



PRESS RELEASE

Newton Biocapital invests in NeuVasQ: EUR 20 million Series A to develop unique blood-brain barrier therapy

- Newton together with public and private investment partners invests in NeuVasQ for the development of blood-brain barrier pharmaceuticals based on the disruptive research of scientific founder Prof. Benoit Vanhollebeke.
- NeuVasQ aims to repair neurovascular function in a range of disorders such as stroke, epilepsy, and neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's.

Brussels, Belgium, 22 June 2021 – Newton Biocapital I (“Newton”), a life sciences investment fund active in Europe and Japan focused on chronic diseases, has announced its investment in a new Walloon start-up of the ULB: NeuVasQ Biotechnologies (“NeuVasQ”). Newton is lead investor in NeuVasQ’s EUR 20 million Series A, comprised of EUR 10 million in public investments from regional and national Belgian funding agencies including SFPI-FPIM, SRIW Life Sciences, Sambrinvest and InvestSud, with a further EUR 10 million in private investments from Newton as lead investor joined by Theodorus IV, The ULB spin-offs investment fund, and business angels from Flanders and Wallonia.

A unique and new approach to addressing neurological disorders

NeuVasQ was founded based on new insights into the molecular mechanisms maintaining the integrity of the blood-brain barrier (BBB). The BBB regulates the exchange between the vascular system and central nervous system (CNS). Increased BBB permeability, due to age or injury, is involved in many neurological conditions through the leakage of harmful blood substances into the CNS. BBB dysfunction is a factor in many neurodegenerative disorders, such as Alzheimer's, as well as multiple acute neurological conditions like stroke and epilepsy.

Benoit Vanhollebeke, Ir. Ph.D., Professor at the ULB and NeuVasQ’s scientific founder, explains: “By precisely targeting the pathways responsible for BBB formation, we aim to restore lost functionality to the neurovasculature. NeuVasQ will further develop this unique and targeted approach which has the potential to safely improve patient lives in a wide range of neurological disorders. I am very thankful to the investors allowing this research to find its way to the patients. I am also very grateful to the FNRS, the WELBIO, the Queen Elisabeth Medical Foundation for Neurosciences, and the ERC for their support of my team’s research at the ULB.”

With its Series A funding, NeuVasQ aims to identify the most promising indications for clinical trials, focusing on a range of neurodegenerative disorders and acute neurological disorders. As part of

these exploratory studies, NeuVasQ will also consider various innovative therapeutic modalities, including gene and mRNA therapy.

Guy Heynen, MD, Partner at Newton Biocapital: “Despite the importance of the BBB, most companies targeting it have focused on circumventing its impermeability in an effort to aid drug delivery into the CNS. Through the elucidation of the signaling pathways responsible for BBB formation, NeuVasQ is instead uniquely positioned to improve BBB integrity. I hold great hope for this approach as it is based on restoring normal function to the BBB. It really has the potential to become an entirely new type of therapy in a wide range of neurological diseases and conditions.”

Alain Parthoens, Managing Partner at Newton Biocapital: “We’re pleased to be supporting NeuVasQ as the company is working to address major unmet medical needs in CNS disorders. This is an area that is of great important to Newton, as we want to aid the development of therapies for diseases where the burden to society is extremely high. We have already been contacted by pharmaceutical companies interested in NeuVasQ’s groundbreaking technology and have started our search for a CEO to lead this promising venture.”

The public investors, **SFPI, SRIW Life Sciences, Sambrinvest and InvestSud**, jointly commented: “We work together to strengthen the Walloon and Belgian life sciences ecosystem and have already supported multiple new ventures introducing innovative treatments targeting unmet medical needs. We're delighted to be part of NeuVasQ, at the start of this exciting journey, and we are convinced that the outcomes derived from Benoit Vanhollebeke's research will contribute to the development of a first-in-class therapy for disabling and life-threatening CNS diseases.”

Lotfi Yelles, Partner at Theodorus IV: "We are delighted to collaborate with Benoit Vanhollebeke's Laboratory of Neurovascular Signaling at ULB and support NeuVasQ Biotechnologies' ambition in developing new therapeutic options for patients suffering from neurovascular/degenerative diseases"

About NeuVasQ Biotechnologies

NeuVasQ Biotechnologies is a spin-off founded in February 2021 by the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and Prof. Benoit Vanhollebeke, a WELBIO investigator at the Laboratory of Neurovascular Signaling at the ULB Neuroscience Institute (UNI) and Professor in the ULB Department of Molecular Biology. NeuVasQ is developing pharmaceuticals to restore blood-brain barrier function in acute neurological disorders such as stroke and epilepsy, as well as neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s. More info at www.NeuVasQ.com

About Newton Biocapital

Newton Biocapital I is a Venture Capital Firm incorporated in Belgium, focused on financing biotech and life science projects in Europe and Japan for the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases. The fund’s approach as lead investor is to support promising start-up projects as well as neglected or undervalued late-stage projects, in order to mitigate the risks and to create investor value. The leadership team consists of specialists with long-standing management and investor experience who coach bio-entrepreneurs through the development stages of their projects. Newton Biocapital’s mission is to generate substantial financial and societal value by providing innovative, breakthrough, and affordable solutions to patients. More info at www.newtonbiocapital.com

About SRIW Life Sciences

In line with Wallonia's traditional strengths, which include research excellence combined with entrepreneurial creativity, SRIW Life Sciences contributes to the development of a truly dynamic and fertile ecosystem that generates jobs, creates value and is attractive to foreign investors.

From clinical development to market access, SRIW Life Sciences encourages and supports entrepreneurial initiatives capable of converting scientific innovation into products that meet medical needs. SRIW Life Sciences also supports the growth of more mature activities which already generate recurring income. The role of SRIW (Société Régionale d'Investissement de Wallonie) as a risk capital provider in the life sciences sector is crucial, given its capital-intensive nature and the high degree of associated risk. More info at: www.sriw.be

About Theodorus Investment Funds

Theodorus Investment Funds is an early-stage Venture Capital fund active in Belgium and Québec, with 70m€ under management. Theodorus operates since 2003 and invests mostly in early-stage ventures in life sciences and deep tech, with a focus in Belgium on spin offs from Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) which is Theodorus' historical partner. More info at www.theodorus.be