

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE AND CREATION OF A GLOBAL LEADER IN ECOLOGICAL CONSULTING

Paris, 22th September 2022



Nature protection: Biotope, the European leader in ecological consulting, joins forces with Bioconsult, the leading German consultancy specialised in off-shore wind power, and its subsidiary HiDef Aerial Surveying, Europe's leading provider of high-resolution aerial wildlife surveys. Aurignac Finance's Energy Transition team advised the transaction.

Biotope thus becomes a 27% shareholder in the German and British entities. The new Group employs 800 persons and registers over €80m in revenues. It has subsidiaries in 10 countries and operates permanently on 4 continents.

With this critical size, the three entities are able to respond to an essential challenge of their market: to obtain the most reliable objective data on a large scale in order to establish the most robust environmental impact studies and thus to define and implement optimal nature protection projects throughout Europe and the world.

The transaction places the new Group in a long-term perspective. It will be able to deliver high-level ecological studies with the necessary freedom of thought from any financial, industrial or energetic issue.

About Aurignac Finance

Aurignac Finance is an M&A advisory firm providing investment banking services on transactions with enterprise value predominantly between €5m and €150m. Founded in 2004, the firm has been ranked as one of the leaders in its market by Refinitiv for many years. With 13 employees and several sector-specific advisors, Aurignac Finance is the French partner of Mergers Alliance, an independent global network of M&A advisors, leader on the segment of transactions valued up to \$500m.

Aurignac Finance has developed strong expertise in the driving sectors of the energy transition. With a dedicated team of 5 people, a strong track record in these areas and a research and monitoring department, Aurignac is continuously involved in the full spectrum of operations driving this sector (fundraising, M&A and infrastructure financing).

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The expertise acquired over the years by each of the entities and pooled over the past seven years will be used in particular to protect marine mammals and birds in a context of strong development of offshore wind energy throughout the world. The different entities are very complementary in their know-how and geographical coverage. Already present in all four corners of the world through its 30 sites in France and abroad, Biotope is strengthening its capacity to intervene in Northern Europe and in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Frédéric Melki, Chairman of Biotope: "We are delighted to be able to consolidate a long-standing partnership with companies that share the same values of rigour, innovation and passion. Our ambition is to continue the development of the different entities by increasing operational and above all human synergies. The presence of Aurignac at our side was a triggering and facilitating factor of the operation. Their team was able to respect the specificities of all the stakeholders, to impose a necessary rhythm to the operation and to bring innovative solutions in response to the stakes of the deal".

Georg Nehls, Managing Director of Bioconsult: "We are very pleased to combine our know-how with that of Biotope in the service of biodiversity. Such a group of companies specialised in ecology did not exist before in Europe. This alliance will enable us to considerably increase our capacity to collect reliable data on a large scale, to analyse them and thus to better understand the movements, avoidance and disturbance of species and, ultimately, the adaptation (or not) of their populations to marine infrastructures".

Jean-René Griton, Partner at Aurignac Finance, comments: "It was a great pleasure to advise on this transaction. Biotope and Bioconsult are forerunners in nature protection engineering in Europe and worldwide. It is always gratifying to carry out a cross-border merger of three leading companies in three different countries, but our greatest satisfaction was to work out a deal that would strengthen each entity over the long term, ultimately serving biodiversity".

Main parties and advisors

Bioconsult:

Bioconsult SH (Georg Nehls, Thilo Liesenjohann),

Conseils Bioconsult:

Conseil juridique : **Blaum Debtmers Rabstein** (Dr Klaus Oepen, Daniella Bramkamp)

Biotope:

Groupe Biotope (Frederic Melki, Anne-Lise Melki, Ariel Benfredj-Hirsch)

Conseils Biotope:

M&A advisors: **Aurignac Finance** (Jean-René Griton, Stoyan Kostadinov, Clotilde Bouvat-Martin, Théophile Binet)

Legal advisors: **Valoris Avocats** (Cecile Puijalon-Radu) **Ebner Stolz** (Dr Christoph Winkler, Antje Kurz)

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