



Amatera raises €1.5M to speed up the development of climate resilient coffee and perennial crops

Paris, France – October 26, 2023 – Amatera, a biotech platform accelerating the development of new perennial crops to help feed the world in the face of deforestation, diseases and climate change, announced today the closing of a €1.5 million Pre Seed investment round led by PINC, Paulig’s venture arm. Exceptional Ventures, Mudcake (previous Trellis Road), Joyance Partners, Agfunder and several experienced biotech entrepreneurs, including Nicolas Morin-Forest from Gourmey, are also participating.

Starting with coffee

Each year, about a trillion cups of coffee are consumed worldwide. This number is expected to double by 2050. Meanwhile, coffee is one of the crops in the world most threatened and affected by climate change and diseases.

Most Arabica coffee plantations around the world are established with the varieties resulting from breeding efforts initiated some 50 years ago. However, these varieties are susceptible to disease outbreaks, and are poorly adapted to the changing climatic conditions observed in many coffee growing regions. Rising temperatures are expected to reduce the area suitable for growing Arabica coffee by up to 50 percent in 2050 and 26% of the global coffee production is already lost to diseases every year.

“Coffee is under threat but today it can take more than 20 years to create a new coffee variety with conventional breeding techniques. We are accelerating the breeding of perennial crops including coffee to create new varieties four to five times faster such as the “Robustica”, a new coffee variety that combines the rich flavor profile of Arabica with the robustness and higher yield properties of Robusta. We’re also developing an Arabica variety that is naturally caffeine-free, which saves a huge amount of time, money and energy, as the standard way to decaffeinate coffee is by rinsing beans with chemical solvents.” says **Omar Dekkiche, CEO of Amatera**.

Using cells to speed up breeding

Amatera combines the latest plant cell culture and molecular biology techniques usually used for row crops and vegetables, to speed up the natural evolution of plants.

“Our approach is based on accelerating the plant’s natural evolution at the cellular level, which is an alternative non-GMO route to genome editing. The technology as such is not new but applying it to perennial crops such as coffee is, since they are more complicated and require several breakthroughs in cell biology. This is also why gene editing techniques are

struggling. Our technology is a real game-changer and opens up the avenue to applying it on several other crops, such as cacao, bananas and grapes or even pharmaceutical plants”, says **Lucie Kriegshauser, CTO of Amatera.**

“We love the disruptive potential and versatility of the platform since it can be used on several crops. Coffee has traditionally not received as much research and innovation as many other crops globally, and as coffee is one of Paulig’s core products, we are of course happy that Amatera’s first solution involves coffee. Our discussions with trading houses and customers show huge interest. It is still early days, but the team and its partners are world class, and we are very excited to see what they can do”, says **Marika King, Head of PINC.**

“We’re thrilled to be part of the team at Amatera. The team combines deep expertise in both science and business, and is focused on one of the biggest challenges of our time: accelerating the development of crops that will thrive and feed the world in the face of deforestation and climate change. And all of this without reliance on any controversial gene editing. Omar and Lucie are the real deal”, says **Matt Cooper, Executive Chairman of Exceptional Ventures.**

About Amatera

Amatera Biosciences develops a non-GMO breeding platform optimised for perennial crops, accelerating the selection and crossing of plants by pushing the boundaries of in vitro culture. The first application of their technology is on coffee, before expanding to other perennial crops threatened by climate change and massive diseases, such as cacao and grapes.

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About PINC

PINC is Paulig’s venture arm for investments in early-stage start-ups in and around the future of food. The objective of PINC is to help Paulig renew itself and prosper as well as contribute to a tastier and more sustainable planet.

About Paulig

Paulig is a family-owned food and beverage company, growing a new, sustainable food culture – one that is good for both people and the planet. Paulig provides all things tasty; coffees and beverages, Tex Mex and spices, snacks and plant-based choices. The company's brands are Paulig, Santa Maria, Risenta, Poco Loco and Zanuy. Paulig’s sales amounted to EUR 1,1 billion in 2022. The company has 2,300 passionate employees in 13 different countries working around the purpose For a life full of flavour.

About Exceptional Ventures

Exceptional Ventures is a London-based VC firm dedicated to investing in high-impact startups that improve the world we live in. Its mission is to help people live healthier, happier, and longer lives while supporting a healthy planetary ecosystem. Launched in 2022 with a £20M fund, it’s building a portfolio of 40 early-stage startups over three years across the HealthTech, FoodTech, and Financial Health sectors. Its founders, Matt Cooper and Paolo Pio, bring a wealth of experience in investing and supporting entrepreneurs with a combined portfolio of over 200 invested startups.