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Novonesis to acquire MicroBioGen, deepening its bet on yeast innovation and bioethanol

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Novonesis plans to acquire Australian biotech company MicroBioGen, strengthening its yeast technology, R&D capabilities and bioethanol solutions

Novonesis is set to acquire Australian biotechnology company MicroBioGen, moving to take full ownership of a business it has worked with for more than a decade and strengthening its position in yeast technology for industrial applications, particularly bioethanol. The agreement builds on Novonesisâ?? 2013 investment in MicroBioGen and its existing 23 per cent stake in the company. The transaction gives Novonesis an opportunity to bring MicroBioGenâ??s yeast genetics, scientific expertise and technology platform fully into its own biosolutions portfolio as demand grows for biological technologies that can improve the efficiency and sustainability of industrial production.

For Novonesis, the deal is as much about expanding its technology base as it is about ownership. Yeast sits at the centre of several industrial fermentation processes, and advances in strain development can influence productivity, process efficiency and the economics of bio-based manufacturing. Ester Baiget, CEO of Novonesis, said: â??This acquisition marks an additional step in our 2030 strategy. It strengthens our yeast capabilities, strengthens our R&D capabilities, and reflects our disciplined investment focus to drive growth.â?•

The acquisition comes as Novonesis continues to position biology as a growth platform across industries where fermentation and enzyme technologies can replace or improve conventional production processes. The company invests approximately 10 per cent of annual sales in innovation and has built its strategy around applying microbiology and industrial fermentation expertise to challenges spanning food, agriculture, energy and other bio-based industries.

MicroBioGen adds a specialised yeast technology platform developed over more than 20 years. The Australian company has built a library of elite yeast genetics designed to improve the industrial performance of yeast strains and has developed a business model around what it calls â??Yeast Innovation as a Service.â?• The companies already have a significant track record of collaboration. Their work in bioethanol has included the co-development of the Innova yeast series, designed to deliver improved industrial performance in ethanol production. Full ownership could allow Novonesis to integrate MicroBioGenâ??s technology more closely with its broader R&D capabilities and accelerate the development of new biological solutions.

Claus Crone Fuglsang, Chief Scientific Officer at Novonesis, said: â??We see MicroBioGen as a perfect match building on more than a decade of close collaboration, and we look forward to integrating their technology into Novonesis. With the acquisition, we will continue to strengthen our capabilities and develop the biosolutions our customers need.â?
The strategic rationale extends beyond bioethanol. MicroBioGenâ??s yeast platform has potential applications across baking, sustainable feed, energy and food, giving Novonesis additional opportunities to apply advanced yeast genetics across existing and emerging markets.

That broader application base is significant as industries look for biological alternatives that can improve resource efficiency and reduce the environmental footprint of production. For Novonesis, integrating MicroBioGen could therefore strengthen both its scientific capabilities and its ability to commercialise yeast-based solutions across multiple sectors. MicroBioGen has developed its technology through more than two decades of research into industrial yeast and has worked with industry leaders globally. Its collaboration with Novonesis represents one of the clearest examples of how its genetics platform can be translated into commercial industrial applications.

Geoffrey Bell, CEO and Co-founder of MicroBioGen, said: â??Joining Novonesis is a strong fit for MicroBioGen and its employees. After more than a decade of close collaboration, we could not think of a better home for the company.â? The transaction also reflects a continuation of a relationship that began with Novonesisâ?? investment in MicroBioGen in 2013. Rather than entering an unfamiliar technology area, Novonesis is moving to consolidate an existing partnership and bring a proven scientific capability further inside the organisation.

Novonesis said it will continue to support MicroBioGenâ??s existing partners and maintain continuity across its collaborations during the transition. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed. Completion remains subject to customary regulatory approvals, including clearance from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). With the acquisition, Novonesis is strengthening one of the core biological technologies behind industrial fermentation while expanding the potential applications of its yeast platform. The move underscores the companyâ??s broader strategy of investing selectively in scientific capabilities that can support growth in bio-based industries and create new solutions for customers seeking greater efficiency and sustainability.