

New VIB start-up Aelin Therapeutics secures 27 M€ to exploit its proprietary Pept-in™ protein knockdown platform

Leuven (Belgium), December 11, 2017 - *Aelin Therapeutics, a privately held Belgian biotherapeutics company, announces today that it has secured a 27 M€ investment to pioneer a novel modality in drug development in order to create a completely new class of antibiotics and first-in-class therapeutics against high-value undruggable human targets. The technology, branded Pept-ins™, harnesses the power of protein aggregation to specifically induce functional knockdown of a target protein. The company will use the proceeds of the 27 M€ Series A financing, to bring a first Pept-in product to the clinic.*

Aelin Therapeutics is founded by VIB and its partner universities KU Leuven, VUB and UGent, based on the groundbreaking work of renowned structural biologists Prof Joost Schymkowitz and Prof Frederic Rousseau. The company is based on a very comprehensive preclinical Proof of Concept data package illustrating different applications of the technology such as in bacteria and cancer cells, but also in fungi, viruses and plant cells, with publications in high impact journals including Science. The Pept-in technology allows for the rational design of novel biotherapeutics and differentiates itself from any other therapeutic modality through its unique mode of action, its designability and intracellular target space out of reach for typical small molecule or antibody approaches.

Building on the solid science and a convincing data set, Aelin Therapeutics has succeeded in raising 27 M€, bringing together a strong group of well-reputed investors consisting of LSP (the Netherlands), PMV (Belgium), Novartis Venture Fund (Switzerland), Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund (Germany) and Fund+ (Belgium). These resources enable the company to build on its platform capabilities and develop its first products until the end of initial clinical development.

Scientific publications

- [De novo design of a biologically active amyloid, Gallardo et al., Science 2016](#)
- [Protein aggregation as an antibiotic design strategy, Bednarska N et al., Molecular Microbiology 2016](#)

Note to the editor

Credits

When reporting on this news, please mention all partners involved. When retweet mention us: @VIBLifeSciences @CBD_VIB @ugent @LeuvenU @VUBrussel @PMVnv @Novartis @Boehringeret

VIB-KU Leuven Center for Brain & Disease Research

Scientists at the VIB-KU Leuven Center for Brain & Disease study how brain cells are organized and how they communicate with each other. These mechanisms reveal and provide insights into what goes wrong in brain diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, ALS and dystonia. This basic work should ultimately lead to new drugs for use against these currently incurable diseases.

Ghent University

After more than twenty years of uninterrupted growth, Ghent University is now one of the most important institutions of higher education and research in the Low Countries. Ghent University yearly attracts over 41,000 students, with a foreign student population of over 2,200 EU and non-EU citizens. Ghent University offers a broad range of study programs in all academic and scientific fields. With a view to cooperation in research and community service, numerous research groups, centers and institutes have been founded over the years. For more information www.UGent.be.

KU Leuven

KU Leuven is a leading European university dedicated to research, education and service to society. It is a founding member of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) and has a strong European and international orientation. Its sizeable academic staff conducts basic and applied research in a comprehensive range of disciplines. University Hospitals Leuven, its network of research hospitals, provides high-quality healthcare and develops new therapeutic and diagnostic insights with an emphasis on translational research. The University welcomes more 50,000 students from over 140 countries. Its doctoral schools organise internationally oriented PhD programmes for over 4,500 doctoral students. More info: www.kuleuven.be/english.

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) is a thriving university in the heart of Belgium and Europe, which in 1969-1970 split off from the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), founded in 1834. VUB combines excellence in teaching with excellence in research. Several of its 150 research groups are top-ranked worldwide. The principle of independent research is central at VUB, but the quality of its undergraduate and graduate programs is no less important, as the university provides an environment where students are treated as individuals and supported in their personal development. Currently, VUB has some 9,000 students and 2,700 staff, divided over eight faculties and two Brussels campuses (in Etterbeek/Elsene and Jette). The VUB University Hospital is adjacent to the Medical Sciences campus in Jette and employs 3,000 people. More info: www.vub.ac.be/.

VIB

VIB is a strategic research center in life sciences and biotech. The results of VIB's top research are actively translated into added value for society. VIB unites the expertise of 75 research groups thematically organized into 8 research centers. VIB's technology transfer team proactively translates new biological findings into new economic activities, such as starting up new companies and partnerships with the biotech and pharmaceutical industry. Since its foundation in 1996, VIB has created 19 start-up companies. VIB also engages actively in the public debate on biotechnology by developing and disseminating a wide range of science-based information about all aspects of biotechnology. VIB has a close partnership with five Flemish universities – Ghent University, KU Leuven, University of Antwerp, Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Hasselt University. More information: www.vib.be.

About LSP

LSP is an independent European investment firm, providing financing for private and public life sciences companies. LSP's mission is to connect investors to inventors, focusing on unmet medical needs. Since

the late 1980s, LSP's management has invested in about 100 innovative enterprises, many of which have grown to become leaders of the global life sciences industry. With over €1 billion of investment capital raised to date and offices in Amsterdam, Munich and Boston, LSP is one of Europe's leading life sciences investors. For more information, please visit www.lspvc.com

About PMV

PMV is a do and dare company that shapes the economic future of Flanders. PMV finances promising companies from the very start to growth and internationalization. PMV offers tailor-made financial solutions for every entrepreneur with a solid business plan and a strong management team, by providing venture capital, loans and guarantees. An experienced and highly motivated team of 125 professionals endeavors every day to achieve the goal of creating prosperity and well-being in Flanders. By the end of 2016, PMV had a portfolio of about 1 billion in assets under management. More info about PMV can be found on www.pmv.eu.

About Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund

Created in 2010, the Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund GmbH (BIVF) invests in groundbreaking therapeutics-focused biotechnology companies to drive innovation in biomedical research. BIVF is searching for significant enhancements in patient care through pioneering science and its clinical translation by building long-term relationships with scientists and entrepreneurs. BIVF's focus is to target unprecedented therapeutic concepts addressing high medical needs in immuno-oncology, in regenerative medicine or gene therapy. These may include novel platform technologies to address so far undruggable targets, new generation vaccines and/or new biological entities, such as oncolytic virotherapy. BIVF takes an active role with its portfolio companies – delivering significant added value through its own extensive drug discovery, scientific and managerial expertise. BIVF has €200 million under management and currently supervises a portfolio of more than 20 companies. For more information, please visit www.boehringer-ingelheim-venture.com.

About Fund+

FUND+ is an open-ended Fund for long term equity investment in innovative Life Sciences companies with a focus on Belgium. The objective is to create sustainable shareholders value, contribute to the development of a leadership position in the Life Sciences sector for Belgium and generate a tangible, beneficial societal impact. (www.fundplus.be)

Contacts

Questions concerning the start-up

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