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**Saving water through digitalisation:
BayWa investment arm BayWa Venture GmbH invests
in Spanish IoT start-up Spherag together with Bonsai
Partners and Ship2B Ventures**

Munich, 2 August 2022 – BayWa AG has invested in the Spanish start-up Spherag through its investment arm, BayWa Venture GmbH. Co-investors include Bonsai Partners and Ship2B Ventures. Spherag has developed an internet of things (IoT) solution to digitalise and automate existing irrigation systems, reducing water and energy consumption in agriculture by one-third with little effort. The new investment will be used to expand distribution operations and develop additional use cases for the current solution in the area of precision irrigation.

“The number of irrigation systems will need to increase around the world to ensure the cultivation and supply of certain foods,” says Marcus Pöllinger, member of the BayWa Board of Management whose responsibilities include agricultural business in Germany. Pöllinger also believes that regulations on water usage will only become stricter: “It’s not about whether we can optimise consumption, it’s how we can optimise consumption – there’s no other option.”

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The Spherag solution consists of solar-powered modules that can be fitted to the control units of existing irrigation systems. The network of modules creates a digital twin of the system, which monitors irrigation in real time and can be controlled directly. In future, farmers will be able to manage irrigation remotely using their smartphones instead of opening and closing each of the valves by hand. “Suddenly there is no longer any need to walk around the entire field,” says Marion Meyer, Managing Director of BayWa Venture GmbH. “Not only does this save time, it also reduces energy consumption and water usage and minimises unnecessary nitrogen leaching.”

Other data sources such as weather stations and soil moisture sensors can also be integrated into the Spherag system. Other functions include measuring water consumption. “Irrigation in agriculture is still very much an analogue process,” Meyer adds. “Spherag is the gateway to the digital world. It’s a particularly interesting solution for water-intensive cultures such as nuts or avocados, which are in high demand from consumers but are often criticised due to the amount of water needed to grow them. But fruit and vegetable growing in Germany can benefit from the new technology, too.”

Spherag was founded in 2020 and already has a presence in more than 15 countries. The Spanish company’s solution is already in use by over 450

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agricultural operations from Australia to the United States to irrigate an area of some 50,000 hectares. “Combining technology with convenience is what sets our solution apart,” says Spherag CEO Jesús Ibáñez. “A typical irrigation system consisting of ten valves, a pump and a mixer can be automated in one morning.” In terms of the effort involved, Ibáñez believes that integrating IoT modules is a small step. “But what the system delivers is a quantum leap forward in sustainable field management,” he says.

Spherag TECK IoT S.L.

Spherag is a pioneering presence in the integration of IoT solutions in the field of agriculture. The Spanish start-up designs and develops electronic IoT systems as well as the underlying cloud infrastructure used to monitor the network. Right from day one, Spherag’s approach has always been to establish a plug-and-play link between IoT and cloud-computing irrigation solutions and the needs of farmers. Spherag was founded in early 2020 and employs 12 staff members. More information is available at spherag.com

BayWa Venture GmbH

BayWa Venture GmbH is the innovation arm of BayWa AG. Its goal is to find and roll out new business models for BayWa and its affiliates that make a lasting,

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measurable difference by investing in and collaborating with start-ups. The BayWa Venture investment portfolio currently comprises eight start-ups. More information is available at venture.baywa.com

Bonsai Partners

Bonsai Partners is a venture capital company with a total assets under management of more than €210 million. The company has been supporting leading tech companies – including some of Spain’s most successful online firms, such as Infojobs, Softonic, Idealista, Wallapop, Glovo and Returnly – since 2001. Bonsai Partners invests at multiple phases, both in the primary and second markets, in European start-ups such as SendCloud, Exotica, Casavo, Refurbed and Paack. Spherag is the second investment for a new fund launched in July. More information is available at bonsaipartners.eu.

Ship2B Ventures

Ship2B Ventures is Spain's leading impact investment company. It combines risk investment and impact assessment to generate triple profitability in its start-up investments: on an economic, social and environmental scale. Ship2B Ventures holds assets under management of more than €55 million with investments in the likes of Qida, Mika, Codeop and Rosita Longevity. More information is available at ship2bventures.com.

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Caption: The Spherag solution can reduce water and energy consumption in agriculture by one-third with little effort.

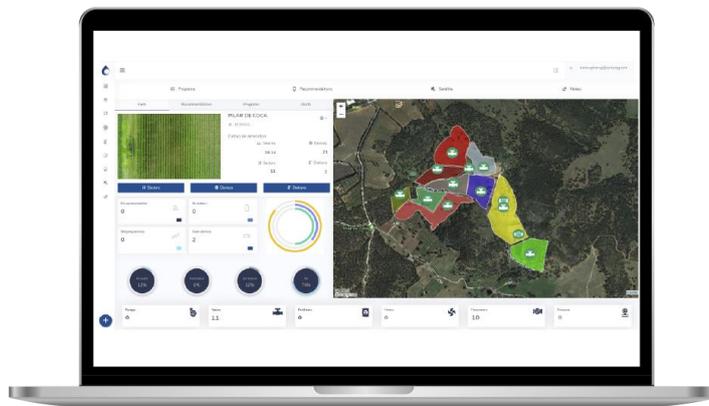
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Caption: The Spherag solution consists of solar-powered modules that can be fitted to the control units of existing irrigation systems.

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Caption: The network of IoT modules creates a digital twin of the entire irrigation system, which monitors irrigation in real time and can be controlled directly.

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