Inthera Bioscience raises EUR 3.4 million in seed financing round

Zurich, Switzerland, December 14, 2015 – Inthera Bioscience, a Swiss biopharmaceutical company focused on the development of first-in-class targeted small molecule therapies for solid tumors, today announced the closing of a EUR 3.4m financing round led by MS Ventures, with equal contribution from Aglaia Oncology Fund II and Novo Seeds. EVA Basel also participated in the financing.

Aberrant cellular signaling is a major cause of cancer development and progression. Blocking protein-protein interactions mediating signal transduction in cancer cells is a highly attractive approach for the development of novel anti-cancer agents. However, with few exceptions, such targets have remained evasive to date. Founded in 2013 by Dr. Ulrich Kessler and Prof. Paramjit Arora, Inthera Bioscience employs a proprietary technology platform to rationally design protein-protein interaction inhibitors. The company has discovered potent disruptors of hypoxia-inducible signaling for the treatment of solid tumors and targeted agents against HPV-associated cancer, which are in pre-clinical development.

Jasper Bos, Senior Investment Director at MS Ventures, commented: “The broad applicability of Inthera’s technology is intriguing. Protein-protein interactions are one of the most promising target classes in oncology but have been notoriously intractable. The possibility to rationally design small molecule inhibitors against them could break new ground in targeted cancer therapy.”

“Inthera is a great fit with Aglaia’s strategy”, said Mark Krul, Partner at Aglaia. “We strongly believe in innovative technology platforms in order to develop truly novel, first-in-class therapies in oncology. Hypoxia-inducible signaling is a major driver of cancer progression and metastasis in many solid tumor types; blocking this pathway has the potential to become a revolutionary therapy.”

Nanna Lüneborg, Investment Director at Novo Seeds, said: “We are delighted to partner with the Inthera team and our co-investors. HPV-associated cancer is an epidemic on the rise and Inthera’s lead program could pioneer a novel, targeted approach to the treatment of these malignancies.

“It is exciting to advance our lead program from in vivo proof of concept to the clinic and expand our emerging pipeline”, said Ulrich Kessler, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Inthera. “Being supported by such a strong investor syndicate illustrates the potential of our technology and projects. We are looking forward to working with our new board members Jasper Bos, Mark Krul and Nanna Lüneborg.”

About Inthera Bioscience AG
Inthera Bioscience is a private biopharmaceutical company focused on developing inhibitors of intracellular protein-protein interactions employing a proprietary technology platform. Rationally designed, these molecules display hot spot residues on a non-peptidic backbone merging the versatility of small molecules with the specificity of biologics. The broad applicability of the approach has been illustrated
against several targets in oncology. Inthera’s lead programs focus on HPV-associated cancers and hypoxia-inducible signaling.

About MS Ventures
MS Ventures is the strategic corporate venture capital fund of the healthcare business of Merck. The fund was established in March 2009 and focuses primarily on early stage investments. MS Ventures has a strategic mandate and invests in companies that develop products and/or technologies that could benefit patients in therapeutic areas relevant to Merck. MS Ventures has a total of €140 million under management for strategic investments, investments through its Israel BioIncubator and for spin-offs from the Merck organization. For more information, please visit www.ms-ventures.com.

About Aglaia Oncology Fund II
Aglaia is an independent venture capital firm based in the Netherlands. With three funds under management, Aglaia focuses exclusively on oncology. It distinguishes from other funds through its early-stage commitment and hands-on involvement. Aglaia aims to translate groundbreaking research into commercially and clinically successful products. The clear combination of financial and social return gives form to impact investing. For more information, please visit www.aglaia-biomedical.com.

About Novo Seeds
Novo Seeds is the early stage investment arm of Novo A/S, the holding company in the Novo Group. Novo A/S is responsible for the management of the assets of the Novo Nordisk Foundation, which are currently valued at more than DKK 300 billion. Novo A/S is a private limited liability company fully owned by the Novo Nordisk Foundation. Besides being the major shareholder in the Novo Group companies, Novo A/S provides seed and venture capital to development stage companies and takes significant ownership positions in well-established companies, within life science, as well as manages a broad portfolio of financial assets. For more information, visit www.novo.dk

About EVA – the Basel Life Sciences Start-up Agency
EVA (ErfindungsVerwertung AG) in Basel/Switzerland supports start-up entrepreneurs with coaching, through its high value network and with seed financing. The major shareholders are Basler Kantonalbank BKB and Basellandschaftliche Kantonalbank BLKB. Currently, EVA’s portfolio comprises 13 life science start-up companies.

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