

Press release

Pureos Bioventures Portfolio Company Araris acquired for up to USD 1'140 million

- *Taiho Pharmaceutical acquires Araris for USD 400 million, plus USD 740 million in potential milestones*
- *Pureos was leading the seed financing round of Araris*
- *Pureos Venture Partner Dr. Dragan Grabulovski co-founded Araris and served as its CEO, while Managing Partner Dr. Dominik Escher represented Pureos on the company's board of directors*

Pfäffikon, Switzerland, 17 March 2025

Pureos Bioventures (Pureos), a venture capital firm specializing in investments in private innovative drug development companies, today announces the acquisition of its portfolio company Araris Biotech AG (Araris) by the global pharmaceutical company Taiho Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. (Taiho). Araris is a spin-off from the Paul Scherrer Institute and ETH Zurich. Pureos led the seed financing round and actively supported the company to grow from an early-stage biotech startup to a cutting-edge innovator in next-generation antibody-drug conjugate (ADC) technologies aimed at developing new and improved cancer treatments. With the acquisition, Araris will continue its research and development activities as a wholly owned subsidiary of Taiho at its current location in Au/Zurich, Switzerland.

The acquisition follows a research collaboration between Taiho and Araris initiated in November 2023. Under the agreement, Taiho will pay an upfront amount of USD 400 million in cash, with the potential for additional milestone payments of up to USD 740 million. **Co-founder and CEO of Araris and Venture Partner at Pureos, Dr. Dragan Grabulovski**, said: "We are very grateful to all our investors and, in particular, to Pureos which led our seed financing round. Pureos' early financial backing and strategic guidance was instrumental for expanding our development pipeline, ultimately leading to the acquisition by Taiho. We are currently advancing three preclinical-stage products for the treatment of hematological and solid tumors and expect to enter clinical trials soon."

Dr. Dominik Escher, Managing Partner of Pureos and Director of Araris, commented: "ADCs have revolutionized cancer treatment, but a major challenge remains: the instability of the toxic payload, which can break down before reaching cancer cells, leading to unintended toxicity for patients. Araris has developed a groundbreaking linker technology that keeps the payload stable until it reaches the cancer cell, enabling higher dosing and more effective tumor elimination. From the start, we recognized the transformative potential of the Araris technology. I warmly congratulate the entire team, especially Dr. Philipp Spycher, the scientific founder, for his outstanding contributions, first as a postdoc at the Paul Scherrer Institute and later as Araris' Chief Scientific Officer."

Araris has been pioneering a best-in-class approach that enhances linker stability, simplifies manufacturing, and has the potential to improve drug efficacy by wide margins. Its proprietary ADC linker platform, AraLinQ™ also enables the conjugation of two or more different payloads at specific sites of the antibody. ADCs from Araris' platform have demonstrated superior efficacy and safety in preclinical studies compared to conventional ADCs.

Pureos' investment strategy focuses on identifying and supporting high-potential biotech companies with disruptive technologies and promising novel drug candidates for severe diseases. The successful exit of Araris underscores Pureos' ability to foster innovation, deliver value to its investors, and ensure that novel breakthrough therapies reach the patients in need. Pureos launched its first fund in 2019 with a committed capital of USD 205 million. Araris is the second acquisition from this fund after the purchase of Corlieve Therapeutics by uniQure for up to €250 million. Pureos is currently raising its second fund, from which it already completed first investments.

About Araris Biotech AG

Araris Biotech is a leading company pioneering the future of antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) and redefining the entire paradigm of targeted cancer therapy and beyond. It is a spin-off company of the Paul Scherrer Institute and ETH in Switzerland, with Dr. Philipp Spycher, Dr. Isabella Attinger-Toller and Dr. Dragan Grabulovski among its founders. Araris' vision is a world without chemotherapy and its proprietary conjugation and groundbreaking multi-payload technology represents a quantum leap forward in ADC design, enabling the transformation of any antibody into an ADC with the goal of better safety and efficacy. By enabling the attachment of multiple, synergistic cancer-fighting payloads to a single antibody in an efficient one-step process, Araris is creating a new generation of smart missiles that deliver the potency of combination chemotherapy in a targeted fashion in order to tackle the persistent challenges of cancer resistance. Araris' investors include Pureos Bioventures, 4BIO Capital, b2venture, Redalpine, Schroders Capital, VI Partners, Wille AG, Institute for Follicular Lymphoma Innovation and Samsung Ventures.

For more information, please visit: www.ararisbiotech.com

About Taiho Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.

Taiho Pharmaceutical, a subsidiary of Otsuka Holdings Co., Ltd. (<https://www.otsuka.com/en/>), is an R&D-driven specialty pharma focusing on the fields of oncology and immune-related diseases. Its corporate philosophy takes the form of a pledge: "We strive to improve human health and contribute to a society enriched by smiles." In the field of oncology, in particular, Taiho Pharmaceutical is known as a leading company in Japan for developing innovative medicines for the treatment of cancer, a reputation that is rapidly expanding through their extensive global R&D efforts. In areas other than oncology, as well, the company creates and markets quality products that effectively treat medical conditions and can help improve people's quality of life. Always putting customers first, Taiho Pharmaceutical also aims to offer consumer healthcare products that support people's efforts to lead fulfilling and rewarding lives.

For more information, please visit <https://www.taiho.co.jp/en/>

About Pureos Bioventures

Pureos Bioventures is a venture fund advised by the Swiss venture capital firm Pureos Partners. It invests exclusively in private innovative drug development companies, with a special emphasis on the next generation of biological drugs and drug formats. The fund's portfolio companies are built on scientific excellence to develop therapies across a broad indication spectrum including oncology, immunology, ophthalmology, rare diseases, and neuroscience. Pureos has built a team with in-depth investment, operating and clinical expertise, that strives to impact patients' lives by advancing innovative treatments for devastating diseases.

For more information, please visit www.pureosbio.com

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