An Expertise and Dedication to Advancing Cell Therapy Manufacturing: *An Interview with Camille Bachelet of CELLforCURE by SEQENS*

Can you please start by providing a brief overview of CELLforCURE's history and how the company has developed since being founded?

Founded in 2010 by LFB, a French government-owned pharmaceutical company, CELLforCURE was created to pioneer manufacturing in the emerging field of cell & gene therapy. Designed as one of the first specialised CDMOs in Europe, CELLforCURE built a GMP facility tailored to ATMP (Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products) production.

In 2015, CELLforCURE reached a major milestone when it received GMP authorisation from the ANSM, allowing it to manufacture ATMPs for both clinical and commercial use in Europe. This recognition positioned CELLforCURE as a trusted manufacturing partner in the growing cell therapy ecosystem.

In 2016, CELLforCURE manufactured clinical vials of an allogeneic CAR-T cell therapy, marking one of the first GMP productions of its kind in Europe.

In 2019, Novartis acquired CELLforCURE and, from 2020 to 2023, CELLforCURE produced the first approved autologous CAR-T therapy.

In 2023, following a strategic decision made by Novatis, SEQENS acquired CELLforCURE, marking a new chapter. Now under SEQENS, CELLforCURE continues to deliver end-to-end CDMO services in ATMP manufacturing from early clinical phases to commercial supply, leveraging more than a decade of operational and regulatory expertise.

Today, CELLforCURE by SEQENS remains one of the key CDMOs in Europe dedicated to the manufacturing of innovative cell and gene therapies.

Thinking back to when the company started in 2010, what have been the key areas of growth in the past 15 years for CELLforCURE?

We began as one of the first European GMP facilities entirely dedicated to the production of advanced therapy medicinal products (ATMPs). Over the past 15 years, we've expanded our activities from clinical-stage manufacturing to full commercial production, with a strong emphasis on reliability, scalability and compliance.

A key area of growth has been the diversification of our technological platforms. Initially focused on a limited set of cell types, we now support a wide range of autologous and allogeneic therapies, including CAR-T cells, NK cells, MSCs and other innovative products. This diversification has enabled us to meet the evolving needs of our clients in both oncology and regenerative medicine.

We have also continuously strengthened our quality systems and regulatory expertise to align with global standards, supporting the transition of our clients' products from early-stage development through to market approval.
Finally, one of the most important drivers of our growth has been our people. We've built a multidisciplinary team with deep scientific, regulatory and operational knowledge to navigate the complexity of advanced therapies and deliver high-quality products to patients.

What would you say are the key attributes of CELLforCURE's work?

CELLforCURE stands out through its comprehensive expertise and dedication to advancing cell therapy manufacturing. One of the key attributes of our work is our real-life, hands-on experience in both clinical and commercial manufacturing. We have developed deep knowledge across a wide variety of cell types, enabling us to deliver reliable and high-quality manufacturing services tailored to the specific needs of each client.

Quality and regulatory compliance are foundational to everything we do. We maintain rigorous standards in quality assurance to ensure that all products comply with the stringent requirements of clinical trials and regulatory agencies. This focus guarantees the safety and efficacy of therapies manufactured in our facilities.

Another essential attribute is our collaborative partnership approach. We work closely with biotech companies, from startups to more established innovators, acting as a trusted partner to translate groundbreaking research into scalable and compliant manufacturing processes. This partnership mindset

helps accelerate the development and industrialisation of novel therapies.

Lastly, CELLforCURE's manufacturing capabilities are highly scalable and flexible. We support clients throughout the entire product lifecycle, from early clinical development phases to commercial-scale production. This adaptability allows us to meet evolving client needs while ensuring seamless transitions between development stages.

Together, these attributes position CELLforCURE as a reliable and forward-thinking CDMO in the cell therapy space.

Please explain the experience that CELLforCURE gained from being part of NOVARTIS and how this allowed the company to develop.

Being part of a global pharmaceutical leader has been a transformative experience for CELLforCURE, allowing the company to accelerate its development both technically and organisationally. In this context, the site benefited from significant investments, upgrading its infrastructure and bringing it in line with global CAR-T manufacturing standards. This has significantly enhanced our capabilities in terms of capacity, compliance and operational excellence.

As part of a global pharmaceutical leader, CELLforCURE benefited from direct exposure to the industrialisation of complex cell and gene therapies. We gained hands-on experience in large-scale GMP manufacturing of CAR-T therapies, including processes designed for both clinical and commercial supply. This was made possible thanks to the integration into Novartis' global network, the implementation of best practices and collaboration with cross-functional international teams.

In addition, Novartis' decision to entrust CELLforCURE with the production of advanced therapies validated the expertise of our teams and reinforced our positioning as a centre of excellence in Europe. The site now operates with six flexible GMP production suites, covering over 10,000 m^2 and is fully equipped to serve biotech, academic and pharmaceutical partners.

Ultimately, this experience helped us mature as a CDMO, ready to support the next generation of cell and gene therapy developers from early development to market launch.

Now that you have been acquired by SEQENS, please explain how you anticipate this aiding the further development of CELLforCURE's future.

Following its acquisition by SEQENS, CELLforCURE is well-positioned to accelerate its development as a CDMO dedicated to ATMPs.

As a leading CDMO group with extensive experience, SEQENS brings significant added value to CELLforCURE, from commercial insight to robust client project execution. This support is particularly strategic as CELLforCURE restarts its activities in the advanced therapies field.

