



Sensorion, the specialist in inner ear diseases, completes a new funding round to begin the human clinical trial phase

Montpellier, January 19, 2015 – Sensorion S.A., a biotech specialising in the treatment of inner ear diseases, today announces that it has completed a new funding round from its longstanding shareholders, Innobio and Inserm Transfert Initiative, for an amount of up to €4 million depending on the achievement of clinical milestones, thus taking the total funds raised since its creation in 2009 to €10 million. This new funding will allow Sensorion to begin a phase 1 clinical trial of its first drug candidate for the symptomatic treatment of severe vertigo, dizziness or tinnitus.

A unique technological platform and ambitious development programmes

Initially founded as an Inserm research unit and headed by Laurent Nguyen, a medical doctor with over 20 years of experience with major pharmaceutical laboratories, Sensorion has developed its scientific expertise in the field of hair cells, which are neurosensory cells that are crucial for the inner ear to operate correctly. Indeed, its dysfunction are behind highly-debilitating symptoms, such as severe vertigo or tinnitus, and lesions that can result in a loss of hearing.

Sensorion has thus developed a technological platform enabling it to develop and test new treatments for all inner ear disorders, both symptomatic and anti-lesional. Two initial drug candidates chosen using the Sensorion platform, one for treating symptoms during bouts of acute vertigo or tinnitus and the other for treating progressive lesions in the inner ear, are about to enter the clinical phase.

A new funding round to begin the clinical phase for the first drug candidate

Thanks to this latest funding round, the first drug candidate, SENS-111, aimed at treating bouts of vertigo or tinnitus, will now be able to begin its 1st clinical phase during the 1st quarter of 2015. The sum raised will also open the way for the selection of a second drug candidate within a distinct programme aimed at treating lesions in the inner ear.

“We have been supporting Sensorion’s research since the outset and are very motivated by the possibility of launching a clinical trial on the first drug candidate. Furthermore, with the imminent launch of a human trial for a second programme, Sensorion will be able to develop a portfolio of high-potential products providing a response to a number of inner ear pathologies”, states Cécile Tharaud, Managing Partner of Inserm Transfert Initiative.

A strategy aimed at initiating clinical trials more rapidly

Sensorion is aiming to become a major player in the treatment of inner ear pathologies, a nascent market whose potential is estimated at more than 10 billion dollars¹ worldwide.

Sensorion’s strategy consists of developing a diverse portfolio of innovative products in order to rapidly access this global market by following three key priorities:

- capitalise on its unique scientific know-how regarding hair cells and its technological platform to identify the best drug candidates;
- reduce development times and risks by choosing known molecules that have already successfully achieved pharmaceutical development stages therefore lowering the attrition rate;
- develop easy-to-administer treatments (tablets or capsules taken orally or via a standard injection) in order to address a potentially massive market.

¹ Source: Alcimed, Sensorion

“Sensorion targets sizeable medical needs, as no drug currently provides an efficient solution to highly-debilitating pathologies of the inner ear. Sensorion is an excellent example of our portfolio of biopharma companies, and is striving to transform the very best in French research into a major player in its field”, **comments Chahra Louafi, Investment Director for the InnoBio fund managed by Bpifrance Investissement.**

“The support of our longstanding shareholders, Innobio and Inserm Transfert Initiative, highlights the pertinence of our business model based on identifying treatments capable of rapidly addressing pathologies of the inner ear, a nascent market marked by unmet medical needs. This funding will allow Sensorion to accelerate its development by achieving, from 2015, the milestone that is the transition to the clinical trial phase for the two research programmes that offer hope of a treatment for patients severely handicapped by their illness”, **concludes Laurent Nguyen, CEO of Sensorion.**

About Sensorion:

Founded within Inserm (the French institute of health and medical research) in 2009, Sensorion is a biotech spinoff that specialises in the treatment of pathologies of the inner ear such as acute vertigo, tinnitus and hearing loss. Backed by its pharmaceutical R&D experience and a comprehensive technological platform, Sensorion is developing two major research programmes both for treating symptoms during bouts of acute vertigo or tinnitus and for treating progressive lesions in the inner ear, which are on the verge of entering phase 1 of their clinical trials. Based in Montpellier, southern France, within the university and hospital hub, Sensorion has a portfolio of 7 patent families, employs 15 staff and receives financial support from Bpifrance and InsermTransfert Initiative.

www.sensorion-pharma.com

About Bpifrance and InnoBio:

The public investment bank Bpifrance is the result of the merger of business funding and investment organizations OSEO, FSI, CDC Entreprises and FSI Regions. It was established by French law on December 31, 2012. It has two shareholders, the French State and the Caisse des Depots (the French Deposits and Consignments Fund). The aim of Bpifrance is to support businesses, (SMEs, mid-cap companies and larger entities of strategic importance to the French economy), from their seed capital stages up to stock market listing. They offer access to credit, collateral and equity funding. Bpifrance also provides assistance and enhanced support services for innovation, export and external growth. They act as a single point of contact regarding the funding and investment needs of entrepreneurs in every region.

InnoBio is a EUR 173 million venture capital fund managed by Bpifrance, which is also an investor in the fund. Sanofi, GSK, Roche, Novartis, Pfizer, Lilly, Ipsen, Takeda and Boehringer-Ingelheim are among the other investors. The main aim of the fund is to make equity investments in innovative companies providing technology, products and services for health care. Find out more at <http://www.bpifrance.fr> Twitter - @bpifrance

About Inserm Transfert Initiative:

Inserm Transfert initiative is a seed venture capital company that received a capital injection of €35.5 million in 2012 and is devoted to the seed-stage funding of innovative start-ups in the biomedical sector. Inserm Transfert Initiative was created in 2005 through an equal partnership between four biotech start-up funding players: Inserm Transfert SA, CDC Entreprises, Natexis Venture Selection and Sofinnova Partners. Inserm Transfert Initiative supports biotech entrepreneurs in the early stages of their companies' development.

www.it-initiative.fr

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