



## **BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM BOOSTS IMMUNE-ONCOLOGY PIPELINE THROUGH COLLABORATION WITH VIRATHERAPEUTICS**

- **New long-term collaboration to develop next generation oncolytic virus platform and lead candidate VSV-GP**
- **Potential transaction value of up to EUR 210 million; co-funding of development activities and option to acquire ViraTherapeutics**

**Innsbruck, Austria, and Ingelheim, Germany, September 28, 2016** – ViraTherapeutics and Boehringer Ingelheim today announced a long term collaboration to jointly develop a next generation oncolytic virus therapy platform and to investigate ViraTherapeutic’s lead candidate VSV-GP (Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV) glycoprotein (GP)) alone and in combination with other therapies. ViraTherapeutics, a biopharmaceutical company specializing in the development of oncolytic virus therapies, has developed its novel technology with joint support from its lead investors EMBL Ventures and Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund (BIVF) and will now be responsible for preclinical and clinical testing of VSV-GP in Phase I trials. Under the terms of the collaboration, Boehringer Ingelheim receives the right to acquire ViraTherapeutics after conclusion of Phase I clinical development.

“We are very excited about this new collaboration with ViraTherapeutics, a company for which the Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund is a core investor,” said Dr. Michel Pairet, member of Boehringer Ingelheim’s Board of Managing Directors responsible for Innovation. “Oncolytic viruses are among the most promising new therapy approaches in cancer research and the technology developed by ViraTherapeutics may offer significant advantages compared to others currently under development. The new collaboration is an example of Boehringer Ingelheim’s increasing focus on partnering and further complements the company’s growing immune-oncology pipeline that includes among others, a therapeutic cancer vaccine and next generation checkpoint inhibitors.”

Oncolytic virus therapy is a cancer treatment approach that uses a virus that infects and breaks down cancer cells. Tumor antigens that are normally hidden from the immune system inside the cells are released, triggering an immune response to fight the tumor. VSV-GP has a shorter replication time than other oncolytic virus platforms currently under development. This oncolytic virus does not integrate in the DNA and has been modified to avoid neural inflammation associated with wild type viruses. In VSV-GP the glycoprotein of the Vesicular Stomatitis Virus has been replaced by the glycoprotein of the Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis Virus (LCMV) to conceal the virus from the immune system. In preclinical models it did not induce virus neutralizing antibodies, potentially enabling repeated administration.

“This is an important milestone for the development of ViraTherapeutics. The team has worked hard on our technology platform and lead candidate. In addition to its oncolytic activity, VSV-GP has demonstrated the ability to prime and boost an anti-cancer immune response and does not appear to prompt effective antiviral immune responses. These properties are expected to allow ground-breaking applications of this novel treatment approach. In the collaboration with Boehringer Ingelheim we can now fully explore the platform and therapeutic potential of our VSV-GP oncolytic virus,” said Prof. Dr. Dorothee von Laer, scientific founder

and CEO of ViraTherapeutics. “We will also continue to investigate VSV-GPs potential to be armed with therapeutic genes as well as antigens for its use as a prophylactic or therapeutic vaccine vector.”

Boehringer Ingelheim is combining a focus on cutting-edge science with a long-term view enabling the company to create a stable environment for the development of the next generation of medical breakthroughs. This new project adds another building block in this long-term strategy to improve the lives of patients with high unmet medical needs.

#### **About ViraTherapeutics GmbH**

Austrian based ViraTherapeutics GmbH (ViraT) is a privately held biopharmaceutical company developing promising innovative virus-based immunotherapeutics for the treatment of cancer. ViraT was founded in 2013 as a spin-out of the Medical University of Innsbruck by Prof. Dr. Dorothee von Laer, head of the Virology Division at the university. ViraT develops oncolytic cancer vaccines based on a chimeric virus derived from the Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV), so called VSV-GP. Initially, ViraT received Pre-Seed financing funds from CAST (Center for Academic Spin-offs Tyrol), Tyrol, and from the Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH (aws - the Austrian Government Promotional Bank). ViraT is funded by Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund (BIVF), EMBL Ventures and the Empl foundation, as well as by the aws through its Venture-Capital-Initiative and Seedfinancing program and by the FFG (Austrian Research Promotion Agency) through several programs.

The company currently has 14 employees. ViraT won the international life science business plan competition Best of Biotech 2012 and was awarded the second prize in the Science4Life venture cup 2013. ViraT has a collaboration with the Medical University of Innsbruck, which includes a team of scientists from the laboratory of Prof. von Laer.

For more information, please visit [www.viratherapeutics.com](http://www.viratherapeutics.com).

#### **About Boehringer Ingelheim in Oncology**

Boehringer Ingelheim’s oncology research is driven by a passion to advance clinical practice and a determination to improve the lives of patients who are battling cancer. Through our own scientific innovation and partnerships, we are focused on discovering and providing novel best-in-class, breakthrough cancer medications that fit the needs of patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals. We have a clear strategy to become a leader in the field of lung cancer. Boehringer Ingelheim has successfully launched two products for NSCLC, which have been widely adopted and established as valuable additions to current clinical practice. Continuous insights and learnings from research and development are key parts of innovation and our way forward to advance clinical practice in lung cancer and other cancer types.

Boehringer Ingelheim is one of the world’s 20 leading pharmaceutical companies. Headquartered in Ingelheim, Germany, Boehringer Ingelheim operates globally through 145 affiliates and a total of some 47,500 employees. The focus of the family-owned company, founded in 1885, is on researching, developing, manufacturing and marketing new medications of high therapeutic value for human and veterinary medicine.

Social responsibility is an important element of the corporate culture at Boehringer Ingelheim. This includes worldwide involvement in social projects through, for example, the initiative “Making More Health” while also caring for employees. Respect, equal opportunity and reconciling career and family form the foundation of mutual cooperation. The company also focuses on environmental protection and sustainability in everything it does.

For more information please [www.boehringer-ingelheim.com](http://www.boehringer-ingelheim.com).

#### **About EMBL Ventures**

EMBL Ventures is an independent venture capital investor that manages three Funds with a total of EUR 120 million capital on behalf of major European institutional and private investors. With an active portfolio of currently 15 companies, EMBL Ventures focuses on investments in the life science area to leverage its close relationship with the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and its technology transfer

organization, EMBL Enterprise Management Technology Transfer GmbH. Professionals at EMBL Ventures pursue a hands-on investment approach to company building and financing of disruptive technologies in an entrepreneurial start-up environment, aiming ultimately for a transaction with a strategic partner that is seeking to acquire external product innovation.

For more information, please visit [www.embl-ventures.com](http://www.embl-ventures.com)

#### **About Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund**

The Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund (BIVF) was formed in March 2010 to invest in biotechnology and start-up companies to help drive innovation in medical science. The investment focus includes - but is not limited to immunomodulation, esp. immuno-oncology, tissue regeneration, new therapeutic modalities, e.g. gene therapy, cell-based therapeutics, ADC, and microbiome. This reflects BIVF's interest in platform technologies and the extension of the current therapeutic area focus of Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) and demonstrates BIVF's commitment to investigate new treatment modalities and technologies, beyond BI's existing landscape, for the potential future benefit of patients. BIVF takes an active role with its portfolio companies – delivering significant added value through its own extensive drug discovery, scientific and managerial expertise. The BIVF has EUR 100 million under management and supervises currently a portfolio of 17 active companies.

[www.boehringer-ingelheim-venture.com](http://www.boehringer-ingelheim-venture.com)

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