SEQENS also provides a full range of shared services essential for the smooth and efficient operation of any site within the Group, including IT, HSE, legal, procurement and human resources.

Finally, as the foundation of SEQENS' Cell & Gene Therapy Business Unit, CELLforCURE works closely with SEQENS teams to identify synergies and define future service offerings for customers in the ATMP field.

How has your own expertise and that of your colleagues aided the development of CELLforCURE by SEQENS's work?

As an Innovation and Partnership Manager at CELLforCURE by SEQENS, my role is to bridge the latest cutting-edge technologies with our manufacturing expertise. Holding a PhD in immunology and having provided scientific support at Miltenyi Biotec, I bring a strong scientific foundation that allows me to understand the biological complexities and technical challenges of cell therapy development.

This expertise helps me evaluate emerging technologies critically and identify those with the highest potential to enhance manufacturing efficiency and product quality. At CELLforCURE by SEQENS, I collaborate closely with multidisciplinary teams including development, manufacturing, quality control and quality assurance. Such cross-functional collaboration ensures smooth integration of innovations while respecting regulatory requirements. Our combined knowledge guarantees that every step, from cell sourcing and engineering to final product release, meets stringent quality and reproducibility standards.

By uniting scientific insight with manufacturing know-how and strong teamwork, we continuously foster innovation at CELLforCURE by SEQENS. This approach improves process efficiency, shortens development timelines and supports the delivery of therapies worldwide.

This shared commitment and collaboration are key drivers at CELLforCURE by SEQENS and are essential in the rapidly evolving cell therapy landscape.

CELLforCURE by SEQENS oversees projects from start to finish. Please tell us a bit about how that process works and why overseeing the entire thing helps with efficiency.

What sets CELLforCURE by SEQENS apart is our ability to support products, not only in clinical stages, but all the way through to commercial manufacturing. Our site is one of the few in Europe with experience in the commercial supply of ATMPs. This makes us a strategic partner for companies looking to optimise the transition from clinical to commercial stages.

At CELLforCURE by SEQENS, we offer end-to-end support for ATMP manufacturing, from technology transfer and process development to GMP manufacturing, quality control and final product release. This integrated approach allows us to act as a true partner throughout clients' product lifecycle.

We start by working closely with our clients to ensure a smooth and robust technology transfer. From there, our teams collaborate on process optimisation and scale-up, ensuring that the manufacturing process is not only compliant but also tailored to the specific needs of each project. Our in-house quality and regulatory teams are involved from day one, helping to anticipate challenges.

By managing the full value chain under one roof, we reduce the risk of delays, avoid communication silos and ensure continuity across project phases. This seamless coordination enhances both speed and reliability, two key factors in the development and commercialisation of cell and gene therapies. It also gives our clients a single point of contact, which simplifies decision-making and increases transparency.

A key USP of CELLforCURE by SEQENS is the quality control facility, boasting 800 square meters of quality control area and 100 square meters of banking area. Please briefly explain your facilities and what makes them unique in the field.

A key strength of CELLforCURE by SEQENS lies in our state-of-the-art quality control facility, where approximately 90% of analyses are performed in-house. This extensive infrastructure enables us to conduct a wide range of critical tests, including sterility, identity, potency, stability, environmental monitoring, raw materials testing, in-process quality control, as well as final product quality control and batch release.

What makes our facility unique is the high level of integration and control, allowing seamless project development and ensuring fast, reliable delivery of products, thereby reinforcing our position as a trusted comprehensive solution provider in the cell and gene therapy field.

It was recently announced that CELLforCURE by SEQENS have formed a partnership with Galapagos to support the manufacturing for clinical development of their CAR T-cell therapy for upcoming trials. Please explain a bit about this new project and how CELLforCURE by SEQENS's experience makes it a good fit.

CELLforCURE by SEQENS has been chosen by Galapagos to manufacture CAR T-cell therapy candidates for upcoming clinical trials, expanding the decentralised manufacturing network in Paris and the broader France region.

The selection of CELLforCURE by SEQENS as a manufacturing partner is based on its proven expertise in GMP-compliant, commercial-scale cell therapy production. As a recognised leader in France, CELLforCURE by SEQENS has worked closely

with French hospitals for over five years, actively contributing to the establishment of the first local CAR-T manufacturing pathways in the European Union.

Located strategically in Les Ulis, near major treatment centres in Paris and the wider France area, CELLforCURE by SEQENS enables Galapagos to realise its ambition of a decentralised manufacturing network that brings treatments closer to patients, allowing faster and more efficient access to care.

What is next to come for CELLforCURE by SEQENS?

CELLforCURE by SEQENS's top priority is, and will remain, to serve its clients by relieving them of the complex burden of ATMP manufacturing from development through to commercialisation. With large GMP facilities in Europe and a proven track record in commercial production, our mission is to provide reliable, scalable and compliant manufacturing solutions that allow our clients to focus on what matters most, delivering therapies to patients.

In parallel, CELLforCURE by SEQENS is committed to supporting emerging biotech companies by fostering partnerships with a range of stakeholders. The goal is to facilitate and accelerate the development of advanced therapy projects.

Camille Bachelet

Camille Bachelet (Scientific Innovation and Partnership Manager) holds a PhD in Immunology. She completed her doctoral research at Imagine Institute, focusing on the immune system of children with lymphoma. She then spent four years at Miltenyi Biotec as Scientific and Technical Support for France, supporting researchers and clinicians in the development and implementation of advanced cell and immunotherapy technologies.