

PARIS, March 2, 2026

Ilion Water Technologies Raises €3.8M to Simplify Desalination with Pressure-Free Technology

Ilion Water Technologies, a deeptech startup incorporated in February 2025, announced today the closing of its pre-seed funding round of €3.8M (including €1.3 million in non-dilutive funding). The round was co-led by Demea Sustainable Investment with its new early-stage fund IAM (Innovation for Adaptation & Mitigation) and Critical Path Ventures. This milestone follows significant institutional support from Bpifrance, the Île-de-France region, CNRS Innovation, PSL, and the European Research Council (ERC).

Spin-off of the Physics Laboratory at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS-PSL), Ilion is tackling the global water crisis by challenging the century-old industry standard of high-pressure desalination. Currently, 97% of the world's water resources are saline, yet only 3% of the global population drinks desalinated water due to the high costs and complexity of traditional systems.

Ilion's breakthrough lies in its patented technology. Unlike standard Reverse Osmosis (RO) systems that rely on "brute force" mechanical pressure, Ilion utilizes a highly charged membrane controlled by a low-voltage electrical panel. This innovation eliminates the need for bulky high-pressure equipment, resulting in a system that is:

- **Pressure-free:** Simplifying infrastructure and reducing CAPEX.
- **Energy-efficient:** Operating on just a few volts to drive water through standard filters.
- **Chemical-free:** Utilizing advanced physics to reduce environmental impact.

The newly raised capital will be used to scale up its technology and launch its first field validation partnerships with industrial early adopters. By offering a modular design that can retrofit existing infrastructures, Ilion aims to provide a greener, cheaper alternative for the 29% of the world's population living near saltwater sources.

The founding team brings together top-tier expertise: Dr. Lucie Ries (CEO, water treatment expert), Zacharie Pilo (CTO, ocean engineer), Pr. Lydéric Bocquet (Professor at ENS Paris, Scientific Advisor, Académie des Sciences, serial innovator), Paulina Sarnikowski (Lab Manager, biotechnology), and Frédéric Hammel (Strategic Advisor, 25+ years in the startup ecosystem).

Media contact: Ilion Water Technologies: Lucie Ries, CEO

email: lucie.ries@ilion-watertech.com



About Ilion Water Technologies

Based in Paris, Ilion is a deeptech startup redefining water treatment standards. A winner of the i-Lab 2024 and Pollutec Innovation Challenge, the company transforms cutting-edge nanofluidics research into sustainable industrial solutions.

ilion-watertech.com

About DEMEA Invest

Demea Sustainable Investment (ex-Demeter) is a European asset manager dedicated to financing the ecological and energy transition across venture capital, growth equity and infrastructure. Demea Sustainable Investment invests from early-stage tickets of €1 million to larger commitments across its growth and infrastructure strategies.

In 2025, Demea Sustainable Investment and Cerea Partners - the long-standing specialist in the agri-food value chain - announced their merger to form **Demea Invest**, a combined sustainable investment platform managing approximately **€3bn in assets**, unifying complementary sector expertise and **70 professionals across six offices**, including Paris, Lyon, Bordeaux, Düsseldorf, Madrid, and Montréal. The legal merger is expected to be completed in the second half of 2026.

The IAM fund, investor in Ilion Water Technologies, was raised with the support of the National Seed Fund (FNA), managed by Bpifrance Investissement as part of the *Programme d'Investissement d'Avenir*.

www.demea-si.com

About Critical Path Ventures

Established in 2022, Critical Path Ventures invests in innovative scientific research projects by providing financial support and strategic guidance to early-stage startups founded by researcher-entrepreneurs. It focuses primarily on physics, medicine, biotechnology, and climate-related technologies.

www.critical-path.fr

Contributors to the transaction

Legal Advisors:

For the company: Goodwin – Xavier Leroux & Valentine Nuaud

For Demea Sustainable Investment: Joffe & Associés – Thomas Saliel & Rudy Diamant

For Critical Path Ventures: AGN Avocats Paris – Antonin Cubertafond, Associé

Media contact: Ilion Water Technologies: Lucie Ries, CEO

email: lucie.ries@ilion-watertech.com



Financial Advisors:

Odyce – Aurélie Lafitte

IP Advisors:

Questel (Novagraaf) – Cyril Mavré, Nicolas Nowak, Stéphane Roux

ESG Advisors:

Greenflex – Camille Poutrin, Jean Dumont

HR Advisors:

Human Ventures : Valérie Blanchot Courtois

Media contact: Ilion Water Technologies: Lucie Ries, CEO

email: lucie.ries@ilion-watertech.com