

**Evaluation Document for the
ZKB Pioneer Award TECHNOPARK® 2004**

NovoGEL AG

Technology:

NovoGEL possesses a key technology for manufacturing novel gels, in particular gels based on starch, originating in work done at the ETH Zürich (the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich). During the last two years this work was heavily improved on and expanded by NovoGEL and evidence was provided for its applicability in a variety of fields.

Using appropriate mixtures and specific processing of the starting materials, this technology allows the manufacture of a novel class of physical network structures (gels) having advantageous properties. These properties of the novel gels can be specifically adjusted within a very broad range. On the one hand, this allows existing products based on problematic raw materials (e.g. gelatine-based products such as medical soft and hard capsules/shells or gum-like candy (BSE)) to be replaced by products having unproblematic raw materials (starch). On the other hand, the technology lines up an entire series of novel product possibilities of extraordinary usefulness.

Basically, the technology lends itself to any kind of macromolecules. Above all, however, the possibility of using starch makes it very interesting. This reproductive and environmentally safe raw material guarantees that the technology is sustainable. In addition, established industrial processes may be adapted and existing equipment may be used for applying the technology. Therefore, the technology is expected to meet with rapid acceptance.

Team / Management:

The founders' team combines decades of experience in the field of material science with particular competency in the handling and processing of starch as a material, years of management and industrial experience as well as professional know how in protecting intellectual property.

In addition, the team was complemented at an early stage by a further person with important (legal, financial) competencies (C. de Pedrini). This optimal combination is rounded off by another widely known person heavily anchored and deeply rooted within the economy and having an international network (H. B. Meier).

Also, the team members have known each other for a very long time. It is probably due to this fact that in spite of major challenges during the founding of the company the team is still existent with the same crew.

Market Advantage:

NovoGEL is the proprietor of know how based on the team members' years of experience in handling starch on the one hand, and of a plurality of patents on the other, thus providing broad protection to the basic technology and its applications. The firm is the owner of these patents and patent applications. The by now far-reaching network which comprises well known players in different sectors of the industry provides solid and broad support to the company.

Market / Strategy:

This great platform technology fundamentally opens up a wide panoply of quite different markets to NovoGEL, such as the food sector (e.g. food with reduced glycemic index), medical technology (e.g. implantable PVA gels) or the field of materials (e.g. biopolymers), to name only a few. As a result, the company has been concentrating its efforts on selected markets for the time being and is developing the fundamentals for the corresponding favored products. Thereafter, NovoGEL will be looking for strong partners to join up with in order to further develop, distribute and sell the products or will license its technology to such partners. This strategy seems to pay as it turned out that the industry is highly interested in the technology.

Summary:

Although NovoGEL is still a young firm, they have been able to make its great potential plausible to a number of important partners as well as experienced business people and venture capitalists and to get their interest. This was also demonstrated in the Venture Businessplan Competition 2004, where NovoGEL managed to make the first place. The professional organisation of the company and the team members' personal network round off the image of a successful company. Therefore, we believe that this spin-off from the ETH Zürich is facing a promising future.

Prof. U.W. Suter
Vice President for Research, ETH Zürich
September 28, 2004