

**PRESS RELEASE – LIFE SCIENCES and BIOTECHNOLOGY**

Ghent, Belgium – 19 May 2015

**BELGIUM WELCOMES >1.000 BIOTECHNOLOGY SPECIALISTS AT THE LARGEST REGIONAL LIFE SCIENCES CONVENTION IN EUROPE – GHENT, MAY 21**

*The 11th annual Knowledge for Growth convention in Ghent – the largest regional life sciences convention in Europe – welcomes **more than 1000 participants** this year. On May 21<sup>st</sup>, the convention welcomes international keynote participants, including **Peter Piot** from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, who discovered the Ebola virus in 1976, **Young Sohn** from Samsung Electronics who is driving Samsung's Digital Health initiative and **Kemal Malik** from Bayer, focusing on innovation and partnering.*

More than 110 companies will be present at the Ghent convention, which will also feature numerous posters presented by academic scientists. The popularity of the job fair demonstrates the strong growth in the life sciences sector. Attached you can find a selection of the Belgian innovations that will be presented at the conference. But many more remain to be discovered in the numerous workshops and exhibitions.

**Ghent is decidedly the place to be on May 21 for anyone with a link to the life sciences and biotechnology sector.** In addition to just about all the Belgian players in this sector, there will also be companies from the Netherlands, Canada, United-Kingdom, the United States, Italy, Japan, Germany, Spain, France, Denmark, Luxemburg and Sweden among the attendees.

For more information, contact: Ann Van Gysel, spokesperson for FlandersBio (0475 33 66 00)

## **Cardio3 BioSciences into cancer therapy as Celyad – soon as big in the US as in Belgium?**

Walloon biopharmaceutical company **Celyad, previously Cardio3 BioSciences**, a leader in the field of engineered cell therapies is preparing for a registered public offering in the US. Celyad is one of the Belgian biotech stock market success stories with one lead product in cardiovascular diseases, C-Cure®. C-Cure is currently in a Phase 3 clinical trial for the treatment of heart failure.

But the company has even bigger plans. With the acquisition of OnCyte (the oncology division of American Celdara Medical), in early 2015 they move into one of the most promising fields of cancer treatment today: CAR T-cell therapy. The phase 1 clinical trial of NKG2D CAR T-cell therapy for leukemia or myeloma is already ongoing and so far no short-term side effects have been observed in patients. To better reflect the expansion into cell therapy for oncology, Cardio3 BioSciences changed its name to Celyad. Company's Euronext ticker will change from CARD to CYAD.

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## Gentical focused on curing HPV infection before they turn into cervical cancer

70% of cervical cancer cases are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) and the traditional HPV vaccines are only useful to prevent, not to treat the infection. **Gentical** (GTCL) is developing a solution for those who had been previously infected with HPV, and for whom the vaccine would no longer be active, including most adult women carrying the cancerogenic HPV-virus. The company is developing innovative immunotherapies that will work by avoiding cancers that are caused by HPV. They are focusing specifically on preventing cervical cancer by eliminating HPV infection. ProCervix, a therapeutic vaccine currently in the Phase 2 of clinical trials, aims at treating the infection before it turns into cancer. This is a first-in-class immunotherapeutic candidate and a potential blockbuster that could reach about €1B sales.

The French biotech company Gentical, founded by the Belgian **Benedikt Timmerman** - former senior director R&D of Novartis Seeds is currently expanding beyond Europe. To obtain licensing revenue from other applications and to increase the visibility for their technology platform on the international market, Gentical has signed a partnership agreement with the world's largest private producer of vaccines the the **Serum Institute of India Ltd.**

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## Novosanis presents innovative technologies at Knowledge for Growth

Young startup company **Novosanis**, a spin-off from the University of Antwerp designs and develops medical devices for various applications and will show their latest data at Knowledge for Growth on May 21 in Gent.

CEO **Vanessa Vankerckhoven** will give a talk on a delivery system for accurate injection of small volumes. Novosanis will also present two posters. **Timothi Van Mulder**, PhD Fellow and Researcher Medical Development at Novosanis will present data on high-frequency ultrasound to assess skin thickness. Vankerckhoven's and Van Mulder's presentations are in support of VAX-ID™ - an easy to use device for intradermal injections. The device, which will reach the market in 2 - 5 years, allows for the minimization of the vaccine's dose while improving the immune response. The VAX-ID™ device received the Belgian James Dyson Award last year.

