UGent and imec launch silicon photonics spin-off Caliopa

I-Micronews

Ghent University (UGent) and imec today announced the creation of Caliopa, a spin-off from their world leading Photonics Research Group. An initial 2 million Euro in funding was raised from Baekeland, Fidimec, PMV-Vinnof, a private investor and the founders. Caliopa will develop and market advanced silicon photonics based optical transceivers for the data and telecommunications markets.

According to the latest Market Forecast from LightCounting LLC, the premier market research firm for optical communications, the global sales of optical transceivers will reach $2.4 billion in 2010, with the market posting a 13% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between 2011 and 2014, as the industry catches up with the steadily growing demand for bandwidth.

“Multiple optical components can be replaced with a single optical chip by using silicon photonics allowing us to develop small, highly integrated and low power optical transceivers. The ability to make these silicon photonics components at standard CMOS manufacturing facilities also makes it commercially very attractive” commented **Martin De Prycker**, CEO of Caliopa. *“Key potential customers have expressed great interest in Caliopa’s solutions stating that port density and power consumption are the major concerns in driving the growth of optical networks.”*

Caliopa will be able to build on the know-how, intellectual property and experience of years of research by the world renowned Photonics Research Group at Ghent University and imec led by Prof. Roel Baets. In addition, it will use the expertise in silicon processing of the world-leading nanoelectronics research center imec. To develop its first products, the company raised 2 million Euro in funding from a consortium of investors led by Baekeland, Fidimec and PMV-Vinnof.

Caliopa currently counts 7 team members, composed of technical experts from imec/UGent and industry veterans with over 75 years cumulative management experience in the high tech industry. The company is planning to double this team in the next 12 months.

News release can be downloaded at
http://www2.imec.be/be_en/press/imec-news/caliopalaunch.html

About Silicon Photonics
Silicon photonics offers the possibility of large cost savings (in materials, components, and energy consumption) and a significant increase in capabilities. The ability to use standard microelectronic CMOS manufacturing facilities and processes makes silicon photonics commercially very attractive.

The sub-micron precision of these standard microelectronic CMOS processes allow for silicon photonics components to integrate a variety of optical functions in a very small chip that consumes far less power than traditional optical components. The decades of experience making (electronic) chips from silicon as well as the installed base of (silicon) semiconductor manufacturing capacity can be leveraged to build highly integrated low-cost optical components for a variety of applications. The performance, enabled by the high accuracy of the semiconductor manufacturing tools, is an important benefit but of even more interest is the potential to lower costs and increase volume production, much as it is in the regular semiconductor industry.

Silicon photonics technology has become mature enough to potentially disrupt the component supply-side of electronic and telecom/datacom markets.

About Caliopa
Caliopa aspires to be a market leader in advanced optical transceivers for the data and telecommunication markets. The company was incorporated in 2010 as a spin-off of the Photonics Research Group of Ghent University and imec to commercialize a decade of research in Silicon Photonics. Benefitting from the advantages of Silicon Photonics, Caliopa will develop and market optical transceivers that offer advanced functionality, higher port density and lower power consumption. Caliopa is privately held by a consortium of investors including Baekeland, FIDIMEC, Vinnof and private investors.

About imec
Imec performs world-leading research in nanoelectronics. Imec leverages its scientific knowledge with the innovative power of its global partnerships in ICT, healthcare and energy. Imec delivers industry-relevant technology solutions. In a unique high-tech environment, its international top talent is committed to providing the building blocks for a better life in a sustainable society. Imec is headquartered in Leuven, Belgium, and has offices in Belgium, the Netherlands, Taiwan, US, China and Japan. Its staff of more than 1,750 people includes over 550 industrial residents and guest researchers. In 2009, imec's revenue (P&L) was 275 million euro. Further information on imec can be found at www.imec.be.

Imec is a registered trademark for the activities of IMEC International (a legal entity set up under Belgian law as a "stichting van openbaar nut”), imec Belgium (IMEC vzw supported by the Flemish Government), imec the Netherlands (Stichting IMEC Nederland, part of Holst Centre which is supported by the Dutch Government), imec Taiwan (IMEC Taiwan Co.) and imec China (IMEC Microelectronics (Shanghai) Co. Ltd.).

About UGent
Ghent University was founded in 1817 and is one of the leading institutions of higher education and research in the Dutch speaking region of Western Europe today. Ghent University's eleven faculties are composed of more than 130 departments all together. These departments offer high-quality courses in every one of their scientific disciplines, each inspired by innovative research. Ghent

University is an open, committed and pluralistic university with a broad international perspective. Located in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium and the cultural and economical heart of Europe, Ghent University is an active partner in national and international educational, scientific and industrial cooperation.

Photonics is a field in which Ghent University excels. The Photonics Research Group is one of Europe's leading groups in the field of photonic integration. It hosts three ERC-grant holders. Recently Ghent University has founded a multidisciplinary research platform in the field of photonics: the Center for Nano- and Biophotonics ('NB Photonics'), thereby clustering the resources and knowhow of 12 professors from four different faculties. The technology transfer in the field of photonics is taken care of by a specific unit: the Photonics Innovation Center 'Plateau', which was instrumental during the incubation phase of Caliopa. Also with respect to education in photonics, Ghent University takes a leading role by coordinating an international master program in this field.

About Baekeland II Fund
In 2005 the partners of the Ghent University Association, together with Fortis Private Equity Belgium, KBC Private Equity, Ethias, Volksvermogen and the ARKimedes Fund, a subsidiary of PMV, the investment company for Flanders, established Baekeland Fund II. This fund was created with capital of 11.1 million EUR. Baekeland Fund II invests in mainly high-tech companies that have grown out of the research labs of Ghent University, Hogeschool Gent, Arteveldehogeschool or Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen. Baekeland Fund II is operationally managed by UGent TechTransfer, assisted by investment managers from KBC Private Equity and Fortis Private Equity Belgium. For more info, see www.baekelandfonds.be

About Fidimec
Through its daughter company FIDIMEC NV, imec supports the incorporation of spin-off companies. During the feasibility studies and the incubation period the starting company can rely on starting capital, infrastructure and personnel. FIDIMEC Invests in incubation projects to lay the foundations for incubation projects to become viable companies. In this process FIDIMEC tries to attract a maximum of external sources of financing.

About Vinnof
PMV-Vinnof (the Flemish Innovation Fund) provides seed capital for young, innovative companies and start-ups in Flanders. Vinnof is a 100 % subsidiary of PMV, the investment company for Flanders. More information on Vinnof is available on www.vinnof.be

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