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Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Signs Definitive Agreement to Acquire Life Science Company Mirus Bio for US\$ 600 million

- **Acquisition will advance Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, integrated offering for viral vector manufacturing**
- **Complements existing portfolio for development and production of novel modalities such as cell and gene therapies**
- **Novel modalities are a key growth area for company's Life Science business sector**

Darmstadt, Germany, May 22, 2024 – Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, has signed a definitive agreement to acquire life science company [Mirus Bio](#) for US\$ 600 million (around € 550 million). Based in Madison, Wisconsin, USA, Mirus Bio is a specialist in the development and commercialization of transfection reagents. Transfection reagents, such as Mirus Bio's TransIT-VirusGEN®, are used to help introduce genetic material into cells. These reagents play a key role in the production of viral vectors for cell and gene therapies.

"This strategic acquisition is a further building block for accelerating growth in the break-through technologies of the future. As a leader in the production of viral vectors, our goal is to make the significant potential of cell and gene therapy available for patients worldwide," said Belén Garijo, Chair of the Executive Board and CEO of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. "As a leading science and technology company, we are well-positioned to support our Life Science customers across the biopharmaceutical industry to bring new curative treatments to market."



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“Novel modalities, such as viral vector-based cell and gene therapies, hold immense promise to improve the lives of patients. Combining Mirus Bio's leading technology with our bioprocessing expertise and portfolio allows us to provide solutions for almost every step of viral vector development and manufacturing,” said Matthias Heinzl, Member of the Executive Board of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and CEO Life Science. “With our integrated offering along the viral vector value chain, we are now well-positioned to support our customers in this fast-growing market to positively impact the lives and health of patients worldwide.”

“We have been driving innovation in nucleic acid delivery for two decades,” said Dale Gordon, CEO of Mirus Bio. “The broad portfolio, scale, and global reach of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, combined with our leading transfection reagents, will help take our business to even greater heights and allow us to serve more customers, and ultimately patients, worldwide.”

The transaction with Gamma Biosciences, a life sciences platform established by global investment firm KKR, for the acquisition of Mirus Bio is expected to close in the third quarter of 2024 and is subject to regulatory clearance and other customary closing conditions.

The Life Science business sector of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, provides the tools, high-grade chemicals and consumables that accelerate scientific breakthroughs across the entire pharmaceutical industry. This includes one of the broadest product portfolios for bioproduction processes. The acquisition of Mirus Bio is an important step towards the company's ambition to offer solutions for every step of viral vector manufacturing to advance cell and gene therapies from preclinical through commercial production. The company's expertise covers a variety of viral vector types, including adeno-associated virus, lentivirus, and adenovirus. Additionally, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, offers both contract testing services and a wide range of comprehensive contract development and manufacturing services for viral vector manufacturing with more than three decades of experience supporting cell and gene therapies on the path to commercialization.

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Novel Modalities like cell and gene therapies, antibody-drug conjugates or mRNA hold immense promise to improve the lives of patients. The global market for process products for these modalities is expected to grow by around 20% per year over the mid-term. For example, the overall number of cell and gene therapies in development has doubled since 2019, and more advance to commercial stage. Viral Vectors play a key role in the production of these life-changing therapies. To support this growth, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, opened its second Carlsbad, California-based [viral vector contract development manufacturing facility](#) in 2021. The € 100 million investment more than doubled the company's capacity to support large-scale commercial and industrial manufacturing for viral gene therapy. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, also invests in R&D to enable its customers to bring new curative treatments to market. In 2024, the company laid the cornerstone for [a new Life Science research center at its global headquarters in Darmstadt](#). The more than € 300 million investment will bring together research on key technologies, including viral vectors and novel modalities like mRNA.

Viral vectors

Viral vectors are very effective tools for introducing genetic material into cells. In their natural state, viruses can enter human cells and introduce genetic material to cause the cell to produce more virus particles. Scientists harness this ability to introduce genetic material but modify the virus so it can't cause disease. Instead, it becomes a delivery vehicle, or "vector", which can deliver therapeutic genes into human cells. Viral vectors are therefore widely used in medical research and treatment, including cell and gene therapy.

Cell and gene therapy

More than 20 viral vector-based cell and gene therapies have been approved over the last ten years. Currently, there are approximately more than 1,500 molecules developed globally. The market is projected to grow by 30% until 2028. In gene therapy, viral vectors carry functioning genes into patient cells to replace defective ones or add new genes to combat diseases. In cell therapy, viral vectors can be used to modify cells outside of the patient's body before returning them to the patient. A common use is in modifying immune cells to fight cancer. The viral vector introduces new genetic material into the immune cells that boosts their ability to attack cancer cells. These modified cells are then given back to the patient to help their immune system fight the disease more effectively.

About Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, operates across life science, healthcare and electronics. Around 63,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people's lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From providing products and services that accelerate drug development and manufacturing as well as discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – the company is everywhere. In 2023, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 21 billion in 65 countries.

The company holds the global rights to the name and trademark "Merck" internationally. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, operate as MilliporeSigma in life science, EMD Serono in healthcare and EMD Electronics in electronics. Since its founding in 1668, scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to the company's technological and scientific advances. To this day, the founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company.

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