

## Univercells launches contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO)

20 March 2020 | News

**Univercells launches cell & gene therapy contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO) Exothera with GMP capabilities in 15,000m<sup>2</sup> site in Jumet, Belgium Exothera will partner with cell & gene therapy innovators to unlock their manufacturing potential by capitalizing on best-in-class manufacturing technologies and bioprocessing expertise.**



Univercells has launched a contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO), Exothera, to support cell and gene therapy developers with process development and production of viral vectors. The company has been created to help alleviate the two most critical challenges manufacturers face in bringing these vital therapies to market: a structural lack of capacity and scarcity of bioprocessing expertise.

Exothera is uniquely positioned to create bespoke bioproduction support programs for manufacturers to achieve successful market entry. The team combines complex applied bioprocessing experience with best-in-class technologies. Parent company Univercells' novel manufacturing platforms will be leveraged among others, to design high-quality, cost-effective viral vector processes with the option of implementing sustainable commercial facilities at the customer site if desired. By taking a holistic approach to rapidly deliver scalable bioproduction processes, the CDMO will help cell and gene therapy innovators accelerate the delivery of these groundbreaking therapies with drastic reductions in time to market and cost.

Following initial activities in the established facilities in Gosselies and Nivelles, Exothera's capabilities will be housed at a 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> site in Jumet, Belgium, recently acquired by Univercells. The existing infrastructure of the Jumet site will be revamped to accommodate state-of-the-art laboratories, cleanrooms, and GMP qualified manufacturing areas for clinical and commercial production. Capacity ramp-up will rapidly foster local employment, with an extensive hiring effort to appoint PhD scientists, manufacturing experts and laboratories technicians.

The flexible GMP areas at Jumet will contain Exothera's CDMO activities and ongoing Univercells vaccine development and manufacturing initiatives, with capacity for rapid response programs. On the rapid response front, the company is currently pursuing support opportunities for COVID-19 vaccine innovators, drawing on vast capability and know-how in expediting successful vaccine manufacturing programs.

"This new focus will enable our team to leverage expertise with innovation to overcome the industry's production constraints

and foster the success of cell and gene therapies”, declares Hugues Bultot, CEO of Univercells and Exothera. “We strongly believe that Exothera will make a difference in the manufacturing of these advanced and critically needed therapies, ultimately unlocking their potential to improve patients’ lives.”