



## NousCom concludes successful series A financing of EUR 12 million.

**Basel, Switzerland – May, 17 2016**

NousCom announced today that it has closed a EUR 12 million Series A financing co-led by LSP and Versant Ventures. The funds will be used to support discovery and development of personalized cancer vaccines and tumor selective oncolytic viruses.

“We are pleased to partner with investors who support the development of a new immuno-oncology company with multiple product candidates. We believe we will be able to create immense value as we bring a series of novel, life-changing therapeutics to patients affected by cancer,” said Riccardo Cortese M.D., Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer and President of NousCom.

NousCom’s technology focuses on viral vectors and oncolytic viruses, which infect and kill tumor cells and stimulate an immune response against cancer cells throughout the body. It has two product candidates, the Endovax and Exovax programs. Endovax, an antigenless vaccine, is based on oncolytic viruses capable of infecting and replicating only in cancer cells and causing immunogenic cell death, thereby recruiting T cells at the tumor site and reactivating T cells exhausted in the tumor micro-environment. Exovax is based on viral vectors coding for strings of cancer neo-epitopes to induce and expand cancer and patient specific T cells.

NousCom Director Dr. Joachim (JR) Rothe says: *“Personalized cancer vaccines and oncolytic “antigenless” vaccines have the potential to converge into a protocol of oncolytic virus prime- and personalized vaccine boost for maximum sustained effect.”*

“The NousCom platform offers an innovative approach to cancer vaccines that is versatile, powerful and scalable,” said Guido Magni, Partner at Versant Ventures. “Further, since we backed this same team at Okairos, we know the members’ skill level, dedication and ability to build a successful company.”

For decades, cancer vaccines have been based on naturally occurring proteins that are more expressed in tumor cells than in normal cells. This approach, based on self antigens, has reached a stage of stagnation, with very modest results in numerous clinical trials.

New developments in DNA and RNA sequencing technologies now allow affordable, rapid and robust determination of the exact sequence of the genome of tumors. From a small cancer biopsy one can now discover many mutations leading to changes in the sequence of proteins, thus generating neoantigens that are perceived as non self and thus have the potential to circumvent tolerance and to engage an intact naïve T cell repertoire. Neoantigens are therefore ideally suited for the design of cancer vaccines. Because mutations in tumors are very frequent, but differ from patient to patient, we need to produce for each patient its own personalized epitope based vaccine. Rooted in our extensive experience we have furthermore developed a proprietary miniaturized manufacturing process suited for rapid, efficient and parallel production of patient-specific vaccines. Our proprietary Adeno vectors have a “high capacity”, potentially encoding for over 100 neoantigens into a single vector, and they induce long lasting central and effector memory T-cells, which are associated with longer survival when found in tumor infiltrates.

In its second development program, NousCom scientists have developed a next generation of oncolytic viruses, encoding for a variety of immunomodulators and capable of infecting and killing cancer cells with the specificity of antibodies while not infecting normal cell.

## **About NousCom**

The Founders of NousCom are a well established team that has worked together for many years in previous successful enterprises, including IRBM/Merck and Okairos, and are veterans in the field of oncolytic and genetic vaccines. At Okairos , they developed and tested a novel viral vector platform, based on adeno vectors derived from non human primates, that has been tested in more than 4000 subjects in several clinical trials in USA, Europe and Africa. Leveraging on this previous experience the NousCom team is well positioned to make breakthrough contributions in the development of a platform technology harnessing the power of oncolytic viruses and the flexibility and the immunological potency of viral vectors encoding neo-antigens, to develop personalized patient specific cancer vaccines. The company is headquartered in Basel, Switzerland and has operations in Rome, Italy. For more information on NousCom, please visit the company's website at [www.nouscom.com](http://www.nouscom.com)

## **About LSP**

LSP (Life Sciences Partners) is a leading independent European investment firm, providing financing for private and public life-science companies. Since the late 1980s, LSP's management has invested in a large number of highly innovative enterprises, many of which have grown to become leaders of the global life-science industry. With over EUR 1 billion of investment capital raised to date and offices in Amsterdam, Munich and Boston, LSP is one of Europe's largest and most experienced specialist life-science investors. For more information, please visit [www.lspvc.com](http://www.lspvc.com).

## **About Versant Ventures**

Versant Ventures is a leading global healthcare investment firm committed to helping exceptional entrepreneurs build the next generation of great healthcare companies. The firm invests across the healthcare sector and at all stages of company development, with an emphasis on the discovery and development of novel therapeutics. With \$1.9 billion under management and offices in North America and Europe, Versant has built a team with deep investment, operating, and scientific expertise that enables a hands-on approach to company building. Since the firm's founding in 1999, nearly 50 Versant companies have achieved successful acquisitions or IPOs. For more information, please visit [www.versantventures.com](http://www.versantventures.com).

<http://www.nouscom.com>