

## EsoBiotec ready to transform cell therapy cancer treatments

- EsoBiotec, a recently founded biotech company, announces a EUR 6 million pre-series A round comprised of non-dilutive funding from the Walloon Government combined with seed investments from venture capitalist Thuja Capital and regional funding agencies SRIW Life Sciences and Sambrinvest.
- EsoBiotec is developing next generation cell therapy cancer treatments and offering previously unattainable treatment options to the largest possible number of patients.
- **Paul Rennert**, President, CSO and co-founder of Aleta Biotherapeutics in the USA, and renowned strategist of cancer-immunotherapeutic therapies, joins the Board of Directors:  
*“EsoBiotec’s disruptive approach holds the potential to transform the current standard of cell and gene therapies for cancer treatment. I look forward to supporting the team to bring these transformational therapies to patients worldwide.”*

**Gosselies, Belgium, 30 September 2021** – EsoBiotec’s mission is to empower the human body to fight cancer by bringing *in vivo* engineering of cells to patients. The company aims to develop cost-effective and off-the-shelf therapeutics, providing these state-of-the-art cell therapies to the largest number of patients possible.

EsoBiotec has developed the ENaBL platform, which tailors viral vectors for *in vivo* cellular engineering to produce CAR T and other cancer fighting cells inside the patient’s body. These off-the-shelf lentiviral vectors will safely and specifically deliver lifesaving genetic material to cells of interest for long-term expression. This approach is superior to those used in current cell therapies and allows EsoBiotec to circumvent the challenges of *ex-vivo* cell products, such as scalability, host rejection, prohibitive cost, and product variability. The use of the proprietary engineered lentiviral vectors also reduces the complexity of manufacturing and simplifies the procedures for patients and hospitals.

**Jean-Pierre Latere**, EsoBiotec CEO: “The potential of cell and gene therapies is clinically and commercially proven, but the current therapies face multiple accessibility challenges associated with manufacturing and delivery to cancer patients. EsoBiotec’s *in vivo* engineering approach has the potential to bypass these obstacles and provide safe, specific, and durable engineering of cancer-fighting cells in patients. We are thrilled with this initial financial support and vote of confidence, allowing us to launch our activities and build towards a Series A round.”

**Philippe Parone**, EsoBiotec VP of R&D: “Over the last weeks, we have been able to recruit a top-notch team of scientists actively working to further expand our pipeline in hematological malignancies and solid tumors. We focus on safety, targeting specificity and affordability of our products. We plan to test our first products in patients over the next few years. As we develop these products, our ongoing research collaboration with Professors Karine Breckpot and Nick Devoogdt from the Vrije Universiteit

Brussel (VUB) ensures we can tap into their deep expertise in cutting edge technologies for cancer research.”

**Michel Briejer**, Thuja Capital: “The ENaBL platform focuses on empowering patients’ cells to fight cancer. EsoBiotec’s off-the-shelf products fit perfectly within the scope of our new Thuja Capital Healthcare Fund III. Co-investing with Sambrinvest and SRIW further demonstrates our commitment to supporting early-stage innovative companies developing best-in-class therapeutic products in Belgium and beyond.”

**Helena Pozios**, Sambrinvest: “These are exciting times for cell and gene therapies, and Belgium has become a key player in research and development in this field. The launch of EsoBiotec and its establishment within Brussels South Charleroi Biopark is further proof of the attractiveness of the Belgian biotech ecosystem.”

**Christina Franssen**, SRIW Life Sciences: “We are thrilled to join this exciting adventure and support a pioneering company like EsoBiotec, with its game-changing approach to tackling cancer. Oncology is an area in desperate need of innovation and it is great to see EsoBiotec joining other innovative players in the Walloon region.”

EsoBiotec will use its proceeds to expand from Charleroi, Belgium; accelerate its pipeline development activities; build more collaborations with leading academic centres; and prepare for its clinical development program, initially targeting Europe and the USA.

**Media contact:**

Jean-Pierre Latere, CEO of EsoBiotec

Email: [info@esobiotec.com](mailto:info@esobiotec.com)

**About EsoBiotec**

EsoBiotec is a young biotechnology company developing innovative therapeutics to fight cancer. Our mission is to empower the human body to tackle cancer by bringing *in vivo* engineering of cells to patients. We aim to develop cost-effective and off-the-shelf therapeutics and providing state-of-the-art cell therapies to maximise accessibility. Our disruptive approach holds the potential to transform the current standard of cell and gene therapies for cancer treatment. EsoBiotec was founded in 2020 and backed with non-dilutive funding from the Walloon Government combined with seed investments from venture capitalist Thuja Capital and regional funding agencies SRIW Life Sciences and Sambrinvest.

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**About Thuja Capital**

Thuja Capital Management (Thuja) manages several venture capital funds aimed at building and scaling companies in the fields of (bio)pharmaceuticals, medtech and digital health. In addition to generating a financial return for its investors, Thuja’s investments positively impact the health and well-being of patients. Thuja serves physicians and patients worldwide by providing capital to daring entrepreneurs with ground-breaking product concepts locally. For more information visit [www.thujacapital.com](http://www.thujacapital.com)

**About Sambrinvest**

With over 35 years of experience working alongside companies and entrepreneurs, close to 300 portfolio companies and more than 180 million euros under management, Sambrinvest is a major

venture capital player in Wallonia. More than an investment fund, Sambrinvest is also a catalyst for the development of local ecosystems, such as biotech, digital and engineering.

Visit [www.sambrinvest.be](http://www.sambrinvest.be) for more info.

### **About SRIW Life Sciences**

By relying on the traditional strengths of Wallonia, SRIW Life Sciences invests in 'local heroes': scientists and entrepreneurs who want to leverage their innovation to build a sustainable and equitable global economy with roots in Wallonia.

SRIW Life Sciences focuses on diversity and cross-fertilization in its broadest sense. We invest in life sciences companies at diverse stages of development across a wide range of technologies and disease areas.

We are an early and patient investor; we invest in the most promising early-stage companies and can act with a long-term view – longer than the average VCs.

The role of SRIW as a risk capital provider in the life sciences sector support empowering innovators to explore areas they might hesitate to venture into alone. And by supporting innovative start-ups, we aim to strengthen the economic health of our region.

More information: <http://www.sriw.be>