancer and stem cell research, early drug discovery and toxicology to enable and significantly refine the efficiency and predictability of preclinical cell-based models. In May 2020, the team launched BIOFLOAT™, their first product line that offers an advanced cell-inert surface coating for 3D culture with superior reliability and consistency. Further products leveraging faCellitate's smart polymer platform are in development.

For further information, please visit [www.facellitate.com](http://www.facellitate.com) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).