



Forbion Capital Partners leads €18 Million Financing of Amakem NV
‘Localised Drug Action’ platform generating novel kinase inhibitors to treat ophthalmic diseases

Naarden, The Netherlands, 5 September 2011 – Forbion Capital Partners, the Dutch life sciences venture capital firm, today announces that it has led the Series A investment of Amakem NV, the ophthalmology company developing new treatments for serious eye conditions, with a syndicate of leading life sciences investors.

Amakem NV has raised €18 million to advance its ophthalmology drug development portfolio and progress its lead candidate for glaucoma, AMA0076, to clinical proof-of-concept. The Series A round was led by Forbion Capital Partners and also included Crédit Agricole Private Equity, Vesalius BioCapital, as well as the existing investors LRM, PMV and Life Sciences Research Partners.

AMA0076 is a novel, highly potent Rho Kinase (ROCK) inhibitor for the treatment of glaucoma, a condition which damages the optic nerve resulting in vision loss and ultimately blindness. AMA0076 has been proven in preclinical models to be highly effective in reducing intraocular pressure (IOP), a major factor in glaucoma, and to avoid important side effects such as hyperemia. Hyperemia, also known as ‘red eye’, results from excess blood flow in vessels in the white of the eye and is a distressing and dose-limiting side effect to patients.

This novel kinase inhibitor has been created using Amakem’s proprietary ‘Localized Drug Action’ platform. The principle is to treat a specific organ with a locally administered drug, which is then deactivated in the bloodstream before it reaches other organs or tissues. By limiting or avoiding systemic exposure, any potential side-effects in non-target organs can be reduced. This approach is applicable to a wide range of kinase inhibitors through routes where local administration is viable: eye, lungs, skin, GI tract, ears and via local injections.

Amakem’s primary disease focus is glaucoma; however, the Company is also exploring additional compounds targeting other ophthalmic indications and has initiated numerous academic collaborations, including the Ophthalmology Research Center of the University Leuven Hospital (ULH). Jack Elands, CEO of Amakem, said: “Since Amakem’s foundation in 2010, we have strongly advanced our Localized Drug Action platform and, in AMA0076, have developed a highly promising candidate for the treatment of one of the most important eye diseases. Existing treatments for glaucoma are not effective for all patients and other ROCK inhibitors in development have shown dose-limiting side effects, particularly hyperemia. This fundraising round will enable us to advance our lead candidate to clinical proof-of-concept.”

Christina Takke, Partner at Forbion Capital Partners, said: “Amakem is well positioned to develop novel drugs that will have a major impact in the treatment of ophthalmic diseases. We are impressed by how quickly Amakem has built a promising pipeline of products that await clinical validation. We are delighted to have led this financing round and to have assembled an impressive international syndicate to support the Company in its next phase of development.”

Nico Vandervelpen, head of Life Sciences at LRM said: “Kinases represent an attractive family of proteins for drug development, as they are crucial mediators of disease pathways and are ubiquitous in the human body. However, kinase drugs may present a significant toxicity risk, unless their systemic exposure is controlled. Addressing this need, Amakem’s technology is suited for generating novel new drug candidates for local application. We look forward to working with Amakem to bring forward new treatments for a number of very important diseases.”

Christina Takke (Forbion Capital Partners), Emmanuelle Coutanceau (Crédit Agricole Private Equity) and Gaston Matthyssens (Vesalius BioCapital) will join Amakem’s Board of Directors. Geert-Jan Mulder (Forbion Capital Partners) and Kenneth Wils (PMV/Vinnof) will join the board as observers. Chris Buyse (Life Sciences Research Partners and CFO at Thrombogenics) who has been the company’s chairman during its successful first phase will step down and Michael Palfreyman will take his place.

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Notes to Editors:

About Amakem

Amakem is an ophthalmology company developing new treatments for serious eye conditions. Amakem's product pipeline is based on its unique Localized Drug Action platform which is designed to generate safe and effective novel kinase inhibitors that minimize systemic exposure with the aim of reducing side effects. Amakem's lead candidate, AMA0076, is for glaucoma and the Company is working to apply the Localized Drug Action approach to a range of other eye diseases.

Amakem is based in Belgium and located in the life sciences incubator "BioVille" at the University of Hasselt. The Company has a long-standing collaboration with the Ophthalmology Research Center of the University Leuven Hospital.

About Forbion Capital Partners

Forbion Capital Partners is a dedicated Life Sciences venture capital firm with offices in Naarden, The Netherlands, and Munich, Germany. Forbion invests in life sciences companies, particularly in world-class drug discovery & development as well as med tech companies addressing substantial unmet medical needs. Forbion's investment team of nine investment professionals has built an impressive performance track record since the late nineties with successful investments in Rhein Biotech, Crucell, Neutec, Glycart, Borean, Impella, Alantos, Acorda, Fovea, PanGenetics and BioVex. Current assets under management exceed EUR 400M, split between three active funds and comprising some 27 promising portfolio companies. Forbion Capital Partners Fund II is supported by the European Investment Fund through its ERP and LfA facilities. Finally, Forbion co-manages Biogeneration Ventures, an early stage fund focused on (academic) spin-outs and seed investments in the Netherlands.

For more information, please visit www.forbion.com.