

Press release

14 November 2016

Novo Seeds and Almi Invest together invest up to 6.3 million SEK in the Lund-based company Merozyne Therapeutics.

Novo Seeds and Almi Invest jointly invest up to 6.3 million SEK in Merozyne provided defined milestone results are achieved.

Merozyne is working to develop a treatment of congenital muscular dystrophy (MDC1A) caused by the absence of functional laminin protein. MDC1A is a hereditary muscle disease that manifests during the first year of life. In MDC1A patients the disease weakens the muscles and reduces the mobility of the joints.

Merozyne Therapeutics activities are based on research led by Professor Madeleine Durbeej Hjalt at Lund University focusing on autophagy and muscle disease. Autophagy is a key biological process and the discovery of which was awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine this year.

Laminin is a protein involved in muscle function. Most patients with MDC1A never learn to walk and may also have breathing difficulties and about 30 % of the patients never reach adolescence. Currently there is no cure and the need for a working drug treatment is large.

The founders of Merozyne include a group of companies co-localized at the research park Medicon Village in Lund, where also Merozyne will be localized.

"We are very pleased that Novo Seeds and Almi Invest have chosen to invest in Merozyne, which demonstrates the quality of the research conducted at the Lund University and by Merozyne. The investment enables Merozyne to continue and intensify its development program to find a cure for MDC1A," comments Eskil Söderlind, CEO, Merozyne Therapeutics.

"I am proud to see this branch of my pre-clinical research reach a level of commercial development. This is a very promising first step towards a cure for MDC1A. It is most valuable to see Novo Seeds and Almi Invest making an investment in Merozyne," comments Professor Madeleine Durbeej Hjalt, CSO, Merozyne Therapeutics.

"Congenital muscular dystrophy is a chronic debilitating orphan neuromuscular disease for which there is currently no cure. Novo Seeds is pleased to fund the further development of a potential novel disease modifying treatment based on the scientific discoveries made in the lab of Professor Madeleine Durbeej Hjalt," says Morten Graugaard Døssing, Investment Director at Novo Seeds.

"Merozyne has a unique opportunity to develop a novel treatment of a disease with a big medical need," says Per Antonsson, Investment Manager at Almi Invest. "We are very pleased to fund this project together with Novo Seeds and we see big potential for the company."

Contact

- Eskil Söderlind, CEO
Merozyne Therapeutics AB
es@merozyne.com
+46706836310
www.merozyne.com

About Novo A/S and Novo Seeds

Novo Seeds is the early stage investment arm of Novo A/S. Novo A/S is a private limited liability company wholly owned by the Novo Nordisk Foundation.

The company is the holding company in the Novo Group and responsible for managing the Foundation's assets. Besides being the major shareholder in the Novo Group companies, Novo A/S 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. Read more at www.novo.dk.

About Almi Invest

Almi Invest is Sweden's most active investor in early stage growth companies. The portfolio currently consists of approximately 400 growth companies in many different industries. Almi Invest is a subsidiary of Almi Företagspartner AB. www.almiinvest.se