

## UCB and Investor Syndicate Led by Novo Seeds Launch Syndesi Therapeutics to Develop Novel Therapeutics for Cognitive Disorders

- Syndesi Therapeutics to leverage UCB's expertise in neurology drug discovery to develop potential therapeutics in cognitive disorders with a first-in-class mechanism
- Series A financing of €17 M from a syndicate of Belgium and international investors

Belgium –[ February 1st, 2018 ]- The creation of Syndesi Therapeutics ('Syndesi') was announced today as the result of a partnership between UCB and a syndicate of Belgium and international investors. The investor syndicate is led by Novo Seeds and Fountain Healthcare together with Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JJDC, Inc. (JJDC), V-BIO Ventures, the Walloon Investment Fund (SRIW) and VIVES Louvain Technology Fund. Syndesi Therapeutics has exclusively licensed a first-in-class small molecule program from UCB and the series A investment totalling €17M will fund the clinical development of the lead compound up to early proof-of-concept in humans.

Syndesi Therapeutics is based in Belgium and will leverage UCB's neurology expertise in modulating the synaptic vesicle protein SV2A. UCB's Neuroscience researchers in Belgium have designed a unique class of novel SV2A modulators. Unlike *levetiracetam* and other types of SV2A modulators discovered and developed by UCB for epilepsy, the novel compounds are devoid of anti-epileptic properties but have demonstrated robust pro-cognitive properties in preclinical models. Cognitive impairment currently being outside UCB's strategic scope, the decision was made to have the program further developed externally to leverage its full potential. The discovery of these novel pro-cognitive SV2A modulators at UCB has benefitted from prior support of the Walloon Region, and Syndesi will use the Series A investment to build upon that work and move the lead molecule into clinical development.

"UCB is the world leader in SV2A research, having discovered and developed two major anti-epileptic drugs treating patients around the world. We are excited to see Syndesi develop our novel pro-cognitive SV2A modulators to create value for patients with cognitive impairment," said Dhavalkumar Patel, UCB's Chief Scientific Officer and Executive Vice President. "The Belgian life science ecosystem is particularly vibrant and we realised that it was the right environment to promote this research as part of our biotech model approach."

Jonathan Savidge, PhD CEO of Syndesi noted "Development of these small molecules that modulate the SV2A target in a distinct manner represents an intriguing new approach for the treatment of cognitive deficits since they specifically target synaptic dysfunction, a hallmark of Alzheimer's Disease and other indications characterized by cognitive impairment. Syndesi benefits both from UCB's research expertise and from an impressive syndicate of experienced investors and their respective networks.

"Cognitive impairment remains an area of significant unmet need for patients not only with Alzheimer's Disease but also more broadly across a range of neurological disorders, and we are excited about the potential promise of this novel therapeutic approach," says Morten Graugaard Døssing, Principal at Novo Seeds. "I am thrilled to be working with the company which is supported by scientists at UCB and able to leverage Janssen neuroscience expertise via a presence at the JLINX

incubator, all in an effort to develop products that could one day make a meaningful difference for patients suffering from cognitive impairment.”

#### **About Syndesi Therapeutics**

Syndesi Therapeutics ([www.syndesitherapeutics.com](http://www.syndesitherapeutics.com)) has been established at the Centre d’Entreprises et d’Innovation (CEI) in Louvain-la-Neuve and will have a presence at the JLINX incubator facilities to access expertise at the Janssen campus in Beerse, Belgium. Syndesi has an exclusive, worldwide license from UCB to develop and commercialise a series of novel, pro-cognitive SV2A modulators. Syndesi will build on a rich legacy of work by UCB to further develop these novel SV2A modulators to investigate their potential to improve cognition in diseases such as Alzheimer’s Disease, other dementias and cognitive impairment associated with schizophrenia.

