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SOLVAY TAKES STAKE IN FUEL CELL DEVELOPER ACAL ENERGY

Investment in innovative low-cost and high reliability fuel cell technology

Solvay announces today that it has taken an equity stake of 13% in UK-based fuel cell developer ACAL Energy. ACAL Energy will use the funds to accelerate the development of its innovative fuel cell technology (FlowCath®), which reduces the cost and improves the reliability of fuel cells. Solvay's investment amounts to GBP 1.25 million (EUR 1.49 million).

Fuel cells are a highly efficient and clean energy conversion technology, with a wide variety of applications including remote and distributed power, residential cogeneration, as well as automotive and mobile applications. FlowCath® replaces quantities of expensive precious metal catalyst found in the cathode of conventional fuel cells with a proprietary low cost liquid catalyst. This not only reduces the cost of the fuel cell but also provides significant durability and reliability benefits through system simplification and the elimination of the most common failure mechanisms found in standard fuel cells. ACAL Energy will introduce a demonstration fuel cell with a power output of 1 kW in 2009. More information about fuel cells can be found on [Solvay's website](#).

“This investment in an innovative company allows us to take part in a technological breakthrough, which will make fuel cells more cost-efficient. As leader in innovative polymer membrane technology for fuel cells, we are committed to give strong support to the development of such devices which are needed to achieve sustainable development,” said Jean-Michel Mesland, Solvay's General Manager Research & Technology and Member of the Executive Committee. “Solvay considers fuel cell technology as a promising source of future business”, added Leopold Demiddeleer, Senior VP Future Businesses of Solvay.

Chief Executive Officer, Dr SB Cha said, “We are very fortunate in this difficult investment climate to have the backing of knowledgeable and experienced investors such as the Carbon Trust Investments and Solvay. FlowCath® will enable fuel cells to capture a significant share of the new energy production mosaic alongside solar, wind and other forms of clean energy generation. Our world-class development capabilities and partnerships with leading companies in Europe and Asia will enable us to deliver this technology to the market in the very near future.”

SOLVAY is an international chemical and pharmaceutical Group with headquarters in Brussels. It employs more than 28,000 people in 50 countries. In 2007, its consolidated sales amounted to EUR 9.6 billion, generated by its three sectors of activity: Chemicals, Plastics and Pharmaceuticals. Solvay (NYSE Euronext : SOLB.BE - Bloomberg: SOLB.BB - Reuters: SOLBt.BR) is listed on the NYSE Euronext stock exchange in Brussels. Details are available at www.solvay.com.

ACAL ENERGY is a developer of a new fuel cell technology that will enable low cost and highly reliable fuel cell systems for stationary and remote power, home cogeneration, and automotive and mobile applications. The company was founded in August 2004 by FlowCath® inventor Dr Andrew Creeth and is headquartered in Runcorn, UK. ACAL Energy is currently funded by CT Investment Partners LLP, Rising Stars Growth Fund (RSGF), NorthStar Equity Investors Ltd., Porton Capital Ltd., Synergis Technologies Ltd., Solvay SA and a major Japanese corporate investor.

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NOTES TO THE EDITORS

Fuel cell technology is based on the catalytic transformation of fuel (hydrogen, methanol,..) - via a chemical reaction with oxygen - into electricity, heat and water. It is likely to become the new energy technology in the medium and long term future for a wide variety of portable (for example personal computers and mobile phones), stationary (for example combined heat and power – CHP – generation) and automotive applications.

Fuel cells, which convert hydrogen into electrical power, are not only much more environmentally friendly than traditional combustion engines; they are also much more efficient: the power conversion rate – at around 50% - is twice as high. Moreover, as hydrogen can be produced from renewable sources, fuel cell technology will also help to reduce the dependence of our economy on oil and other fossil fuels.

ACAL Energy is developing fuel cells which use hydrogen as fuel. The ACAL fuel cells are designed to achieve higher power density and lower fabrication costs compared to proton exchange membrane fuel cells. ACAL fuel cell cathode does not use a platinum catalyst and could achieve higher power density compared to conventional PEM fuel cells. The company will introduce a demonstration fuel cell with a power output of 1 kW in 2009.

