



## **BDC Venture Capital and GO Capital invest in Alethia Biotherapeutics, a Montreal biotechnology firm**

**Montreal, April 3, 2008** – Alethia Biotherapeutics announces that it has secured C\$2.4 M in financing from BDC Venture Capital and GO Capital Fund. This investment will allow Alethia to initiate the pre-clinical development of therapeutic monoclonal antibodies for the treatment and prevention of severe bone loss, ovarian cancer, and metastatic breast cancer, indications for which there are currently few therapeutic options.

The development of monoclonal antibodies is becoming increasingly prevalent in drug discovery efforts because of significant improvements in the large-scale production and purification of biotherapeutic molecules in the last 10 years. This had a direct impact on both the speed with which monoclonal antibodies are developed clinically and the safety of these products in human clinical trials. Despite these advancements, there are urgent needs for the identification of new therapeutic targets, which exhibit more specific expression profiles that will result in monoclonal antibodies that will target only the diseased tissue. Alethia uses a novel and highly sensitive discovery and validation platform that delivers protein targets that are present in the disease, but are absent or expressed at very low levels in normal tissues, especially those of the vital organs. This approach has permitted Alethia to assemble a rich portfolio of novel disease-specific targets that will be the main focus of the BDC Venture Capital and GO Capital Fund investment.

“Alethia is highly gratified with BDC Venture Capital and GO Capital’s involvement which will allow the company to accelerate its development programs,” commented Yves Cornellier, CEO of Alethia Biotherapeutics. “This investment is an important step in the realization of Alethia’s business plan. These resources will help the company achieve critical milestones that will favorably position Alethia for a major Series A investment planned for early this fall”.

Alethia’s pre-clinical programs are spear-headed by AB-0440, a protein present at the surface of osteoclasts, the cells in the skeleton that are responsible for degrading the bone in severe bone loss maladies. In the ovarian cancer program, a small membrane-anchored protein called AB-0447 is expressed in 85% of primary tumors and will serve as the target for driving the immune system to the site of the growing tumor. In both of these cases, the first lead mAb candidates will enter into *in vivo* studies later this year. Furthermore, a recent in-licensing agreement with the National Research Council of Canada has provided Alethia with access to expertise in the humanization and production of monoclonal antibodies as well as access to a family of monoclonal antibodies that target a circulating protein that plays a role in recurrent metastatic breast cancer.

“BDC Venture Capital and GO Capital are proud to be associated with this emerging company,” said Ela Borenstein, Director, Venture Capital. “The combination of Alethia’s unique target discovery platform with its diversified portfolio of therapeutic targets favorably positions the company as a new player in the expanding arena of therapeutic monoclonal antibodies”.



### **About Alethia Biotherapeutics Inc.**

Alethia is a Montreal-based biotechnology company that was created in 2002 aimed at discovering tissue-specific disease targets and developing monoclonal antibodies for use as focused therapeutic in areas of unmet medical needs. Through the recent signature of several strategic research partnerships, Alethia has access to monoclonal antibody generation technologies and downstream process development that contribute to quickening the development of therapeutics against the Company's most promising targets.

### **About BDC Venture Capital**

BDC Venture Capital is a major venture capital investor in Canada, active at every stage of a company's development cycle, from seed through expansion. Its focus is on technology-based businesses with high growth potential that are positioned to become dominant players in their markets. Established in 1975, BDC Venture Capital has invested in over 400 firms to date. It currently manages some \$500 million in venture capital investments in the life sciences, telecommunications, information technology, and advanced technology sectors, as well as investments in funds. Visit [www.bdc.ca](http://www.bdc.ca) for more information.

### **About GO Capital Fund**

GO Capital L.P. is a \$50 million venture capital fund that invests in Quebec seed-stage technology firms in the fields of advanced technologies, information and telecommunications technologies, and life sciences. Go Capital is managed by its General Partner, the Business Development Bank of Canada.

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