#### **About UCB**

UCB, Brussels, Belgium ([www.ucb.com](http://www.ucb.com)) is a global biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery and development of innovative medicines and solutions to transform the lives of people living with severe diseases in immunology and neurology. With more than 7500 people in approximately 40 countries, the company generated revenue of €4.2 billion in 2016. UCB is listed on Euronext Brussels (symbol: UCB). Follow us on Twitter: @UCB\_news

#### **About Novo Holdings and Novo Seeds:**

Novo Seeds is the early-stage investment arm of Novo Holdings ([www.novoholdings.dk](http://www.novoholdings.dk)) Novo Holdings is a private limited liability company wholly owned by the Novo Nordisk Foundation. The company is the holding company in the Novo Group, comprising Novo Nordisk A/S, Novozymes A/S and NNIT A/S, and is responsible for managing the Foundation’s assets. In addition to being the major shareholder in the Novo Group companies, Novo Holdings provides seed and venture capital to development-stage companies, takes significant ownership positions in well-established companies within the life sciences and manages a broad portfolio of financial assets.

#### **About Fountain Healthcare Partners**

Fountain Healthcare Partners ([www.fh-partners.com](http://www.fh-partners.com)) is a life science focused venture capital fund with €176 million (\$200 million) under management. Within the life science sector, specific areas of interest to Fountain include specialty pharma, medical devices, biotechnology and diagnostics. The firm deploys the majority of its capital in Europe, with the balance in the United States. Fountain’s main office is in Dublin, Ireland, with a second office in New York.

#### **About Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JJDC, Inc. (JJDC)**

Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JJDC Inc. (JJDC) is the strategic venture capital arm of Johnson & Johnson and a long-term investment partner to global healthcare entrepreneurs. Founded in 1973, JJDC continues a legacy of customizing deals for data-driven companies across the continuum of healthcare, with the goal of turning great ideas into transformative new pharmaceutical, medical device and consumer healthcare products. [www.jjdc.com](http://www.jjdc.com)

#### **About V-Bio Ventures**

V-Bio Ventures ([www.v-bio.ventures](http://www.v-bio.ventures)) is an independent venture capital firm specialized in building and financing young, innovative life science companies. V-Bio Ventures was established in 2015 and works closely with Belgium-based VIB, one of the world's premier life science institutes. The fund invests throughout Europe in start-up and early-stage companies with high growth potential focusing on technologies that provide transformational improvements in the biopharmaceutical, pharmaceutical, diagnostics and agricultural sectors.

#### **About SRIW SA**

SRIW Société Régionale d'Investissement de Wallonie ([www.sriw.be](http://www.sriw.be)) provides equity and/or debt to companies that generate added value and employment in Wallonia. SRIW facilitates the region's economic development, contributing effectively to the modernisation, growth and restructuring of the businesses that make up the Walloon industrial network. In the life science sector, SRIW is investor in more than 30 companies such as I.B.A., Celyad, or Ogeda of which it recently exited. Its current portfolio fair value is above 150 million €.

#### **About VIVES-Louvain Technology Fund**

The VIVES Louvain Technology Fund ([www.vivesfund.com](http://www.vivesfund.com)) is a multi-sector technology fund which invests in the spin-offs of the Université catholique de Louvain (UCL) and start-ups in Belgium and neighboring countries. VIVES II is funded by a dozen leading Belgian and European investors such as the EUROPEAN INVESTMENT FUND (EIF), SFPI-FPIM, BNP PARIBAS FORTIS PRIVATE EQUITY BELGIUM, BPI FRANCE (France), ING BELGIUM, SOFINA, AXA BELGIUM, BELFIUS, IRD (France), NIVELINVEST, REGION BRUXELLES CAPITAL and by SOPARTEC. The objective of the fund is to invest in the development of start-ups, from validation of the technology to commercial maturity. The funds (VIVES I - €15 million and VIVES II - €43 million) are managed by SOPARTEC, UCL's technology transfer company, member of the Louvain Technology Transfer Office.