



Innovative Medicines Initiative

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**IMI LAUNCHES 7 NEW PROJECTS TO TACKLE MAJOR HEALTH RESEARCH CHALLENGES**

**The new projects have a combined total cost of €215 million and will tackle areas such as autism, diabetes, tuberculosis, drug and vaccine safety, and patient education**

**BRUSSELS (Belgium), 7 June 2012** – The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) has successfully launched its third wave of projects. The 7 new projects, which have a combined total cost of €215 million and will run for 5 years, are taking on some of the biggest challenges in healthcare research.

Some of the new projects aim to speed up the search for more effective treatments for certain diseases and conditions that are currently difficult to manage. For example, PreDiCT-TB is investigating ways of designing new combinations of drugs to make tuberculosis treatments more patient-friendly, while DIRECT aims to pave the way for type 2 diabetes patients to benefit from personalised medicines. Meanwhile EU-AIMS is working towards the development of new treatments designed specifically to treat autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Other projects are focused more on safety issues. MIP-DILI aims to make it easier for researchers to identify potential drugs that are likely to cause liver damage – an important issue when one considers that drug-induced liver injury is a leading cause of liver failure. ABIRISK is working in the emerging area of biopharmaceuticals – novel drugs which are based on biological molecules such as proteins and can occasionally trigger an immune response. ABIRISK's goal is to study the underlying causes of the immune response with a view to improving the safety of biopharmaceuticals. Elsewhere, BIOVACSAFE is working to develop tools to accelerate procedures to test and monitor vaccine safety.

Finally, IMI is pleased to announce the launch of another Education & Training project; EUPATI will create a European Patients' Academy on Therapeutic Innovation, which will educate patients and the public about medicines development and empower patients to engage more effectively in the drug development process.

IMI Executive Director Michel Goldman said: *'These projects are all taking on research challenges that would be too big for one company or academic team to tackle on its own. They therefore demonstrate IMI's value in creating pan-European teams of experts that are in a position to make major advances in these critical areas.'*

The new projects mean that IMI is now supporting a total of 30 projects with a combined total cost of over €650 million. All IMI projects are jointly supported by the EU (in cash) and the member companies of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) (in-kind contributions). Looking to the future, IMI expects to kick-off a fourth round of projects by the end of the year in areas related to obesity, Alzheimer's Disease, drug delivery by nano-carriers, sustainable chemical drug production, the behavior of drugs in the human body, knowledge management and stem cells for drug discovery, as well as a fifth wave of projects building a Joint European Compound Collection and a European Screening Centre. In addition, IMI has recently launched [a major programme for combatting antibiotic resistance](#). More [Calls for proposals are in the pipeline](#), including a Call on the assessment of vaccination impact and on effectiveness research.

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**Annex I:** The IMI 3<sup>rd</sup> Call projects in brief  
**Annex II:** Detailed factsheets about each project





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## Annex I - The IMI 3rd Call projects in brief

- More detailed factsheets about each project are attached and also online at [www.imi.europa.eu/content/ongoing-projects](http://www.imi.europa.eu/content/ongoing-projects)

### ABIRISK

**Full project title:** Anti-Biopharmaceutical Immunization: Prediction and Analysis of Clinical Relevance to Minimize the Risk

**About the project:** A growing number of medicines are based on **biological molecules** such as proteins and monoclonal antibodies. These **novel drugs** have resulted in new, more effective **treatments for a number of serious conditions**. Yet sometimes these medicines trigger a response from the patient's **immune system**, which can decrease the effectiveness of the drug or cause severe side effects. The aim of the IMI-funded ABIRISK project is to **shed new light on the factors behind this immune response**. The project, which represents the first concerted effort to solve this problem, will aid in the **creation of new, safer biopharmaceuticals** and also generate tools to determine how individual patients are likely to respond to them both in clinical trials and after release to the market.

**Total cost:** €34.9 million

**Project coordinator:** GlaxoSmithKline

**Managing entity:** INSERM

**Project website:** [www.abirisk.eu](http://www.abirisk.eu)

### BIOVACSAFE

**Full project title:** Biomarkers for Enhanced Vaccine Immunofunctionality

**About the project:** Since their discovery, **vaccines** have protected millions of people worldwide from a broad range of infectious diseases, making them **one of the most effective public health interventions** out. New and better vaccines are still urgently needed, yet their introduction is hampered by lengthy and expensive vaccine safety testing procedures. The aim of the IMI-funded BIOVACSAFE project is to develop cutting edge tools to **speed up and improve the testing and monitoring of vaccine safety**, both before and after release to the market. By bringing together Europe's top industrial and academic teams for the first time, the project will ultimately usher in a new generation of safer, more effective vaccines.

