

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Atheris and Debiopharm Group™ to collaborate for the lead optimization of Debio 0826 using a “Reverse-Discovery” strategy**

**Geneva and Lausanne, Switzerland – October 24, 2013** – Atheris Laboratories, a world leading company in venom-based drug discovery and lead optimization, and Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm), a Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical company developing prescription drugs that target unmet medical needs including oncology along with companion diagnostics, today announced the signature of a collaboration agreement regarding the Atheris “Reverse-Discovery”™ lead optimization platform. Collaboration with Atheris is expected to accelerate Debiopharm’s ongoing lead optimization program in project Debio 0826, whose aim is to develop a peptide drug against an innovative oncology target through a “Venomics” approach using Debiopharm’s expertise in the discovery, development and formulation of peptides.

Venoms represent a well-established resource of bioactive compounds that have already led to seven marketed drugs. This collaboration aims to improve drugability features (increasing efficacy, potency, selectivity and stability, while reducing possibly unwanted side-effects such as toxicity) of one promising lead candidate peptide identified in animal venom by Atheris, Debiopharm and the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL). Lead optimization will be carried out using Atheris’ proprietary “Reverse-Discovery” probabilistic algorithms. Candidates will be identified and produced using a multiplex synthetic venom platform developed by Atheris in partnership with the teams of Prof. Oliver Hartley at the University of Geneva and Dr Frédérique Lisacek from the Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics with financial support from the Swiss Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI).

“Atheris has demonstrated its commitment with pharma and biotech companies to help accelerate drug discovery with cutting-edge venomics technology. We are particularly proud of this partnership with Debiopharm that consolidates our leadership and reinforces our “Reverse-Discovery”™ platform for lead optimization” said President and CEO of Atheris Laboratories, Reto Stöcklin.

“This new partnership is in line with the collaboration that Debiopharm and Atheris started in 2010. Both companies have brought their unique expertise in the field of peptide-based drugs, and contributed to the advancement of project Debio 0826 from hits finding to lead optimization” added Andrés McAllister, Chief Scientific Officer, Research & Evaluation at Debiopharm.

**About Atheris**

Atheris Laboratories is a dynamic family-owned and family-driven Swiss biotech company founded by Dr Reto Stöcklin in 1995. Atheris is a contract research organization (CRO) specialized in peptide and protein drug discovery, peptidomics, bioinformatics and metabolic studies offering high quality bioanalytical services. The company is committed to provide innovative services and products to the life sciences community. Under the brand name Melusine®, Atheris has developed unique collections of pre-fractionated venoms ready-made for high throughput screening (HTS). As a world leader in venom research, Atheris is the partner of choice for drug discovery and lead optimization for venom-derived bioactives.

For additional information, please visit [www.atheris.com](http://www.atheris.com)

**About Debiopharm Group™**

Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm) is a Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical group of companies with a focus on the development of prescription drugs that target unmet medical needs. The group in-licenses, develops and/or co-develops promising biological and small molecule drug candidates

having reached clinical development phases I, II or III, as well as earlier stage candidates. It develops its products for global registration and access to the largest number of patients worldwide. The products are out-licensed to pharmaceutical partners for sales and marketing. Debiopharm is also active in the field of companion diagnostics with a view to progressing in the area of personalized medicine. Debiopharm independently funds the worldwide development of all of its products while providing expertise in pre-clinical and clinical trials, manufacturing, drug delivery and formulation, and regulatory affairs.

For more information about Debiopharm Group™, please visit: [www.debiopharm.com](http://www.debiopharm.com)

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