

## **eXmoor and Virica receive funding to improve AAV gene therapy manufacturing**

- **Partners will develop formulations of VSEs™ and validate their ability to improve yields of adeno-associated vector (AAVs) at scale, lowering gene therapy costs at commercial scale**
- **Virica and eXmoor will receive advisory services and funding through collaborative Canada-UK government program**

**BRISTOL, UK and OTTAWA, CANADA - eXmoor pharma**, the full-service cell and gene therapy (CGT) manufacturing partner, and **Virica Biotech Inc.** ("Virica"), a leading developer of enhancers for scaling of viral vectors as well as cell and gene therapies, announced a new project funded in part through a joint Canada-UK government biomanufacturing collaboration, aimed at improving the manufacture of adeno-associated vector (AAVs), a crucial component of gene therapies. The collaborative project will utilize Virica's VSEs™, small molecules that have been shown to increase productivity of AAVs, leveraging eXmoor's scale-up process development expertise to identify top candidates and deploy them at commercial scale upon completion of the project next year.

Commercial gene therapies have remarkable efficacy, utilizing just a single dose to treat and even cure intractable diseases. However, unlike most medicines, these must be made through specialized processes with extremely high manufacturing costs. Making these therapies accessible to more patients and for additional diseases will require streamlining the processes, especially the challenge of growing AAVs in specialized HEK293 cells.

Virica's VSE™ library was identified through its High Throughput Virology Platform and includes small molecules that augment innate cellular responses within manufacturing cells. This includes tuning the immune defences of HEK293 cells that otherwise slow the replication of viral vectors. Through the partnership, Virica will develop VSE formulations to enhance AAV production, and eXmoor will optimize the manufacture of vectors with VSEs from small- through commercial-scale capacity.

"We thank Innovate UK for supporting this project, which we believe will benefit not only our work but our entire industry – and most importantly, patients," said Angela Osborne, CEO of eXmoor. "Together, Virica and eXmoor aim to produce validated and commercially relevant VSE™ enhancer formulations our clients can utilize, as well as other global manufacturing players."

"The advisory services and funding provided by the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program and our partnership with eXmoor create a great commercial opportunity to increase efficiency and reduce costs of life-saving therapies," said Jean-Simon Diallo, co-founder and CEO of Virica. "We look forward to building strong business relationships between Canada and the UK in the process."

Following a successful application to the Canada-UK Biomanufacturing of Biologics and Advanced Therapies collaborative R&D competition, Virica will receive advisory services and funding from the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP) to support their participation in the project, while eXmoor pharma will receive support through Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation.

### **About eXmoor pharma**

eXmoor pharma is a one-stop cell-and-gene-therapy partner accelerating the manufacturing journey from research to patients. Founded in 2004, eXmoor has specialized in the CGT sector since 2007, helping organizations to understand, plan and implement the appropriate CMC strategy. eXmoor does this via its combination of GMP manufacturing capability and its translation and capital consulting groups, including process and analytical development labs. eXmoor has completed over 500 projects for 150 organizations and is headquartered in Bristol, UK, with 80 current employees, growing to 200 by 2027. To learn more: [exmoorpharma.com](http://exmoorpharma.com).

## **About Virica Biotech**

Virica develops enhancers which optimize the manufacturing of viral vectors and cell and gene therapies, allowing developers to economically deploy their products at scale. Virica's Viral Sensitizer (VSE™) platform reduces production inefficiencies caused by innate cellular defences in manufacturing cells. Purpose formulated VSE™ combinations substantially increase manufacturing yields and reduce the cost of goods for a range of products, including vaccines, gene therapies, and cell therapies. To learn more: [www.viricabiotech.com](http://www.viricabiotech.com)