



Univercells acquires SynHelix, entering into synthetic biology and the race to next-generation DNA synthesis

Brussels, Belgium & Evry, France, January 6, 2022

Univercells S.A. (Univercells) today announces its acquisition of SynHelix, a biotechnology company that aims to debottleneck biotherapeutics development through an unprecedented robust, scalable and automated DNA synthesis technology resulting in one-step generation of long DNA fragments, in large quantities, with high purity in a cGMP-compliant setup. SynHelix's offering will complement the RNA platform being developed by Quantoom Biosciences SA (Quantoom), the Univercells affiliate that is developing an end-to-end RNA production technology.

SynHelix has been supported until now by AdBio partners (formerly Advent France Biotechnology), a French life sciences venture capital firm. Following the transaction, SynHelix will become Quantoom Research Center, a separate legal entity and new affiliate of the Univercells Group, established in France. Both the founders of SynHelix and AdBio will subsequently become minority shareholders of Univercells.

Alain Huriez, chairman and managing partner of AdBio partners said: "By investing in December 2019, we were the first venture capital firm to believe in SynHelix's disruptive technology and to bet on the intelligence and ingenuity of its scientific founders, Irina Gbalou and Ahmed Said. The confirmation of the potential of the SynHelix technology was soon beyond our expectations and it was time to offer the company the fastest and most agile industrial development opportunity, as well as the possibility for its founders to continue innovating in a supportive environment. Univercells met all the criteria of an ideal industrial partner and we are thrilled to have contributed to this transaction, fulfilling our role as a company builder."

Headquartered in Evry-Courcouronnes, France, SynHelix develops a technology that is an alternative to DNA amplification on bacteria, which requires large and expensive industrial facilities, as well as complex processing and quality control steps for very low yields. SynHelix plans to transfer this technology to the Quantoom's automated platform, integrating a 'new generation DNA bioreactor' that will provide record benefits in productivity and costs, both for R&D and production needs.

SynHelix is part of Genopole®, France's leading biocluster and incubator for excellent biotechnology projects, offering a unique environment for researchers and entrepreneurs who want to innovate and advance research.

In 2020, Synthetic Biology¹ investments reached a new record of nearly USD 8 billion², as gene, RNA and DNA therapies have grown rapidly over the past decade. The need for rapid, cheap, multiplex modification of genomes and ongoing research activities are expected to drive future

¹Synthetic Biology industry includes Health & medicine, Biomanufacturing, Chemicals & materials, Energy & environment, Food & nutrition.

² <https://synbiobeta.com/synthetic-biology-investment-set-a-nearly-8-billion-record-in-2020-what-does-this-mean-for-2021/>

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growth. As part of Univercells and a key contributor to Quantoom's innovation, SynHelix's ambition is to contribute to this market growth with its innovative technology.

Univercells will use its new outpost to strengthen partnerships within the French biotech ecosystem. The recently announced commitment of the French government to promote and expedite the biotech sector contributes to the attractiveness of the SynHelix acquisition. Moreover, Univercells aspires to expand its European footprint related to existing products and services, beyond its home country of Belgium, into France in the near future.

José Castillo, CEO of Quantoom Biosciences, said: "The development of SynHelix's synthetic DNA production platform is highly complementary to Quantoom's flagship RNA platform, as linear DNA is one of the critical inputs of RNA production. This deal will unlock expertise, knowledge and IP on *de novo* DNA synthesis, where the SynHelix team holds valuable experience. Both companies' founders, employees and investors share the same vision and mission, aiming at making new and complex biopharmaceuticals available to all and firmly believe in technology-driven affordability. In addition, the acquisition enables us to tap into the dynamic French biotech ecosystem."

Irina Gbalou, CEO and co-founder of SynHelix added: "We are really thrilled to join the Univercells Group. SynHelix was founded with the mission of making an impact in synthetic biology, which faces a bottleneck in DNA supply. Alain Huriez and the entire AdBio partners team believed in us from the beginning and have never stopped supporting us throughout our journey. Providing access to their network and strategic vision gave us the opportunity to meet Univercells founders, Hugues Bultot and José Castillo. This acquisition is the result of a common vision: to bring flexibility and affordability to biologics development by combining expertise in innovative bioproduction methods. The SynHelix team is looking forward to working alongside Quantoom's strong scientific, development and management teams to advance the next-generation vaccines production platform. Considering the prospects for Univercells growth, we are convinced that our work will have a major leverage effect on the field of gene therapy and synthetic biology."

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●●● About AdBio partners ●●●

AdBio partners (previously Advent France Biotechnology) is an AMF-regulated (the French financial market authority) company that invests in a range of sectors within the life sciences - specifically in therapeutics-oriented projects. AdBio partners' unique strategy combines early-stage investments in promising enterprises and strong entrepreneurial support to strengthen the company's growth.

Created in 2016 in Paris, France, AdBio partners has a strong entrepreneurial spirit; from the inception of its first fund in 2017, it now maintains 17 European investments in France, Belgium, Spain and Ireland.

AdBio partners has developed strong relationships within the European innovation ecosystem; as a result, it has attracted international VC syndicates to its portfolio companies.

The operational team is managed by Alain Huriez and Matthieu Coutet and has appointed a number of investment professionals with long-standing track records in entrepreneurial ventures, combined with strong scientific and medical expertise.

www.adbio.partners

●●● About SynHelix ●●●

SynHelix is a French life sciences company with the mission of breaking the bottleneck of biotherapeutics development which faces unsolved DNA supply, given the exponentially increasing demands from the pharma and biotech industry.

SynHelix combines expertise in enzyme engineering and bioprocess optimization to develop a large-scale enzymatic DNA synthesis platform.

Headquartered in Evry (France), SynHelix benefit from the research hub for genomics and life sciences of Genopole's campus. The company continues to grow with the valuable support from AdBio partners (formerly Advent France Biotechnology), the Region Ile-de-France and Bpifrance.

www.synhelix.com

●●● About Univercells ●●●

Univercells is a global life sciences company with the mission of making biologics accessible to all. Using our combined expertise in scaling, production and bioprocessing, Univercells finds new and sustainable ways to widen access to life-changing drugs.

Our affiliate companies deploy innovations in infrastructure, drug substance manufacturing, equipment manufacturing, equipment design, training and on-the-ground health services to drive down costs, shrink manufacturing footprints and meet the needs of the entire health value chain.

Headquartered in Gosselies (Belgium), Univercells is supported by regional and national investors, as well as international investors active in vaccines and healthcare, such as the Bill &

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Melinda Gates Foundation, the European Investment Bank and the Global Health Investment Fund, among others.

www.univercells.com

●●● Disclosure Statement ●●●

The contents of this announcement include statements that are, or may be deemed to be, 'forward-looking statements'. These forward-looking statements can be identified using forward-looking terminology, including the words 'believes', 'estimates', 'anticipates', 'expects', 'intends', 'may', 'will', 'plans', 'continue', 'ongoing', 'potential', 'predict', 'project', 'target', 'seek' or 'should', and include statements the company makes concerning the intended results of its strategy. By their nature, forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties and readers are cautioned that any such forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance. The company's actual results may differ materially from those predicted by the forward-looking statements. The company undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise forward-looking statements, except as may be required by law.

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