



ORANO MED

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Guillaume Porche

Project manager

ORANO MED

IN SHORT:

Orano Med is a subsidiary of Orano **which is specialized in nuclear medicine**, and based in France and in the United States (180 employees). It aims to develop a **new generation of targeted cancer therapies** thanks to the unique properties of lead-212, a rare alpha-emitting radioisotope with very significant cytotoxic properties. Its goal is to have a large-scale, reliable, and independent production capacity for this element. For that, the company has created a **worldwide industrial platform**. As part of its rollout, Orano Med is currently building an ATLab (Alpha Therapy Laboratory) in **Onnaing in the Valenciennes metropolitan area** to ensure the manufacture and distribution of several drugs to combat cancer, a global health issue. In France alone, an estimated 3.8 million people have been diagnosed with the disease.



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Can you tell us more about what Orano Med does?

Orano Med is a biotech company, in other words a start-up focused on the world of living organisms, matter, and health, specialized in the field of targeted alpha therapy. This is a highly innovative technology based on the combination of a biological molecule and an alpha ray emitter, in this case lead-212, which we have targeted for its performance. The alpha emitter destroys cancer cells, while the biological molecule targets their receptors specifically, thereby limiting

the treatment's impact on healthy cells. Alpha therapy has been shown in clinical trials to reduce and, in some cases, even eradicate cancer cells while significantly limiting the impact on surrounding healthy cells.

Explain how Orano Med contributes to our national independence in the field of healthcare?



Orano Med is a subsidiary of Orano, a French government-owned company that specializes in nuclear fuels and recycling. We have grown within the company for over fifteen years and have benefited from its expertise. Orano Med has continued to grow, particularly with the signing in September of a minority stake acquisition by Sanofi and a partnership agreement. Our expertise has been extensively developed in France. In addition, the raw material needed to manufacture these treatments is sourced and processed locally, as is a significant part of the manufacturing process. All of this therefore contributes to our national independence in the fight against cancer.

We think globally and want to make a difference, with the idea of treating patients beyond our borders.

What stage of the manufacturing process are you currently at?

The development cycle for a drug is very long, especially when it involves new types of technology from the field of nuclear medicine. I mentioned the clinical trials that are bringing us closer to a marketing authorization. Our strategy has therefore been to build our industrial facilities in parallel with the final stages, ahead of a potential marketing authorization. The goal is to be ready when the time comes and to respond as quickly as possible to patients' needs. The laboratory is currently under construction and is expected to be delivered in the coming weeks. Next, a commissioning phase followed by an operational phase should take us to late 2025. Our ATLab (Alpha Therapy Laboratory) will be fairly modular. It will allow for the production of up to 25 doses per day at the start of operations, with the goal of increasing this capacity in the future.

Why did you choose to set up in the Hauts-de-France region?

Our drug production laboratory project will serve the entire European market. Our drugs have a limited shelf life due to their composition. Keep in mind that lead-212 has a relatively short half-life (10.6 hours). Our drugs must be delivered on the next day to the hospitals for which they are intended. The choice of northern France is ideal for covering a large part of Europe by road or air transportation. Similarly, our sister site in the US will handle North American orders, which we would not be able to do from France.

Thanks to its strategic location, our facility in Hauts-de-France will allow us to serve the European market.



So, logistics is crucial to your project's success?

Our main criterion was to be able to deliver our drugs as quickly as possible and with maximum security from the heart of Europe. The quality of the highway network in the north, along with the presence of international airports such as Roissy and Brussels, were key factors. We also wanted to set up in a region with a strong industrial culture that is open to innovative activities.

By the way, I am also Director of Operational Excellence, a concept developed by Toyota. So when I learned that one of our closest neighbors in Onnaing would be the French factory of this Japanese manufacturer, I saw it as a sign (smile) ...

What did you think of the support you received from the various economic authorities during the setting up process?

Yes, we received support, which was all the more necessary given that we had few ties to the Hauts-de-France region. NFI helped us identify various locations of interest, which we visited in order to make a final decision regarding where to set up. The advice you provided, along with that of Valenciennes Métropole, was invaluable, as was the opportunity to connect with local services and stakeholders. In the end, we got the feeling that all the local operators trusted us, even though an activity linked to radioactivity could have made some elected officials wary.

What would you say to a decision-maker who is unfamiliar with the Hauts-de-France region and is reluctant to set up here?

The first point – and believe me, this is the truth – is meteorological: all our trips to visit sites took place in fairly good weather with mild temperatures! More seriously, manufacturers need land, and the Hauts-de-France region has a lot of it. But be careful, because things are changing. The Escaut Valley Business Park No. 2, where we are located, was still completely deserted in 2021. Three years later, it is 80% occupied. Finally, we have not had any trouble recruiting staff so far, which is also important.

Support from NFI and Valenciennes Métropole was essential for us, as we were unfamiliar with the Hauts-de-France region, and this allowed us to save valuable time.



NEED HELP WITH YOUR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT?

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