**Koen Beyers**, Chief Technical Officer, elaborates in the second poster on the accuracy of the collection of the first void urine volume, using the Colli-Pee™ device. This device was recently successfully introduced onto the market and uses the first void urine for detection of sexually transmitted infections and cancer biomarkers. Recently, the Colli-Pee™ device was granted the Innovation Award for major social relevance by the Agency for Innovation by Science and Technology (IWT).

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## Trouble managing Big Data in healthcare? The Ontoforce innovation workshop can help!

The amount of data available in healthcare and life sciences is increasing tremendously. These data sets present both opportunities and challenges. The benefits include the opportunity to speed up research on new healthcare and life sciences solutions. However, the analysis and interpretation of large data sets is complex and challenging. The fact that many scientists have not been trained to use Big Data is a major bottleneck in biomedical research. Ontoforce, a pioneer in technology solutions for information management in life sciences, helps researchers get more out of their data. At Knowledge for Growth they are organizing an innovation workshop to unlock the potential of semantic web technologies. Ontoforce's user-friendly data search platform disQover creates semantic links to make drug discovery around the world more effective.

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## Got arthritis? DNalytics has an app for it – MIT innovation award for CEO, Thibault Helleputte

Approximately 30% of patients with undifferentiated arthritis develop rheumatoid arthritis - a chronic, inflammatory disease causing deformity of the affected joints. Depending on geographical location, rheumatoid arthritis affects between 0.3 and 2% of the world's population. Correct diagnosis and monitoring of patients is extremely important.

RheumaKit provided by **DNalytics** is an innovative solution for the diagnosis of undifferentiated arthritis. The system combines the sample collection and transportation kit, laboratory processing, and a web-based application with an embedded predictive model.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), a prestigious engineering school renowned for its innovative spirit, recently recognized DNalytics' work. **Thibault Helleputte**, CEO of the company, has been nominated for the 'MIT innovators under 35' award. The award ceremony is to take place in Brussels on May 20<sup>th</sup>, the day before the Knowledge for Growth Convention.



DNAlytics offers tailored on-demand consultancy services in data mining for pharmaceutical, research laboratories, and biotechnology and IVD companies. RheumaKit is their first IVD CE-labeled diagnostic product

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## MyCartis aims to revolutionize the healthcare system with next generation biomarker analysis

**MyCartis** was formed in 2014 when **Biocartis Lausanne business unit** and **Pronota** joined forces to develop a multiplex system for next generation biomarker analysis. The Evaluation™ platform could become a very powerful diagnostic tool as it is designed for simultaneous combined analysis of a broad range of various biomarkers. The platform combines all of the steps of biomarker testing into one instrument; this both simplifies and accelerates the whole process. Evaluation™ provides a 'one solution fits all' for the researchers and assay developers to validate and commercialize their biomarkers. In the near future it could revolutionize the current healthcare system.

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## KeyGene opens the world's first independent fully automated greenhouse to produce improved crops

**KeyGene** together with WPS, a Dutch company providing smart logistics systems for plant growers, recently opened a digital plant phenotyping facility to support breeders in the development of the new crops. PhenoFab® is a fully automated greenhouse which combines high-throughput digital plant imaging technology with trait interpretation that will serve to improve the quality of the crops.

KeyGene is an innovative Ag-Biotech company focused on improving yield, quality and health of the 6F crops (Food, Feed, Fiber, Fuel, Flowers, Fun) by means of sustainable molecular genetics solutions. Belgian scientist and businessman The company was founded by Marc Zabeau, former Director of Research of the first Ag-Biotech company in the world, Plant Genetic Systems. Marc is currently Managing Partner of Qbic Venture Partners.

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## **Pall is revolutionizing bio-manufacturing - green filtering solution that decreases production cost by 80%**

**Pall** Corporation (PLL) is a global leader in high-tech filtration, separation, and purification. The company, which provides cutting-edge products and services, has recently expanded its portfolio of life sciences solutions through the acquisition of BioSMB, the multicolumn chromatography platform from **Tarpon Biosystems**.

BioSMB can be used for the purification of injectable therapeutics while reducing water usage by 50%, the space required by 70% and the materials required by 80%, thereby providing a 'greener' yet fully disposable and scalable bio-manufacturing solution. Thanks to linking several continuous processing steps, the production cost (of for example monoclonal antibodies) can be reduced by 80%. By increasing the flexibility and lowering the production cost the BioSMB has the potential to fit single product facilities to multi-product manufacturing facilities.

