



## Press Release

Paris, June [20], 2013

### **Kurma Life Sciences Partners announces the launch of Kurma Biofund II: The Orphan Initiative**

**KLS Partners, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), bpifrance (CDC Entreprises), Idinvest Partners and New Enterprise Associates (NEA) are participating in the first closing (€44M).**

**Kurma Biofund II is the first Venture Capital fund dedicated to financing innovation in the rare diseases space with a network of eminent European research institutes.**

Driven by dual objectives; to catalyze the emergence of disruptive innovation in life sciences and generate a strong financial return, Kurma has developed a new investment model supported by:

- A network of partnerships with eminent European clinical and academic research institutes,
- An asset centric investment model, which provides efficiency for risk mitigation and results in a shorter investment cycle.

With six companies created from innovations derived from six different academic institutes since 2009, KLS Partners has demonstrated its value as a financial and commercially oriented partner to manage the growth of a diverse range of life sciences companies developing novel pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and medical devices.



### **Kurma Biofund II : The Orphan Initiative**

The new Kurma Biofund II, which has an ultimate size objective of 75 million euros, embraces a diversified investment strategy with a special and significant focus on rare diseases. The rare diseases space is characterized by a few very specific features:

- Taken separately rare diseases are rare, but if all rare diseases patients were combined they would represent approximately 7 to 9% of the worldwide population
- Patients suffering from rare diseases represent a significant unmet medical need as dedicated treatments are available for only 1.5% of all rare diseases
- Rare diseases are a major opportunity for the pharmaceutical industry and are key to fuel their R&D. Company in this space can leverage a unique environment characterized by favorable regulatory policies as well as attractive reimbursement prospects.
- Productive development of disease modifying therapies will come from the ability to identify and to harness innovation from the most prestigious academic and medical centers, and expertise from patient associations and pharmaceutical companies.

Given the specific scientific, clinical, regulatory and industrial characteristics of rare diseases, KLS Partners has gathered together an ecosystem of skills and expertise around Kurma Biofund II (KBII) aimed at sourcing and selecting the best projects and providing the chosen entrepreneurs with a comprehensive set of tools.

### **Kurma Biofund II: A Network of Expertise**

The first close of KBII fund combines two historical partners of KLS Partners; CDC Entreprises and Idinvest Partners, with:

- Global pharmaceutical firm GSK, through its GSK Rare Diseases business;
- Leading US based venture capital group NEA;
- And French, Paris-based venture capital group Idinvest.

By investing in this fund, GSK Rare Diseases and NEA are willing to share their industrial and entrepreneurial expertise with Kurma's team and each will actively contribute to the scientific committee of KBII. *"We are delighted today to be able to announce the launch of Kurma Biofund II. This first closing is a success, built on the fund's originality: indeed, its global aspect and the combination of exceptional partners are all major assets in a context where the development of new treatments and diagnostic tools for rare diseases is increasingly sought-after by industrialists seeking therapeutic innovation"*, said Thierry Laugel and Rémi Droller, Managing Partners of KLS Partners.



Mouncef Slaoui, Chairman of Research & Development at GSK, commented:

*“GSK’s participation in this fund is an extension of our long-term commitment to addressing the needs of patients with rare diseases and to finding the best science, in whatever part of the world it is taking place. We feel strongly about the importance of continuing to build and support the biotechnology ecosystem through diverse collaborations such as Kurma Biofund II and look forward to working together with leading scientists and academics in the rare diseases field.”*

Daniel Balmisse, Vice President of CDC Entreprises (bpifrance) added:

*“As a major investor in French biotech companies, we are pleased to be able to participate in Kurma Biofund II and to thus continue accompanying a fund management team that has a targeted investment strategy and a particularly original positioning on the market.”*

David Mott, General Partner at NEA added:

*“NEA is pleased to partner with KLS to build a new fund with a special focus on early stage therapeutics for rare diseases. Kurma Biofund II represents an exceptional opportunity for new therapies and shows our transatlantic focus on rare diseases. We look forward to working with prestigious academic centers and pharmaceutical companies to screen new projects and develop selected companies in orphan diseases in Europe.”*

Benoist Grossmann, Managing Partner of Idinvest Partners, concludes:

*“Teaming up with KLS Partners for the launch of its 2nd fund builds on the existing partnership we have had with the team for almost a decade and is in line with Idinvest Partners’ investment strategy that aims to develop businesses that specialise in very specific sectors such as health.”*

**About KLS Partners - [www.kls-partners.com](http://www.kls-partners.com)**

Founded in July 2009, KLS Partners is a key European player in venture capital, development capital and technology transfer in the field of life sciences (biotechnologies, health, nutrition, environmental sciences), notably through the Kurma Biofund venture capital fund and strategic partnerships with forefront European biotechnology medical research centres.

**About GSK - [www.gsk.com](http://www.gsk.com)**

One of the world’s leading research-based pharmaceutical and healthcare companies – is committed to improving the quality of human life by enabling people to do more, and live longer.



**About bpifrance** - [www.cdcentreprises.fr](http://www.cdcentreprises.fr) or [www.fonds-fsi.fr](http://www.fonds-fsi.fr)

CDC Entreprises, an AMF-approved portfolio management company, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the French *Caisse des Dépôts*. It invests both directly and indirectly, mainly on behalf of the FSI, in businesses, from technology seed funding to small-cap buyouts, both nationally and regionally. It manages the *FSI-PME* and *FSI-France Investissement* setups, the aim of which is to promote the emergence of solid and sustainable growth companies by strengthening their shareholders' equity. At September 30<sup>th</sup> 2009, CDC Entreprises had a portfolio of 176 French private equity funds (70 of them regional), which manage a total of 8.8 billion euros, and 2,500 growth companies.

**About Idinvest Partners** - [www.idinvest.com](http://www.idinvest.com)

With €3.6 billion under management and 40 staff, Idinvest Partners is a leading pan-European private equity manager focused on the middle market segment. Idinvest Partners has developed several complementary areas of expertise including primary, secondary and mezzanine investments in non-listed European companies, private equity consulting and investments in innovative European start-ups. Founded under the name AGF Private Equity in 1997, Idinvest Partners was formerly part of the Allianz Group until 2010 when it joined forces with IDI Group to become independent.

**About NEA** - [www.nea.com](http://www.nea.com)

New Enterprise Associates, Inc. (NEA) is a leading venture capital firm focused on helping entrepreneurs build transformational businesses across multiple stages, sectors and geographies. With more than \$14 billion in committed capital, NEA invests in information technology, healthcare and energy technology companies at all stages in a company's lifecycle, from seed stage through IPO. The firm's long track record of successful investing includes more than 170 portfolio company IPOs and more than 300 acquisitions. In the U.S., NEA has offices in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area; Menlo Park, California; and New York City. In addition, New Enterprise Associates (India) Pvt. Ltd. has offices in Bangalore and Mumbai, India and New Enterprise Associates (Beijing), Ltd. has offices in Beijing and Shanghai, China.

**Media contact**

**NewCap.** - Nicolas Merigeau : +33(0)1 44 51 94 98 - [nmerigeau@newcap.fr](mailto:nmerigeau@newcap.fr)