**Total cost:** €30.2 million

**Project coordinator & managing entity:** University of Surrey

**EFPIA coordinator:** Novartis

**Project website:** [www.biovacsafe.eu](http://www.biovacsafe.eu)

### DIRECT

**Full project title:** Diabetes research on patient stratification

**About the project:** Type 2 **diabetes** patients are a diverse group; in some, the disease progresses rapidly, while in others it takes a slower course. Similarly, a treatment that works well in one patient may prove less effective in another. This has led researchers to acknowledge that there are actually **a number of different subtypes of type 2 diabetes**. The goal of the IMI-funded DIRECT project is to **identify these subtypes** and determine **most appropriate treatments** for them. The project brings together Europe's leading researchers from academia, healthcare, and the pharmaceutical industry.

**Total cost:** €43.1 million

**Project coordinator:** Sanofi-Aventis Deutschland GmbH

**Managing entity:** University of Dundee

**Project website:** [www.direct-diabetes.org](http://www.direct-diabetes.org)

### EU-AIMS

**Full project title:** European Autism Interventions - a Multicentre Study for Developing New Medications

**About the project:** Around 1% of children are diagnosed with **autism spectrum disorders (ASD)**, yet there are currently no drugs designed specifically to treat their main symptoms. Working to change this is the IMI-funded EU-AIMS project. The goal of EU-AIMS is to generate tools that will **enhance our understanding of ASD**, and ultimately pave the way for the development of **new, safe and effective treatments** for use in both children and adults. As well as dramatically improving quality of life, good treatments would help to cut the social and economic costs of ASD.

**Total cost:** €35.9 million

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**Project coordinator:** F. Hoffmann-la Roche

**Managing entity:** King's College London

**Project website:** [www.eu-aims.eu](http://www.eu-aims.eu)

## EUPATI

**Full project title:** European Patients' Academy on Therapeutic Innovation

**About the project:** Medicines research and development (R&D) is an increasingly complex process that remains a mystery for the majority of patients and the general public. **Lifting the lid on the medical R&D process** is the IMI-funded EUPATI project. EUPATI is a patient-led initiative that aims to develop the first **European Patients' Academy on Therapeutic Innovation**, with training courses, educational material, and an online public library that will **empower patients** to engage more effectively in the development and approval of new treatments and become true partners in pharmaceutical R&D.

**Total cost:** €10.1 million

**Project coordinator and managing entity:** European Patients' Forum (EPF)

**EFPIA coordinator:** Verband forschender Arzneimittelhersteller eV

**Project website:** [www.patientsacademy.eu](http://www.patientsacademy.eu)

## MIP-DILI

**Full project title:** Mechanism-Based Integrated Systems for the Prediction of Drug-Induced Liver Injury

**About the project:** Many medicines are **harmful to the liver**, and drug-induced liver injury (DILI) now ranks as the **leading cause of liver failure** and transplantation in western countries. However, predicting which drugs will prove toxic to the liver is extremely difficult, and often problems are not detected until a drug is already on the market. For the first time, the IMI project MIP-DILI brings together Europe's top industrial and academic experts in the field. Together, they will develop new tests that will **help researchers detect potential liver toxicity issues** much earlier in development, saving many patients from the trauma of liver failure.

**Total cost:** €32.4 million

**Project coordinator:** AstraZeneca

**Managing entity:** University of Liverpool

**Project website:** [www.mip-dili.eu](http://www.mip-dili.eu) (coming soon)

## PreDiCT-TB

**Full project title:** Model-based preclinical development of anti-tuberculosis drug combinations

**About the project:** **Tuberculosis (TB)** infects over 9 million people worldwide every year and kills 1.7 million. Treatment takes several months, and many patients struggle to take their antibiotics properly, fuelling the rise of drug-resistant strains of the disease. However, putting together a new, shorter treatment regimen could take a quarter of a century using today's methods. The IMI-funded PreDiCT-TB project aims to **speed up the search for new, more effective combinations of treatments** to tackle the deadly disease. PreDiCT-TB is one of the world's only initiatives focused on tackling pre-clinical research barriers to the discovery and development of new TB drug combinations.

**Total cost:** €28.6 million

**Project coordinator:** GlaxoSmithKline

**Managing entity:** University of Liverpool

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## About the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI)

IMI is the world's largest public-private partnership in health research and development. Through the 7th Framework Programme for Research, the European Union contributes €1 billion to the IMI research programme, which is matched by in kind contributions worth at least another €1 billion from the member companies of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). IMI is improving the environment for pharmaceutical innovation in Europe, by engaging and supporting networks of industrial and academic experts in collaborative research projects. The Innovative Medicines Initiative currently funds 30 projects, many of which are already producing impressive results. A comprehensive overview of ongoing projects is available at [www.imi.europa.eu](http://www.imi.europa.eu).

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