



## **Univercells granted €2.4M (\$2.9M) to develop antibody production platform**

**Funding from Service Public de Wallonie will enable Univercells to initiate a development program aimed at driving down costs of biosimilars manufacturing**

**Gosselies, Belgium, January 23, 2018** – Univercells SA, a technology company dedicated to delivering innovative and cost-effective biomanufacturing solutions, today announces that it has received a grant worth €2.4M (\$2.9M) from Wallonia Region (Service Public de Wallonie, DGO6). This funding will enable the company to launch a program aimed at the development of its innovative protein platform, paving the way for the cost-effective production of biosimilars. The platform will enable production units to be deployed anywhere in the world, providing access to biologics independent of location.

The new generation of biologic medicines represents significant progress in healthcare, successfully addressing oncology, auto-immune and rare diseases. However, their prohibitive costs and limited supply lead to unequal access around the world, preventing wide coverage.

The increasing demand for affordable biologics calls for adapted production capacities, capable of drastic cost containment for a significant impact on the commercial price.

Univercells' new 18-month program 'Universimilar' will focus on designing the next generation of production technologies, in order to improve worldwide access to biologics. Its objective is to deliver a cost-effective antibody manufacturing platform offering a ten-fold reduction in production costs by addressing process footprint and efficiency.

With technologies based on the intensification of unit steps and their integration from upstream to downstream, the entire process is miniaturized, driving down infrastructure and equipment costs. This high-efficiency process is capable of delivering large amounts of antibodies, for a competitive supply of biologics.

The resulting high-capacity production unit is more affordable to both build and operate, increasing affordability in high-quality biologics.

The Universimilar project will validate the platform with a first antibody, to be expanded to a range of products and applications. Univercells' ultimate objective is to offer a multi-product platform that could potentially produce any type of antibody.

"We are very appreciative of the continuing insight and support from Wallonia," said Hugues Bultot, co-founder and CEO of Univercells. "The region has supported Univercells since its early days, with a successful earlier project leading to the commercial development of our vaccine micro-facility. We are confident this second platform will demonstrate the same favorable outcome and aid in fostering access to healthcare worldwide."

Last December, Univercells announced the successful closing of a €3 million (\$3.56M) capital increase in a Series-A equity financing round, led by private investors. Prior to that the company received a \$12 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and €3 million from Takeda in 2015.

**About DGO6 (Service Public de Wallonie)**

DGO6 Economy – Employment – Research is a branch of the administration of the region of Wallonia, Belgium. Through its Technology Development Department, the Walloon Region has set up several attractive incentives to boost regional innovation and research, and to support companies, from start-ups to well-established enterprises, on their way from innovation to successful development.

[recherche-technologie.wallonie.be](http://recherche-technologie.wallonie.be)

**About Univercells**

Univercells is a technology company offering novel biomanufacturing platforms, aimed at increasing the availability and affordability of biologics – recombinant proteins and vaccines - for all. Univercells designs innovative production processes to significantly decrease the size of the necessary equipment and facility, for a lower capital and operational cost.

The company's process intensification and integration technology entails smaller footprint and unit cost while offering flexible capabilities, from small to large batches.

Deployment of affordable production units enables 'in-country, for-country' biologics production, creating value for manufacturers and healthcare systems with cost efficiency and local supply while increasing patients' access to healthcare.

Univercells was founded in 2013 by experienced entrepreneurs Hugues Bultot, CEO, and José Castillo, CTO, who bring close to 25 years of expertise in the biotechnology and life sciences sectors. Headquartered in Gosselies (Belgium), Univercells benefits from support from the Walloon region and received €3 million from Takeda in 2015. Most recently, the company was awarded a \$12 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

[univercells.com](http://univercells.com)

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