

## **Innovation Industries joins €18m Series A financing round of A-MANSIA, a leading microbiome company**

*The financing round will be used to progress development pipeline based on the key bacterial symbiont Akkermansia muciniphila*

**Amsterdam, the Netherlands – 27 September 2018 – Innovation Industries announced today that it joins the financing round of A-Mansia Biotech S.A. (A-Mansia), the microbiome company focused on developing products based on the unique properties of the *Akkermansia muciniphila* (*A. muciniphila*) bacterium.**

Founded in 2016, A-Mansia is based on discoveries made by the founding scientists, Professor Willem M. de Vos from Wageningen University (The Netherlands) and Professor Patrice D. Cani from the University of Louvain (UCL, Belgium). Isolated in 2004 at Wageningen University, *A. muciniphila* is one of the most abundant species found in the gut microbiota, the population of microorganisms housed in the gastrointestinal tract. *A. muciniphila* is located in a particular niche: the mucus layer covering the intestinal epithelium. This location allows this bacterium to establish a close cross-talk with the host. Thanks to these interactions with the host immune and metabolic functions, *A. muciniphila* acts as a key gatekeeper to the intestinal barrier.

More than ten years of collaborative research in two well-recognized university laboratories have led to the demonstration that daily administration of live *A. muciniphila* can improve metabolic disorders and inflammatory conditions in mice fed with a high-fat diet. Pasteurised *A. muciniphila* exhibited the same, or greater, beneficial effects and completely prevented the development of disorders induced by a high-fat diet in the preclinical model.

The first human exploratory study of *A. muciniphila* in volunteers is currently ongoing in University of Louvain's hospital (Cliniques universitaires Saint-Luc, Brussels). Interim results confirm that it is safe and well tolerated. In parallel research, the team has identified active components isolated from *A. muciniphila* able to replicate the beneficial properties associated with administration of the whole bacterium.

The company controls a strong intellectual property portfolio, thanks to patents developed by both Universities. Proceeds of this Series A financing will be used to advance the development of a proprietary nutritional supplement based on *A. muciniphila* through to commercial launch. Subjects with an increased cardio-metabolic risk (insulin resistance, hyperglycemia, high blood cholesterol, and visceral fat accumulation) are indeed characterized by lower *A. muciniphila* abundance in the gut. This supplement could then be key to maintaining health and immunity, normal glycaemia, normal blood cholesterol levels and avoiding excessive weight gain. Series A will also finance the start of pharmaceutical discovery effort based on active components isolated from *A. muciniphila*.

Innovation Industries joins the current round with a substantial investment, in which other leading investors also have participated, such as Seventure Partners (investing from several funds including Health for Life Capital), Fonds Vives II (University of Louvain, UCL), the SRIW Life Sciences and Nivelinvest, as well as historical supporter of the research, private investor Mr. Pierre Drion.

Scientific co-founder Professor Willem M. de Vos said: "We discovered this unique symbiont when searching for intestinal bacteria that have an intimate relationship with humans. It is exciting to be progressing *A. muciniphila* to the next level and to be able to contribute to people's quality of life."

Scientific co-founder Professor Patrice D. Cani added: "This is a unique opportunity to develop the output from the scientific discoveries made at University of Louvain (UCL) and Wageningen University's laboratories into products available to everyone."

“We are very happy to have Innovation Industries on Board”, says Jean-Christophe Malrieu, the Company’s CEO. “A-Mansia is now setting onto a new and exciting journey for the development of a new microbiota platform.”

“We are very excited about our investment in A-Mansia”, says Tom Schwarz, Partner at Innovation Industries. “A-Mansia has proprietary knowledge on the unique *A. muciniphila* bacterium and will play a leading role in innovative microbiome health solutions. We look forward to working closely together with the highly professional team of A-Mansia.”

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Note for the press:

#### **About Innovation Industries**

Innovation Industries is an independent venture capital fund that combines company-building and venture investment under one roof. Innovation Industries uses a market-driven approach to create long-term value in high technology start-up and scale-up companies. Our partnerships with all Dutch technical universities (Eindhoven, Twente, Delft and Wageningen) and applied research institutes (TNO) provide us with unparalleled access to knowledge and technologies. Innovation Industries has currently invested in ventures which are active in the nano- and microtechnology, semiconductor, food and agrotechnology, and medical technology fields. For further information about the portfolio companies please visit: <https://www.innovationindustries.com/companies>.

The Innovation Industries Fund is supported by private and institutional investors such as PME and InnovFin Equity. InnovFin Equity with the financial backing of the European Union under Horizon 2020 Financial Instruments and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) set up under the Investment Plan for Europe. The purpose of EFSI is to help support financing and implementing productive investments in the European Union and to ensure increased access to financing.

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#### **About A-Mansia**

Founded in 2016, A-Mansia is a Belgian-based microbiome start-up based on discoveries made by its founding scientists, Professor Willem M. de Vos, from Wageningen University, The Netherlands and Professor Patrice D. Cani, from the University of Louvain (UCL), Belgium. Its R&D will be conducted in collaboration with the laboratories of University of Louvain (UCL) and Wageningen University, and contract organizations. A-Mansia is developing health products based on the unique properties of the *Akkermansia muciniphila* bacterium. The Company has secured €18m in a series A financing from investors Seventure Partners, Innovation Industries, Fonds Vives II (University of Louvain, UCL), the SRIW Life Sciences, Nivelinvest, Mr. Pierre Drion and Mr Olivier Van der Rest as well as a €3m non-dilutive grant from the Wallonia regional government (Direction générale opérationnelle de l'Economie, de l'Emploi, de la Formation & de la Recherche - DGO6).

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