Belgium and Brazil Unite to Advance RNA-Based Therapies: MoU Signed Between Bio-Manguinhos/Fiocruz, Quantoom Biosciences, and Univercells in the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium during the Belgian Economic Mission to Brazil

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – November 29, 2024 – During the Belgian Economic Mission to Brazil, a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Brazilian Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) through its Institute of Technology on Immunobiologicals (Bio-Manguinhos), and the Belgian companies Quantoom Biosciences S.A. and Univercells S.A. in the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium. This MoU represents a commitment to advance the development of RNA-based vaccines and therapies, expanding access to innovative health solutions both regionally and globally.

The signing ceremony was officiated by Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium, accompanied by distinguished members of the Belgian Economic Delegation, including Pascale Delcomminette, CEO of the Wallonia Export and Investment Agency, the Secretary of Health of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Cláudia Mello, and the Municipal Health Secretary of Rio de Janeiro, Daniel Soranz. This agreement highlights the vital role of international partnerships in addressing global health challenges.

According to Mario Moreira, president of Fiocruz, “this partnership represents another strategic step in expanding access to healthcare and strengthening Brazil’s technological sovereignty, as it enables the production of important inputs for the Unified Health System (SUS), such as vaccines and RNA-based therapies. This integration of complementary scientific and technological capabilities is essential to drive innovations in disease treatment, expand the reach of public health and strengthen the resilience of SUS, benefiting millions of people”.

Building upon the successful implementation of Quantoom Biosciences’ Ntensify® mRNA production system earlier this year at Bio-Manguinhos/Fiocruz, the MoU establishes a framework for further collaboration between the parties. Key areas outlined include:

- Collaboration between Bio-Manguinhos/Fiocruz and Quantoom Biosciences on the development of second-generation saRNA (self-amplifying RNA) technologies for vaccines in Latin America and beyond.
- Partnership between Bio-Manguinhos and Univercells on the co-development of RNA-based therapies targeting diseases such as cancer.
- Joint exploration by all parties of “One Health” applications, with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment.
- Collaboration among all parties on the establishment of a new commercial manufacturing facility in Brazil, exclusively devoted to mRNA and based on Quantoom Biosciences technologies, and integrating local enzyme production (the biggest cost driver of mRNA production) and ensuring greater regional autonomy in biopharmaceutical manufacturing.

The MoU reflects a strong commitment among the parties to negotiate and formalize agreements that will further their shared mission of driving accessibility, affordability, and innovation in global healthcare.

José Castillo, CEO of Quantoom Biosciences and CTO of Univercells, shared his enthusiasm for the collaboration: *"This partnership highlights the transformative power of cross-border collaboration in addressing some of the world's most pressing health challenges. Together with Fiocruz and Bio-Manguinhos, we are advancing RNA-based technologies for infectious diseases and cancer therapies, contributing to global health equity and accessibility."*

Hugues Bultot, CEO of Univercells, added: *"This MoU is a testament to our shared commitment to innovation and impact on health. By leveraging our combined expertise, we aim to create scalable and sustainable solutions that will redefine how vaccines and therapies are developed and delivered so everyone, everywhere, can get them."*

Mauricio Zuma, CEO of Bio-Manguinhos, highlighted: *"We are very proud of this joint commitment that will allow the development of new products to include in the Institute's portfolio in order to respond to public health demands and expand the population's access to health solutions in Brazil and beyond. In addition, we aim to scale-up the innovation landscape and strengthen the Brazilian Health Economic-Industrial Complex (HEIC)".*

About Fiocruz

Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Fiocruz) is Brazil's premier public health institution, and Bio-Manguinhos serves as its dedicated unit for vaccine and biopharmaceutical production. Renowned for producing the world's largest supply of yellow fever vaccines and certified by the World Health Organization (WHO), Bio-Manguinhos is committed to advancing innovation in public health to benefit global communities.

About Bio-Manguinhos/Fiocruz

The Institute of Technology on Immunobiologicals (Bio-Manguinhos) is the unit of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) responsible for research, innovation, technological development, and the production of vaccines, diagnostic kits, and biopharmaceuticals, primarily aimed at meeting the demands of national public health. Founded in 1976, Bio-Manguinhos has a prominent international presence, not only through the export of surplus production to more than 70 countries but also through the exchange of experiences and information, technical and scientific events, partnerships with public and private institutions via Technology Transfer agreements, Partnerships for Productive Development (PDPs), and autochthonous development projects. These efforts contribute to expanding its portfolio, which includes more than 50 products. In 2021, Bio-Manguinhos was selected by PAHO/WHO as a hub for developing and producing vaccines with messenger RNA technology in Latin America.

About Quantoom Biosciences

Quantoom Biosciences is leading the revolution in mRNA-based vaccines and therapeutics by providing turnkey solutions for mRNA-LNP manufacturing. Its cutting-edge Ntensify technology enables the production and purification of mRNA through a fully integrated, scalable system that combines processes, equipment, reagent mixes, and disposables. This solution supports the entire spectrum of mRNA production, from R&D to commercial manufacturing. Launched in 2023, Ntensify has already been widely adopted across multiple continents, showcasing its global appeal. Quantoom Biosciences is also developing the Ncapsulate technology for mRNA-LNP formulation and purification, aiming to significantly increase the accessibility and affordability of mRNA-based drugs. Located in Belgium, Quantoom Biosciences thrives in a dynamic biotech ecosystem, driving innovation in mRNA production to make life-changing therapies available to everyone, everywhere.

About Univercells

Univercells is a global biotech innovator, rooted in Belgium, driven by one purpose: to transform how biotech drugs are made so everyone, everywhere, can get them. Through cutting-edge bioprocessing and technology, they create transformative processes and platforms across drug discovery, development, and delivery. Their focus is accessibility, efficiency, and sustainability to eliminate barriers for drug developers.

Collaborating with biotech and pharmaceutical industries, Univercells paves the way for new vaccines and therapies targeting cancer, infectious diseases, and animal health. With support from world-leading and mission-aligned stakeholders like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the European Investment Bank, and the Global Health Investment Corporation, they are poised to make a difference on a global scale.

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