

Press Release

Düsseldorf/Münster, November 19, 2021

NRW.BANK invests in AI start-up from Cologne

operaize develops smart software for efficient and sustainable production planning

In the context of a seed financing round, NRW.BANK has invested in operaize GmbH, a Cologne-based start-up providing an AI-based solution for efficient planning of production processes. Made under the “NRW.Start-up akut” programme, which supports young companies in the difficult conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the investment is designed to accelerate the development of the product, improve its marketability and win new customers.

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“As value chains become increasingly complex, companies need new procedures and solutions for planning, controlling and optimising their production processes,” says Torsten Klink from NRW.BANK’s Equity Finance unit. “Software such as the one offered by operaize therefore has huge potential and we are pleased to be part of the financing round and to support the start-up’s continued growth.”

The operaize solution uses optimisation methods based on artificial intelligence which autonomously detect malfunctions or risks in industrial manufacturing processes and determine suitable problem-solving strategies to avoid breakdowns. This enables enterprises to save resources such as energy and plant capacity. “operaize addresses the core challenges faced by manufacturing companies so as to make production more effective and more sustainable, thus strengthening business performance while at the same time addressing climate change,” says Franz Felsmann, co-founder and CEO of operaize.

“NRW.Start-up akut” is a six-year convertible loan that was relaunched by NRW.BANK and the NRW Ministry of Economic Affairs in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. In the first financing round, eligible companies should not be older than 36 months, but their age is no longer relevant in the second round. NRW.BANK uses KfW funds for the programme. These come from the “Pillar 2” part of the federal government’s set of measures to support small SMEs and start-ups in the COVID-19 crisis.

For more information, visit www.nrwbank.de/start-up-start

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About NRW.BANK

NRW.BANK is the promotional bank of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). Its mission is to support its owner – the state of North Rhine-Westphalia – in the completion of its structural and economic policy tasks. In its three promotional fields “Economy”, “Housing” and “Infrastructure/Municipalities”, NRW.BANK uses a wide range of promotion tools – from low-interest promotion loans to equity financing to advisory services. It cooperates with all banks and savings banks based in NRW on a competition-neutral basis. NRW.BANK takes into account the existing offers by the Federal Government, the North Rhine-Westphalian government and the European Union in the arrangement of its promotion.

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