



Plant Protein Innovator Proeon raises USD 2.4 million in Seed Round

- *The fresh funds will be used to accelerate growth, expand research and development capabilities and set up research lab in the Netherlands*

Pune, 7th September 2021: Committed to building a sustainable and environment friendly food ecosystem, Pune based food ingredient start-up Proeon, has recently raised USD 2.4 million as seed capital. The funding round, led by entrepreneur Shaival Desai, also saw participation from Flowstate Ventures, Peak Sustainability Venture Fund I (executed by Samir Shah on behalf of the Fund), Wao Partners (Pratul Shroff family office), and other angel investors. Existing investor Sanjaya Mariwala, MD of OmniActive Health Technologies Limited also participated in this round. The funds will be utilized to enhance growth and set up a research lab in the Netherlands, Europe, filing IP, scaling up production and expanding the team.

Specialized in high quality plant protein ingredient innovation, Proeon was founded in 2018 by Ashish Korde and Kevin Parekh to promote clean and healthy food for “people, planet, and conscience”. The company helps solve critical formulation challenges at the ingredient level, making it easier for food companies to make tastier and healthier plant-based meat, dairy, and egg replacement products.

Speaking on the funding, founders **Kevin Parekh and Ashish Korde** said, *“We are at the centre of creating next-gen plant protein ingredients and are delighted with the trust shown by our investors. By relentlessly focusing on innovation and partnering with large global brands as well as startups, we are working towards creating food products that are hassle-free to formulate, and are loved by consumers. Our immediate focus would be expanding presence in the markets of North America and Europe, where the shift to plant proteins is accelerating at an unprecedented pace.”*

With the plant-based proteins sector projected to reach nearly USD 200 Bn by 2027, the founders have struck a chord in the global food industry as food manufacturers are aiming to capture the new market being created. Global consumers are increasingly becoming aware of the impact of their food choices, leading them to opt more and more for plant based diets.

Research from the Good Food Institute India indicates that \$3.1B was invested in the broader smart protein sector globally in 2020, up 3x from the year prior as enthusiasm for sustainable and secure protein supply chains deepened during the Covid-19 pandemic. GFI India MD Varun Deshpande said - “India’s agricultural heritage and biodiversity offers tremendous potential to satisfy skyrocketing global demand for plant protein, and Proeon’s work is emblematic of that potential. This investment is a show of confidence in the sector’s promise to strengthen agricultural value chains and benefit farmers, create jobs, and catalyse a more sustainable, secure, and just protein supply.”



Commenting on the investment, entrepreneur Shaival Desai, who has also invested in startups such as Licious, Peesafe, **said**, *“We're really happy to have partnered with Proeon in their journey to innovate in the alternative proteins space. Kevin and Ashish, bring deep industry experience and thorough technical understanding of the proteins space and are the perfect team to cater to this industry that thrives on innovation.”*

“We are thrilled to invest in Proeon which is catering to a rapidly growing market of plant-based proteins in India and globally. Proeon’s technology will have a major societal impact by solving climate change and nutrition challenges of today. The team has demonstrated exceptional technical and strategic capabilities, and is strongly positioned for exponential growth.” **added Anjani Bansal, Founder – Flowstate Angel Investment Fund.**

“Replacing meat with plant based alternatives is a critical part of the planet’s journey towards sustainable survival over the next few decades . Proeon’s plant-based protein will play an important role in achieving that sustainability. ” **said Pratul Shroff.**

Currently, the company is working with brands from Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia to build more sustainable and healthier plant-based alternatives such as highly functional plant-based egg-replacement products, clean-label burgers, patties, and alternative dairy products. In collaboration with their partners and customers, they are also aiming to save more than 170 billion liters of water and eliminate about 150 metric tonnes of CO2 emissions by replacing wasteful, animal-based foods with plant-based alternatives.

About Proeon:

Proeon works with a vision to enable synergy between people, planet, and conscience through innovation in the sustainable production of good food.

Their current product portfolio includes Mung Bean Protein, Chickpea Protein, Amaranth Protein, and Hemp Seed Protein.

They are currently a part of the global accelerator program MassChallenge Switzerland 2021 as the only Indian start-up in the Sustainable Food Systems cohort. In the past, they have been adjudged as winners of the ET Power of Ideas 2018, the SAP Innocity Challenge 2019, and the OHSSAI Excellence & Sustainability Award 2019. They are associated with leading research institutes such as Wageningen University of Research, Netherlands, and the Centre for Food Technology & Research Institute, Mysore, India. They are backed by leading incubators and innovation centres in India like IIM-Ahmedabad's CIIE.CO, CSIR-CFTRI, Mysore, and NCL-Venture Centre, Pune.