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## **Flanders Vaccine - the strength is in the collaboration**

**The Flanders Vaccine** consortium that was recently launched in the presence of the Flemish Minister of Welfare, Jo Vandeuren, aims to strengthen the Flemish position in the field of immunology, infectious diseases and vaccinology.

Flanders Vaccine originated from 5 Flemish academic and industrial partners: UAntwerpen – VAXINFECTIO, UGent – PROVAXS, UHasselt – BIOMED & LifeTechLimburg, FlandersBio and BioMARIC. Belgium already had a strong reputation when it comes to the development of vaccines: “including vaccines against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, HPV and Ebola”, says Prof. Dr. Pierre Van Damme (VAXINFECTIO, University of Antwerp). The new platform will stimulate innovation in vaccine-related research and business, by creating the opportunities for public-private partnerships about specific topics brought up by the industry.

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## **Biocartis raises 100M euros in stock market debut**

Last month **Biocartis**, a high profile in vitro diagnostics company in Flanders, raised 100 million euros from the sale of shares in its initial public offering on the Brussels stock exchange. This was a great success for Biocartis as the interest from investors was much higher than expected and reached 650 million euros.

In November 2014 Biocartis launched its flagship product, Idylla. It is a miniaturized, fully automated molecular diagnostics platform focused on tests in oncology and infectious diseases.

**Rudi Pauwels**, the founder of Tibotec, founded Biocartis in Switzerland. The company was brought to Belgium with the help of VIB and venture capital. Pauwels is grateful for that: "In Switzerland, we could not have done what we have done here."

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## Ablynx' unique inhalable Nanobody® to treat RSV infection in infants

**Ablynx** (ABLX) recently presented an innovative, inhaled Nanobody®, ALX-0171, for the treatment of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) infections in children. Currently, there is no treatment available for infant RSV infections, only symptomatic relief. RSV infects 70 - 80% of children under 2 years of age and remains the primary cause of infant hospitalization and virus associated death. Moreover infection with RSV increases the risk for developing asthma later in life.

Early tests of ALX-0171 showed its superior virus neutralization and high tolerability. Currently infants are being recruited for a phase 2a clinical trial and the preliminary results are expected in the first half of 2016. The important and unique feature of this Nanobody® is that it can be administered via inhalation directly to the respiratory tract, which is the site of viral infection. "Ablynx is pioneering the development of a potentially first-in-class treatment for RSV, which we believe is an area of major unmet need, especially in infants." said Edwin Moses, Chief Executive Officer of Ablynx.

Ablynx is a biopharmaceutical company developing Nanobodies® - therapeutic proteins, which combine the advantages of conventional antibody drugs with the features of small-molecule drugs. The company has more than 30 research programs, both proprietary and partnered, in the field of inflammation, hematology, oncology and respiratory disease treatment.

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## arGEN-x receives €1.5 million for enhancement of therapeutic antibodies

In early May 2015, **arGEN-X N.V.** (ARGX) received a € 1.5 million grant from the Flemish IWT (the government agency for Innovation by Science and Technology). arGEN-X creates novel therapeutic antibodies and the grant will be used to advance and commercialize the application of the NHance® technology for therapeutic antibody modifications. NHance® aims to prolong antibody circulation in the blood, which would allow for better biodistribution which leads to a reduced dosing schedule that is more convenient for patients. “We are very pleased to have received this support from IWT. As an organization, IWT has enabled the steady build of highly competitive Flemish biotechnology companies and we hope to continue this reputation with the advancement of our own novel, cutting edge research,” explains **Michael Saunders**, Senior Director, Targets & Programs at arGEN-X. “With the IWT grant, we aim to further confirm the benefit of antibodies equipped with NHance® by demonstrating enhanced tissue and tumour penetration with select antibody candidates.”

arGEN-X develops therapeutic antibodies for the treatment of cancer and severe autoimmune diseases. The SIMPLE Antibody™ discovery platform generates a limitless source of high quality human antibodies, impossible to generate by any other method. These antibodies are further modified to enhance their circulation time in the body (NHance® technology), to enhance the clearance of disease targets (ABDEG™ technology) or cell-killing properties (Potelligent® technology).

