

ENG: Strategická aliancia medzi InoBat a Wildcat Discovery Technologies sa chystá revolúciu v oblasti elektromobility v Európe

In the very near future, Slovakia should see the construction of a 100MWh battery production line, the costs of which are estimated at EUR100m. The construction is expected to begin in the first half of 2020, with the first batteries ready for distribution towards the end of 2021. This initiative comes as the result of a strategic alliance agreement signed today between InoBat and Wildcat Discovery Technologies. For the first time, Wildcat's renowned R&D platform enhanced with AI capabilities will be brought to Europe and combined in a unique full-scale production line. This initiative aims to become a global leader in automotive battery development and production, with a view to upscale to a 10 GWh mass production facility on the long term.

This cooperation envisages a unique combination of R&D centre, with regional exclusivity provisions to InoBat, and a production line that allows for continuous development of proprietary batteries in close cooperation with electric vehicle manufacturers. This vertically integrated supply chain from R&D to production mitigates many risks derived from processes, such as product flow or vendor compliance, among others. The construction is expected to start in the second quarter of 2020, aiming to have a fully operational facility towards the end of 2021. Capital expenditure for the production line is estimated at EUR100m to start with and will be financed in part by InoBat's shareholders and strategic partners and in part through debt instruments.

"The EU is set to become one of the largest world markets for both electric vehicle batteries and utility-scale energy storage. I am proud to see key European initiatives burgeoning in this regard. We will provide all necessary support for the EU to reach its full potential as a key global player in the next generation of batteries in the upcoming years," stated Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission, responsible for the Energy Union and founder of the European Battery Alliance.

In response to the European Commission's goal to reach technological and industrial autonomy in this field, InoBat aims to serve the European market with proprietary solutions. *"We are very pleased to have Wildcat joining us. Their proprietary technology has the potential to revolutionise the entire European electric vehicle batteries industry. Together with Wildcat, we aim to build a 100MWh demonstration production line, with a view to upscale to a 10 GWh battery mass production facility that will serve the CEE-based automotive manufacturers,"* said Marian Bocek, InoBat's Co-Founder and Executive Chairman.

"We are thrilled to see Wildcat's breakthrough research technology adopted by Central and Eastern Europe via this strategic alliance. Equipped with the ability to rapidly develop and evaluate new materials and technologies, the project with InoBat, and the entire region, will remain on the cutting edge of new battery technology, eliminating the risk of obsolescence,

and ensuring technical relevance and job creation for decades to come,” stated Mark Gresser, Wildcat’s CEO.

Both, the InoBat and Wildcat teams are also currently engaged in discussions with the European Investment Bank, which is known for having backed similar projects in the past year. *“European Investment Bank, the financial arm of the European Union, is working closely with the European Commission to support the development of a European battery ecosystem. It is important to bring the best global battery technologies to Europe and nurture them further in accordance with European standards. That is why we welcome the cooperation between the Wildcat and InoBat as a springboard for the creation of a dynamic battery ecosystem in the Danube Valley”*, said Vazil Hudák, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank.

BACKGROUND

InoBat, the CEE’s R&D and production company, founded as a by-product of the region’s strong manufacturing and industrial heritage, connects leading regional industrial groups with international partners looking to expand their global reach to the European continent.

InoBat’s latest partner, **Wildcat Discovery Technologies**, is developing a technology that combines the power of parallel high throughput experimentation (“HTP”) and artificial intelligence. Wildcat works with companies throughout the battery industry supply chain to accelerate battery performance improvements, reduce R&D costs, speed up the introduction of the resulting products to market, as well as increase overall safety by helping optimising a multi-variable system. Wildcat has invested over US\$70m to develop, build, and augment its HTP, conducting over 225,000 physical experiments, filing over 170 patents, and completing more than 80 customer collaborations. Wildcat’s customers include battery industry leaders at every step of the battery supply chain: automakers in all regions, global consumer electronics companies, large cell makers, and major chemical companies are among Wildcat’s current customers. Furthermore, Wildcat has been backed by several venture capital funds, including 5AM Ventures, Presidio Partners, Richard Branson’s Virgin Green Fund, Infield Capital, and Vision Ridge Partners.

Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary are among the world’s top car producing countries. The CEE’s prime geography locates it as a strategic hub between the East and West, having resulted in the establishment of over 20 OEMs, such as Jaguar Land Rover, PSA, Volkswagen, Audi, Fiat, Skoda, Porsche, KIA, BMW, etc., in just seven countries. This concentration over such a limited area has helped the entire supply chain ecosystem to burgeon (tier 1 and tier 2 suppliers) and transform the region into a fertile ground for the emergence of automotive-related innovations. As mentioned in a McKinsey & Company report dated May 2019, the annual demand for EU-produced batteries is expected to reach 750GWh in 2040 under a conservative scenario, and soar up to 1,500GWh under an optimistic scenario. This means that the projected battery demand from electric vehicles produced in Europe is more than five times the volume of currently confirmed initial phase projects in Europe, creating a great opportunity for InoBat and Wildcat.

The **European Battery Alliance** was launched by Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič in October 2017 as a collaborative platform to allow industry, research, EU Member States, the European Investment Bank and the European Commission to join forces in order to build a strategic value chain for batteries in Europe.