

# Startup biopipe's biological pipes aim to promote sustainable water treatment

[Business](#)



At a time when the term innovation has come to be closely linked with business propositions of technology startups, the Turkish entrepreneurs behind startup Biopipe want to set an example that there is scope to innovate and make an impact in too. A patented, and one-of-its-kind wastewater treatment system, is “inspired by nature,” and treats wastewater biologically without any chemicals. Biopipe’s product uses a natural treatment mechanism, wherein water is treated inside pipes by using “good” bacteria. As a result, Biopipe does away with the need for infrastructure such as treatment plants, water tankers etc. and boasts of being a 100% natural, waste-free and odor-free solution.

Co-founders Enver Misirli and Enes Kutluca admit to have always had a vision for environment protection, and water, being the “most important element for sustenance,” was a key focus area. With Misirli driving the commercial aspects of the venture, and Kutluca applying his environmental engineering background to invent the solution, the duo is an example of how Explaining how Biopipe can redefine a sector that has been largely conventional, Misirli says, “Existing water treatment technologies are treating water, yes, but producing waste, which in turn needs to be treated, and harms the environment.” He further notes the environment dilemma associated with the process, given the quantities of energy required to run water treatment plants. “The third point is the cost involved. Governments build huge infrastructure to collect waste, and clean treated water separately- all this costs a lot,” he explains. He adds that Biopipe can be implemented in various scales- from houses, to hotels, labor camps, and even cities. “It works even in a one cubic meter space, as it does in our Turkey office,” says

Misirli. Accordingly, while majority of Biopipe's business is B2B in nature, they are also working to create awareness of their product among households.

Spending over three years in research and development, a period when they bootstrapped and were supported by grants from , Biopipe's first prototype was born in Kutluca's garage, and was tested in his house. Launched in 2013, Biopipe claims to have completed over 40 projects since then, across Dubai, Oman, Turkey, Qatar, and other markets. Realizing that the best way to "secure yourself from competition is by execution and growing globally," Biopipe focused on strategic partnerships early on, leading to a joint venture and licensing agreement with a UAE-based water management solutions company. It's a win-win deal, says Misirli, with Biopipe growing their technology's reach with Metito's business network and execution expertise, and Metito in turn, enjoying access to a treatment system more effective than conventional ones. "Metito has been very transparent and supportive, and open to new ideas...besides commercial benefits, they have brought in a lot of mentorship and support," says Misirli.

Besides the Metito tie-up, Misirli also considers the recognition and funding from Swiss investment company SGEK Holding in 2014 to be Biopipe's biggest milestone. "The angel investment gave us a great push to commercialize." Post this; Biopipe also raised a second round of investment from other Turkish investors. Misirli's determination for the venture reflects as he spells out the short-term objective of Biopipe: to focus on getting the best out of their partnership with Metito, grow into a well-known brand in the

region, and win over clients with their product. The steadfast focus seems to be working, as the company is busy working on latest key wins such as projects with Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) and Saudi ARAMCO- projects, which have also helped bring in much-needed industry recognition.

#### **‘ TREP TALK ME**

##### **Enver Misirli, co-founder and co-CEO, Biopipe**

What is your view on the importance of team management skills for entrepreneurs?

“ The hardest part of an entrepreneur’s job is perhaps building and motivating the team to work with him. Not an easy job for any entrepreneur. Good projects often fail because of not being able to build the and not having right people with you. Specially, if you are part of an industry not very open to new ideas and innovation (we are a clear example for this).”

What are your top tips for aspiring entrepreneurs in the region?

“ I believethat any entrepreneur working with a valuable technology needs a strategic partner. Without having a partner, it won’t be easy to expand. You will be dealing only locally and your technology can’t be commercialized. If founders do not have the business mentality that is needed to expand, they should look at business partnerships and not be scared about entering into them [such partnerships]. At the end of the day, you need trust in business and nothing can be achieved without trust. [Second], having a mentor, who you can reach out to whenever you are stuck with anything, is also important.”

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Given the region's current economic scenario, is it a right time to get into entrepreneurship?

“ I believe any kind of 'crisis' situation in the economy is actually The focus is now on entrepreneurship, and all governments are looking at entrepreneurs to see what alternative they can offer. So, this could be a great chance. For any country now, it's significant that they support their SMEs, and UAE is also having a great vision in diversification of the economy.”