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## Experienced Belgian biotech investor to lead Karolinska Development

A major venture capital investor in life sciences, **Karolinska Development**, has recently announced its new CEO: Jim Van heusden. Jim has over 20 years of experience within venture capital and research and development. He was Founder and Managing Director of bioskills and before a Partner at the European investment company Gimv.

Karolinska Development is a venture capital company investing in early stage life sciences companies with disruptive innovative technologies that develop orphan drugs for patients suffering from life-threatening or serious debilitating conditions where there exists a well-defined unmet medical need. Karolinska Development works closely with the Karolinska Institutet to allow for a constant flow of innovations. **Jim Van heusden** comments: “We are now focusing on the portfolio companies that have the highest potential to generate attractive returns.”

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## Take your own venture and make it a business case - MBI Life Sciences & Health program starts next academic year in Flanders

The Executive Master of Business Innovation & Entrepreneurship in Life Sciences & Health (MBI Life Sciences & Health) is a unique 'hands-on' MBA program to accelerate life sciences ventures or businesses. The course addresses start-up/growth companies in life sciences, keen to boost their entrepreneurial business. The participants will work on their own venture as the business cases and not generic examples used in regular business schools. Moreover, the course is adapted to the specific needs of the life sciences and healthcare industry unlike any other MBA program. The team of coaches experienced in life sciences will help the new company owners to bring their business to the next level.

MBI Life Sciences & Health will start at the beginning of the next academic year in Flanders offering a world-class educational program thanks to the contribution of VIB, FlandersBio and Vlerick Business School. The courses will take place both in Belgium (50%) and the Netherlands (50%) in collaboration with UMC Utrecht, Utrecht University, Maastricht UMC, Radboud UMC, MIRA and Health Valley. The candidates are currently being preselected.

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## Bone Therapeutics grows both locally and internationally to become a champion of bone regenerative medicine

Walloon bone cell therapy company, **Bone Therapeutics** (BOTHE), is moving into their new headquarters in Gosselies. The new 3000m<sup>2</sup> facility is part of a larger project, the Walloon Cell Therapy Platform. "Our objective is to become a champion of bone regenerative medicine with international aspirations." said Enrico Bastianelli, CEO of Bone Therapeutics. After the successful initial public offering on Euronext Brussels and Paris, the company has established its US based subsidiary, Bone Therapeutics USA Inc. in Boston, Massachusetts. This is the first milestone in the initiation of Bone Therapeutics' clinical trials in the US. "This further strengthens the international reach of our innovative pipeline of bone cell therapy products" further explains Bastianelli.

Bone Therapeutics is a bone cell therapy company addressing high unmet medical needs in the field of bone fracture repair and bone fracture prevention and is investigating therapeutic approaches to address conditions as spinal fusion, osteonecrosis and osteoporosis. The current standard-of-care in this field often involves major surgeries with long recovery times. To overcome this, Bone Therapeutics develops innovative regenerative products containing bone-forming cells (osteoblasts), administrable via a minimally invasive procedure. Bone Therapeutics' autologous product PREOB<sup>®</sup> is currently in two Phase III studies for the treatment of osteonecrosis and non-union fractures and in Phase II development for the treatment of severe osteoporosis. Its allogeneic cell therapy product



ALLOB® is being tested in Phase II for delayed-union fractures and for use in spine fusion surgery.

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## Roche Diagnostics Belgium: supporting Belgium's Innovation engine

Roche's personalized healthcare strategy aims at providing medicines and diagnostics that enable tangible improvements in the health, quality of life and survival of patients. **Roche Diagnostics** is the world leader in *in vitro* and tissue-based cancer diagnostics and a frontrunner in diabetes management. The company supplies a broad array of customized biotech products and solutions for the pharmaceutical, diagnostics and biotech industry.

DISCOVERY ULTRA is a fully integrated system for slide processing that allows automation of the complex assays in pathology labs for cancer diagnosis. The system combines two techniques (IHC and ISH) for the detection of both DNA or RNA; and protein-based biomarkers, which allow for correct diagnosing of patients. Roche's IHC antibodies are developed at Spring Bioscience - an antibody research and manufacturing Center of Excellence acquired by Roche several years ago. Spring is focused on the development of antibody biomarkers for use in oncology research and diagnosis and prognosis of cancer in pathology labs.

Roche also aims to introduce a new standard for laboratory developed testing in qPCR. The FLOW System has a broad range of laboratory applications in virology and microbiology. It is an end-to-end solution for workflow standardization and automation for laboratories performing large-scale sample testing.

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