



Belgian biotech Apaxen appoints Bart Wuurman as CEO

Gosselies, Belgium, November 12, 2020 – Apaxen S.A., a privately-held preclinical stage biotechnology company, developing novel oral drugs for chronic inflammatory diseases, with a primary focus in pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) announced today that it has appointed Bart Wuurman as CEO.

Bart Wuurman is an accomplished biotech CEO with over 30 years' experience in innovative drug development, biotech financing, business development and licensing. He has extensive experience in working with research and development-based companies in pharmaceutical product development in several therapeutic areas, including cancer, fibrosis, cardiovascular diseases and renal diseases. Bart was instrumental to successful biotech company exits in the UK and in the Netherlands. He was responsible for pharma licensing deals worth over \$700 million. Bart was CEO of De Novo Pharmaceuticals (UK), AM-Pharma (NL), Lanthio Pharma (NL) and Lynamid Limited (ASX: CDY, Australia), and is Director of Hercules Pharmaceuticals (NL). Bart was also Managing Director of DDF Ventures, a life-science focused venture fund with a portfolio of start-up companies in The Netherlands.

Bart Wuurman, new CEO of Apaxen, stated:

"I am very excited to join the Apaxen team. Apart from showing great potential as novel treatment for PAH, Apaxen's MIF inhibitors may also have many other applications against chronic inflammatory and autoimmune diseases via their inflammasome activation blocking activities".

Lotfi Yelles Chaouche, Apaxen Board member and partner at Theodorus, commented:

"We are very pleased to have found a CEO for Apaxen with the caliber of Bart Wuurman. He brings the experience and drive to take the company onto the next level of development."

Bart Wuurman succeeds Joël Crouzet, PhD as CEO, who has accepted another appointment.

Enrico Bastianelli, co-founder of Apaxen comments:

"We are very grateful for Joël's efforts to structure the company and lead it through the series A funding round".

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About Apaxen

Founded in 2018, Apaxen raised €3.3 million in 2019 from a syndicate of Wallonian investors to develop its lead drug candidate (MFC-1040) for treatment of PAH, and to bring forward further drug candidates for treatment of other chronic inflammatory or autoimmune diseases.

MFC-1040, is a novel, first-in-class, orally bioavailable and selective small molecule MIF inhibitor, which has demonstrated efficacy in multiple animal models of PAH

(<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.jmedchem.7b01312>). It also showed efficacy in an animal model of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (<https://www.mdpi.com/1422-0067/19/12/4105>). MFC-1040 has a mechanism of action that combines potent anti-inflammatory, anti-fibrotic and anti-proliferative effects. It has the potential to revolutionize the standard of care of PAH, by halting or reverting the progression of the disease while current therapies only address the symptoms of the disease.

Apaxen's technology is based on research and development of small molecule inhibitors of macrophage migration inhibitory factor (MIF), a pleiotropic pro-inflammatory cytokine that is a crucial regulator of innate immune responses and inflammasome activation (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-04581-2>). The Apaxen team combines extensive pharmaceutical development experience and is supported by a world-class team of scientific advisors.

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