



PRESS RELEASE

Reinventing the Health sector start-up financing model

Paris, November 15th, 2016 - Kurma Partners, a French venture capital company specialising in the Life Sciences sector, today presents its investment convictions to encourage innovation and accelerate the creation of new Health-sector companies.

French scientific research: globally-recognised innovations, a growing need for support

Driven by substantial medical needs and solid growth prospects, the French Life Sciences corporate fabric is currently recorded unparalleled growth. The number of research projects in the Health sector is rocketing, and it is today vital to provide a new sustainable, appropriate and competitive model for financing innovation.

Within a context where most scientific research is undertaken in eminent university or academic institutions such as Inserm (*Institut National de la Santé Et de la Recherche Médicale*, the French national institute for health and medical research) or SATT (*Sociétés d'Accélération du Transfert de Technologies*, technology transfer offices), the investment model of Life Sciences venture capital companies has to evolve and modernise itself to meet researchers' requirements and enable their research to be developed through to the drug candidate stage.

Encouraging innovation and the creation of start-ups through academic, industrial and financial partnerships: the Kurma Partners investment model

Created in 2009, Kurma Partners is behind a new Life Sciences investment model combining a network of exceptional partners from the field of academic research, the pharmaceutical industry and the financial ecosystem aimed at sourcing and selecting the most-promising scientific projects and efficiently supporting entrepreneurs.

The technologies selected by Kurma Partners are included in its financing programmes and represent the starting point of a biotechnology company's creation, the aim being to accompany innovation through to the drug candidate stage. Thanks to its network of industrial partners, Kurma Partners simultaneously identifies players with the most appropriate technological solutions to accelerate the new start-up's development.

"Kurma Partners is supported by a network of academic partners with whom we have established a true relationship of trust, which justifies the unique access we have to researchers and clinicians in order to select the most-promising scientific discoveries early on. By putting high-quality industrial partnerships in place with newly-created start-ups, we also ensure the recruitment of experienced management teams to best guarantee the development of these new therapies and the acceleration of their transition from the research stage to that of a therapeutic product", says Rémi Droller, Managing Partner of Kurma Partners.

A tried-and-tested financing model: 9 companies created by Kurma Partners since 2009

Since it was founded, Kurma Partners has enabled the creation of nine companies specialised in the Life Sciences sector, four of them in the last two years. Three of these perfectly illustrate the relevance of this new financing model:

- **Imcheck Therapeutics**, a spin-off of the CRCM (*Centre de Recherche en Cancérologie de Marseille*, the Marseille cancer research centre), develops new therapeutic approaches in immuno-oncology based on the recognised work of Daniel Olive, Head of the CRCM's Immunity and Cancer team for the last 20 years or so. Imcheck Therapeutics was created in partnership with German group Boehringer Ingelheim.
- **Dynacure**, a company founded in 2016 on the basis of world-renowned work by Jocelyn Laporte, Head of the Pathophysiology of Neuromuscular Disease team at IGBMC (*Institut de Génétique et de Biologie Moléculaire et Cellulaire*, institute of genetics and molecular and cellular biology) near Strasbourg, aims to develop new treatments for rare neuromuscular diseases. Initially supported by the Conectus Alsace SATT, Kurma Partners then formed an industrial partnership between American group Ionis Pharmaceuticals and Dynacure to allow the latter to accelerate its research.
- **Step Pharma**, a French company created as a spin-off of the Necker hospital's Imagine Institute, develops new therapies to treat autoimmune diseases using work undertaken by Alain Fischer. It was created in partnership with UK group Signature Discovery.

"Our financing model based on academic, financial and industrial partnerships is currently being implemented, and this is just the first step! Kurma Partners has managed to extract substantial added value from its academic assets by transforming them into state-of-the-art companies in a particularly dynamic sector. This financing model thus provides a response to the need to create and support these companies, whilst totally complying with Kurma Partners' founding principle: support start-ups in order to develop new therapies and meet currently-unmet patient requirements."

About Kurma Partners - www.kurmapartners.com

Founded in July 2009, Kurma Partners is a key European venture capital player in the Life Sciences sector, notably through its Kurma Biofund I fund, Kurma Biofund II fund and Kurma Diagnostics acceleration fund. Managing funds totalling over €250 million, Kurma's investment strategy is based both on a selection of the best European companies and on the creation of a portfolio of "proprietary" companies in which Kurma intervenes from their very creation.

Media contact:

NewCap
Nicolas Merigeau
+33 (0)1 44 71 94 98
nmerigeau@newcap.fr