

## **March 23rd, 2009: ugichem to enter into research collaboration with Santhera Pharmaceuticals to evaluate and apply ugichem's oligonucleotide platform technology in the field of rare neuromuscular diseases**

**Innsbruck, Austria** - ugichem GmbH, an Austrian biotechnology company, announced today that it has entered into an R&D collaboration with Santhera Pharmaceuticals, a Swiss based specialty pharmaceutical company with a focus on rare neuromuscular diseases, to evaluate its oligonucleotide platform technology for potential novel therapeutics to treat inherited neuromuscular disorders. As part of this collaboration ugichem will provide molecules from its proprietary oligonucleotide chemistry platform. Santhera will be responsible for their preclinical evaluation in disease-relevant in vitro and in vivo models. If successful, Santhera has the right to develop such molecules further towards novel oligonucleotide based therapeutics.

"We are very delighted to welcome Santhera as our first industrial collaboration partner" said Dr. Holger Bock, CEO of ugichem. "We think that rare neuromuscular diseases are a very promising field for our oligonucleotide chemistry, amongst others".

Thomas Meier, Santhera's Chief Scientific Officer, commented: "Santhera's research team is constantly evaluating new treatment strategies for neuromuscular disorders. We believe that oligonucleotide chemistry has the potential to become the next generation of disease-modifying drugs for some of those devastating genetic disorders."

### **About ugichem:**

ugichem is an innovative Austrian biotech company based on unique chemistry and focused on the development of novel gene silencing drugs, which have the unique property of penetrating into cells without needing additional support of transfection reagents.

### **About Santhera**

Santhera Pharmaceuticals (SIX: SANN) is a Swiss specialty pharmaceutical company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of small-molecule pharmaceutical products for the treatment of severe neuromuscular diseases, an area of high unmet medical need which includes many orphan indications with no current therapy. Santhera's first product CATENA® is marketed in Canada for the treatment of Friedreich's Ataxia and is investigated in two fully recruited pivotal trials in the United States and in Europe.

### **For further information, contact**

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