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**PROTO LABS COOL IDEA! AWARD WINNER, SBT AQUA,
SEES CLEAN WATER AS THE TRUE PRIZE**

SBT Aqua is the latest recipient of the Proto Labs Cool Idea! Award, a generous service grant which helps companies get their product to market as quickly and efficiently as possible. Danish company SBT Aqua used all three of Proto Labs services – 3D printing, CNC machining and injection moulding – to test and produce its ground-breaking water-analysis technology.

Based in Lyngby, Denmark, the company is a worthy winner of the Cool Idea! Award. The company developed an innovative process that speeds up the detection of pollution in water; its simple ambition is to help create a world where everyone can drink water, knowing it's clean and safe.

SBT Aqua is the first Danish winner of the Cool Idea! Award. The company plans to use injection moulding to mass-produce the sensors, but first it used 3D printing to refine the design, and CNC machining to help predict the how the finished product will look when injection moulded.

Being able to use all three Proto Lab services has made a big difference to the progress of BactoFlow's development. As Gustav Skands, CEO and founder of SBT Aqua, explained, "The short turn-around time offered by Proto Labs, in conjunction with a strong support team helping to deliver the parts, was extremely valuable. To put this into context, Proto Labs can produce and deliver parts quicker than if we used a local workshop! This efficiency is essential with the production of a first product. The other main advantage was the quality assurance provided by Proto Labs. With each part design-checked before production, we had the benefit of the company's 20 years' experience to identify any improvements or tweaks the design needed."

Gustav continued, "The Cool Idea! Award is a double whammy from a business perspective. The service grant allowed us to investigate more innovative ideas, plus accolade of being granted the Award is validation for SBT Aqua as a business, and a great selling point with investors."

Larry Lukis, Proto Labs founder, commented, "We created the Proto Labs Cool Idea! Award to help businesses and individuals turn their ideas into real-life products. Each year, the programme donates service grants of up to £150,000 to use Proto Labs services in prototyping, design development, testing or even an initial production run. This is our way of supporting entrepreneurs whose products can solve important problems and improve lives."

Three different waterworks in Denmark are currently piloting the new process – using the working name BactoFlow – which is radically different from traditional approach to detecting water pollution. Current microbiological quality control processes are slow and expensive. To analyse water quality and test for bacteria, samples are collected manually, incubated in a laboratory for three days before the results are received. With SBT Aqua’s system, a new type of automated sensor continuously samples the water, measures bacteria levels and alerts the user immediately if it detects contamination.

Encouraged by the prototyping experience, SBT Aqua will definitely be using Proto Labs for injection moulding when BactoFlow goes into full production. Quality and reliability are crucial – to ensure the product fulfills its potential to revolutionise contamination detection in water.

As the technology behind BactoFlow is such a game-changer, SBT Aqua is planning an initial launch, to early adopters in Denmark, in the second quarter of 2017. The company will prove the product’s potential through strong reference cases during the rest of 2017, and then start selling it across Europe in 2018.

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Notes to Editors:

About SBT Aqua

Smart Bio Technology (SBT) Aqua is a Danish company founded in 2014 by three graduates from the Technical University of Denmark (DTU). SBT Aqua is currently in a field-testing development stage of a revolutionary sensing unit which is able to monitor the bacteria and non-organic particle level in water in real-time.

<https://sbtaqua.com/>

About the Proto Labs Cool Idea! Award

The Cool Idea! Award helps entrepreneurs bring innovative products to market through grants that support product prototyping, testing and production. For more information or to apply for a Cool Idea! Award, go to www.protolabs.com/cool-idea.

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