# Isarna Therapeutics Appoints Claus Schalper as CEO

**Munich, Germany, September 30, 2021** – Isarna Therapeutics today announced the appointment of Claus Schalper as Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Schalper joins Isarna with over 20 years of experience as an executive and serial entrepreneur in the life science and biotech industries. His appointment expands Isarna's management team, which includes Prof. Marion R. Munk as Chief Medical Officer, Dr. René Rückert as Chief Operating Officer and Chris Huiskamp as Chief Financial Officer. The leadership team will be focused on developing Isarna's lead product ISTH0036 as a promising therapeutic candidate for diseases of the eye.

"Isarna has reached an exciting stage of development for its lead program, ISTH0036, which has broad applicability in a range of ophthalmology indications," said **Claus Schalper, CEO of Isarna Therapeutics**. "I value the opportunity to work together with Marion, René and Chris as we move ISTH0036 toward the next clinical trial to further evaluate its potential to benefit patients with retinal diseases that continue to have a high level of unmet medical need."

Claus Schalper, MBA, joins Isarna from Pieris Pharmaceuticals, a company that he co-founded in 2001 and where he held the position of Chief Financial Officer among other roles, playing an important part in the company's evolution into a US-NASDAQ listed biotechnology company. Mr. Schalper also co-founded XL-protein GmbH and led the company to profitability by executing a series of collaborations with pharma and biotech companies. Mr. Schalper began his career with Arthur Andersen and subsequently served as CEO for several companies in the technology industry. He holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Bamberg, Germany.

"Claus brings a broad range of leadership and corporate development experience to Isarna. With the management team now in place, the company is well-positioned to implement its product development strategy and reach the next value inflection points for ISTH0036 in ophthalmology," said **Matthias Kromayer, Managing Partner and member of the Executive Board at MIG Capital, Isarna's lead investor**.

Prof. Marion R. Munk, MD, PhD, FEBO, joined Isarna as Chief Medical Officer in 2019. She brings over 10 years of clinical expertise in retina, uveitis and age-related macular degeneration research and is a board-certified ophthalmologist currently serving as attending retina specialist and Managing Director of the Bern Photographic Reading Center at the University Hospital Bern, Switzerland. She previously worked at the Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, Illinois and the AKH Vienna, Austria, and serves as a consultant for many key players in the ophthalmology drug and device development space. Prof. Munk holds a bachelor's degree in theoretical physics as well as a MD and PhD in ophthalmology and clinical neuroscience from the Medical University, Vienna.

René Rückert, MD, MBA, joined Isarna in 2018 as interim CMO and in 2019 took the role of the Chief Operating Officer. He brings extensive experience in ophthalmology drug development including many years as a leader and global manager at Bayer and Novartis where he led the global development of the current gold standard therapies in AMD and DME, Eylea and Lucentis. Dr. Rückert previously served as Clinical Vice President, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Operating Officer at a number of innovative biotech and Medtech Companies. In his role at Isarna, Dr. Rückert oversees the company's operations and clinical development programs and supports the company with his business acumen and his global network. Dr. Rückert is a trained

immunologist and board-certified for biochemistry; he received his medical degree from the Charité Berlin, Germany and an MBA from the Warwick Business School, UK.

Isarna Therapeutics has extensive expertise in antisense therapies targeting the messenger RNA (mRNA) transcript for transforming growth factor (TGF)-β, a protein that is chronically elevated in ophthalmic and fibrotic diseases and is used as escape mechanisms by tumors during immune therapy. In ophthalmic indications, fibrosis is a key driver of reduced vision and lack of long-term efficacy of current therapies, TGF-β is a key driver of fibrosis, so ISTH0036 could be the first therapy to prevent the fibrotic changes in patients with retinal pathologies. The company's Phase 2 candidate, ISTH0036, blocks TGF-β 2, which is a major driver of severe retinal diseases such as, wet (neovascular) age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and diabetic macular edema (DME). Preclinical evidence supports a key role of TGF-β 2 in macular edema and neovascularization, supporting the development in AMD and DME as an intravitreal injection. Animal data support target engagement and therefore suppression of TGF-β 2 beyond four months after a single intravitreal injection. The company previously presented data from its Phase 1 dose-escalation trial with ISTH0036 in which the compound showed excellent safety and was well-tolerated at all dose levels.

## About Isarna

Isarna Therapeutics was built on profound knowledge in antisense oligonucleotide design and therapeutic development of this innovative compound class. Today, Isarna is developing a portfolio of antisense therapies targeting an emerging therapeutic field in human biology: TGF-β signaling. Precise modulation of TGF-β pathways using antisense therapy may result in safer and more effective treatment options for a broad range of indications. Currently, Isarna is focused on ophthalmology; its lead compound, ISTH0036, will soon enter Phase 2a clinical development in the blockbuster indications AMD and DME. In addition, Isarna has established a portfolio of antisense compounds addressing three important isoforms of TGF-β to treat fibrotic liver disease, such as NASH, and various forms of cancer.


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