



## **Group B Streptococcal vaccine for the prevention of life-threatening infections in newborns secures funding to reach clinical proof of concept.**

**Copenhagen, January 8, 2014 - MinervaX**, a privately held Danish biotech company, announced today that the company has raised DKK 22 million (EUR 3 million) for the development of its Group B Streptococcal Vaccine. The financing was a combination of an equity financing led by Novo Seeds, the seed arm of Novo A/S, supported by Sunstone Capital and LF Investment, and a Syndication Loan from The Danish Growth Foundation (VækstFonden). The new investors will be joining the current syndicate of SEED Capital and Lund University Innovation System. The financing will complement the DKK 45 million (EUR 6 million) received for the project during the summer of 2013 from the EU under the FP7 program HEALTH for the project.

According to Per Fischer, D.Phil., Chief Executive Officer of MinervaX, "The financing combined with the FP7 funding will enable MinervaX to advance the project to clinical proof of concept by late 2016".

Despite the introduction of extensive use of antibiotic prophylaxis during childbirth, GBS is responsible for up to 50% of life-threatening bacterial infections in newborn infants and infections carry a significant risk of either long-term disability or death. Approximately 15-25 % of women are colonized with GBS in their vaginal flora, from which GBS may spread to the child before or during childbirth. Newborn infants are also at increased risk of contracting GBS infections up to 3 months after birth. Infection of the unborn child may lead to premature labor or stillbirth, and infection of the newborn infant may result in severe infections such as pneumonia, septicaemia and meningitis, which all carry a high risk of long-term disability or death. In addition to newborns, GBS infections are also a growing concern in the elderly.

The vaccine candidate is based on a novel innovative fusion protein (GBS-NN) containing the N-terminal domains of the Rib and Alpha surface glycoproteins of GBS. The vaccine candidate has been shown to elicit a highly protective immune response in animal models of GBS infection, and is capable of neutralizing the strains of GBS responsible for up to 95% of all infections (Serotypes Ia, Ib, II, III, & V) in a single vaccine component.

The vaccine candidate is currently undergoing GMP manufacturing in preparation for clinical trials to be initiated early 2015.

In connection with the new financing, Nanna Lüneborg (Novo A/S), Sten Verland (Sunstone Capital), Fredrik Siwmark (LF Investments) will join the Company's Board of Directors. In addition, Ingelise Saunders, former CEO of Action Pharma and seasoned biotech executive, has been appointed as new independent Chairman.

**About MinervaX** MinervaX is a Danish biotech company, established in 2010 in order to develop a prophylactic vaccine against Group B Streptococcus (GBS), based on research from Lund University. Existing investors in the company include SEED Capital (Denmark, [www.seedcapital.dk](http://www.seedcapital.dk)) and Lund University Innovation System (Sweden, [www.luis.lu.se](http://www.luis.lu.se)). [www.minervax.com](http://www.minervax.com).

**About Novo A/S** - Novo A/S, the holding company in the Novo Group, is responsible for the management of the assets of the Novo Nordisk Foundation, which are currently valued at more than USD 30 billion. Novo A/S is a private limited liability company fully owned by the Novo Nordisk Foundation. Besides being the major shareholder in Novo Nordisk A/S and Novozymes A/S, Novo A/S provides seed and venture capital to development stage companies and takes significant ownership positions in well-established companies, within life science and biotechnology, as well as manages a broad portfolio of financial assets. [www.novo.dk](http://www.novo.dk)

Nanna Lüneborg, Investment Director, Novo Seeds, Email: [nllb@novo.dk](mailto:nllb@novo.dk)

**About Sunstone Capital** - Sunstone Capital is an independent venture capital investor founded in 2007. Sunstone Capital focuses on developing and expanding early-stage Life Science and Technology companies with strong potential to achieve global success in their markets. Within life science, Sunstone Capital has invested in more than 35 companies in the areas of pharmaceuticals, medical technologies and diagnostics, and has completed several successful exits and IPOs. With total funds of EUR 700 million under management, Sunstone Capital is one of the largest and most active European venture capital investors. [www.sunstone.eu](http://www.sunstone.eu)

Sten Verland, Partner, Email: [verland@sunstone.eu](mailto:verland@sunstone.eu)

**About LF Investment** – LF Investment is the investment arm of The Lauritzen Foundation, which is parent company of the shipping companies J. Lauritzen (wholly owned) and DFDS (42,8% holding). LF Investment has holdings in companies in the oil analysis, measuring equipment, software, biotechnology and real estate sectors. <http://www.lauritzenfonden.com/gb/erhvervsaktiviteter.asp>

Fredrik Siwmark, CFO, Email: [fsi@lauritzenfonden.com](mailto:fsi@lauritzenfonden.com)

## **Contacts:**

Minervax:

Per Fischer, Chief Executive Officer, Phone: +45 20 25 20 38,  
Email: [pbf@minervax.com](mailto:pbf@minervax.com)