

Press Release 03/2026 – October 13, 2026

RAW MATERIAL TRANSITION IN THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY: FORMER COVESTRO EXECUTIVE DR. KLAUS SCHÄFER JOINS CYCLIZE IN AN OPERATIONAL ROLE

Stuttgart, Germany – The Stuttgart-based deep-tech startup Cyclize is paving the way for the large-scale replacement of fossil natural gas in chemical production. Dr. Klaus Schäfer, who served as Chief Technology Officer at Covestro AG from 2015 to 2023, has been announced as Cyclize's Chief Industrialization Officer effective October 1, 2026. Schäfer, who has been supporting the company as an investor and Chairman of the Advisory Board since its seed funding round in 2024, will now assume direct responsibility for integrating the technology into European chemical parks. He will retain his role as Chairman of the Advisory Board.

Expanding Leadership for Scaling: Former Covestro Chief Technology Officer Dr. Klaus Schäfer, as Chief Industrialization Officer, is taking on responsibility for large-scale plant scaling at the Stuttgart-based deep-tech company Cyclize.

Natural Gas Substitute as an Industrial Lever: Cyclize's plasma technology replaces fossil natural gas—the key raw material for nearly all everyday chemical products—with non-recyclable waste.

Commercial Traction: Following a successful commissioning in Schwedt, a technology partnership with Siemens, and 20 industrial orders, Cyclize is preparing to build its first large-scale commercial plant (FOAK).

Independence from Natural Gas

Whether plastics, pharmaceutical precursors, textiles, or automotive components: The majority of European industry relies on the chemical processing of natural gas as its primary carbon feedstock. High energy and raw material prices, as well as geopolitical uncertainty surrounding imports, are putting increasing pressure on manufacturing sites in Europe.

Cyclize addresses this core problem with an industrial solution: Using patented plasma technology, the company converts hard-to-recycle industrial and plastic waste into precisely the chemical building blocks that have previously been expensively derived from natural gas. The process replaces fossil fuel imports right at the beginning of the value chain and ensures the necessary raw material resilience for chemical companies.

Its feasibility in an industrial setting has already been proven: A containerized plasma plant is currently undergoing continuous testing on the grounds of the PCK refinery in Schwedt. Together with Siemens, Cyclize has also developed a modular energy system that supplies electricity from the medium-voltage grid to the plasma reactors. The plasma drivers

developed by Cyclize achieve an efficiency of up to 98 percent.

Proven Natural Gas Substitute Poised to Enter Chemical Plants

The commercial demand at the laboratory and pilot scales demonstrates that the industry is seeking such solutions: Cyclize has already proven, on behalf of customers, the suitability of 20 different industrial waste streams as raw material substitutes. Planning is currently underway for the construction of the first large-scale commercial plant (First-of-a-Kind / FOAK) at a German chemical site—the key milestone for scaling up.

“The European chemical industry is facing a historic restructuring. We must break free from our dependence on imported natural gas if we want to remain competitive,” explains Dr. Klaus Schäfer, Chief Industrialization Officer at Cyclize. “Cyclize offers the industry a market-ready alternative: We use local waste streams as a source of raw materials, thereby ensuring the long-term viability of our chemical sites. I’m bringing my 30 years of experience in the chemical industry to bear to quickly and reliably translate this technology into full-scale plants.”

“The leap from pilot operations to the chemical park is what determines the commercial breakthrough of a deep-tech startup,” emphasizes Maïke Lambarth, co-founder and CEO of Cyclize. “Klaus Schäfer has been with our company since the first round of financing; he has overseen chemical production, managed one of Germany’s largest chemical parks, and knows what a new technology needs to succeed there.”

Successful Financing

Funding from the “exist Forschungstransfer” program laid the foundation for the company’s founding in 2023. This was followed in 2024 by an oversubscribed seed round, which, with just under five million euros, enabled the founders to both build the pilot plant at the Stuttgart Technical Center and assemble a team—now numbering 20—with extensive technical expertise.

The seed round was led by UVC Partners, with participation from AURUM IMPACT, High-Tech Gründerfonds (HTGF), and UnternehmerTUM Funding for Innovators. In addition, angel investors have invested in the company.

“Dr. Schäfer has managed international production sites for a global corporation and knows exactly how a chemical plant must be set up to meet the industry’s high standards. The fact that he is taking on an operational role at Cyclize demonstrates Cyclize’s potential for industry. I greatly appreciate the exceptionally good collaboration on the board and am now delighted about his operational involvement at Cyclize.” Amanda Birkenholz, Partner at UVC Partners.

UVC Partners is an established deep-tech investor with over €800 million in AUM and led the seed round for Cyclize.

About Cyclize

Cyclize, a spin-off from the University of Stuttgart, has developed a technology to decarbonize the chemical industry by using mixed plastic waste and CO₂ as raw materials to produce synthesis gas (a gas mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen). This synthesis gas is a fundamental building block for modern chemicals and is used to produce plastics, methanol, hydrogen, and e-fuels. Until now, synthesis gas has been produced through the linear use of fossil resources such as natural gas. The innovative plasma-based process replaces natural gas with waste materials, reduces dependence on fossil fuels, and enables a resilient, circular carbon economy.

Founder Team

Maike Lambarth, Co-Founder & CEO
Stephan Renninger, Co-Founder & CTO
Jan Stein, Co-Founder & COO
Dominik Novakovic, Co-Founder & CFO

Press Contact

Anja Schröder
Email: press@cyclize.de
Phone: +49 152 07203249

Web & Social

Website: cyclize.de
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/cyclize/>

Images

Image 1: Cyclize's founding team at the pilot plant in Stuttgart (from left to right): Dominik Novakovic (CFO), Maike Lambart (CEO), Jan Stein (COO), Dr. Stephan Renninger (CTO); Copyright: Jens Volle / Cyclize)

Image 2: Dr. Klaus Schäfer (Chief Industrialization Officer); Copyright: Covestro AG / Dr. Klaus Schäfer