

PRESS RELEASE

€196 MILLION PAN-EUROPEAN DRUG DISCOVERY PLATFORM LAUNCHED

Large pharmaceutical companies join forces with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and academia in an IMI-supported public private partnership (PPP) to enhance early drug discovery and so address the ever-increasing need for innovative therapeutics to tackle unmet medical needs

Brussels, Belgium & Leiden, the Netherlands, 7 February 2013

The European Lead Factory, a novel platform for innovative drug discovery, was launched today by an international consortium of 30 partners. This partnership, the first of its kind, is supported by the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) and creates unprecedented opportunities for the discovery of new medicines by providing public partners with an 'industry-like' discovery platform to translate cutting-edge academic research into high-quality drug lead molecules on a scale and speed that was not possible previously.

This will be made possible in part through access to an exceptional collection of small molecules. Part of this collection will be contributed by pharmaceutical companies, and the other part will be a newly synthesized compound collection built by the SMEs and academic institutions using the integrated knowledge of all consortium partners and through open innovation and crowd sourcing. Screening of this compound collection will be performed within the pharmaceutical companies and by a newly-established European Screening Centre. Stakeholders, including patient organisations and global health initiatives, are invited to contribute their knowledge and networks to the consortium to elevate the outcome of the early drug discovery process and to be part of the establishment of a new sustainable platform for early drug discovery.

Pharmaceutical companies have vast libraries of compounds which can be screened in the hunt for potential medicines. Usually, access to these compound libraries is highly restricted. As part of the European Lead Factory, the 7 participating pharmaceutical companies will contribute at least 300 000 chemical compounds from their corporate chemical collections. A library of an estimated additional 200 000 novel compounds will be developed jointly by academia and SMEs. Together, the two libraries will form a Joint European Compound Collection consisting of up to half a million compounds that will be accessible to all project partners and to public organisations offering promising new targets for drug discovery screening. These target proposals will be selected through competitive calls.

An equally important part of the European Lead Factory is the European Screening Centre, which will assist public contributors of novel targets in the development of tests amenable to the requirements of industrialised screening methodology. Both the sites in Scotland and the Netherlands will run state of the art facilities for compound logistics and high throughput screening to respectively handle the 500 000-strong compound library and to evaluate new compounds that are active against the novel targets.

The total budget for the project amounts to around €196 million. Of this, €80 million comes from the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7), and €91 million is provided as in kind contributions from the participating companies that are members of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). The remaining €25 million comes from other contributions from the non-EFPIA participants.

If the project proves successful during its initial five year funding period, the European Screening Centre and the teams of SMEs and academic institutions aim for a sustainable role in drug discovery and the future growth of drug development in Europe.

IMI Executive Director Michel Goldman commented: 'IMI is very excited by the launch of the European Lead Factory. This unique project is an excellent example of how a public-private partnership can transform the way in which the pharmaceutical sector identifies new medicines. For the first time, it will give European researchers unprecedented access to industry chemical collections and facilitate the translation of their findings into actual treatments for patients. This project will not only advance the

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chances of success in the discovery of new medicines by European researchers, but also add value by building research capacity in Europe.'

Hanno Wild, Senior Vice President and Head of Candidate Generation & Exploration at Project Coordinator Bayer HealthCare Global Drug Discovery, says: 'The European Lead Factory is an outstanding example of a project in which public-private partnerships enable collaborative drug discovery. The platform brings together academia and industry as well as small and medium enterprises in a unique partnership aiming to discover innovative medicines. Bayer is committed to further develop this novel platform by providing decades of experience in drug development. The joint efforts of the consortium will support drug discovery and hopefully generate new therapies for patients.'

The Netherlands-based non-profit TI Pharma will facilitate the governance of this new project and is responsible for the scientific management of the screening centre. Scientific Director of TI Pharma and Head of Screening of the European Lead Factory Ton Rijnders: 'Establishing this public private partnership brings unprecedented opportunities to develop a sustainable ground breaking drug discovery platform based on superior input and output by connecting top notch science, decades of experience in drug discovery and development and the agility of SMEs.'

Dimitrios Tzalis, CEO of Taros Chemicals and Head of the European consortium's chemistry effort, affirms: 'The experience of creating an unparalleled drug discovery platform consisting of leading European SMEs and academia has been very exciting and compelling, to say the least. This platform of knowledge and experience, based on novel chemistry and innovative targets will be fortified by the pharmaceutical industry's expansive knowledge in drug development, resulting in a giant surge forward in drug development.'

Notes to Editors

The research leading to these results has received support from the Innovative Medicines Initiative Joint Undertaking under grant agreement n° 115489, resources of which are composed of financial contribution from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) and EFPIA companies' in kind contribution.'

More information: <http://www.imi.europa.eu/content/european-lead-factory>

Project partners

EFPIA companies

- Bayer Pharma AG, Germany
- AstraZeneca AB, Sweden
- H. Lundbeck A/S, Denmark
- Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, a Pharmaceutical Company of Johnson & Johnson, Belgium
- Merck KGaA, Germany
- Sanofi, France
- UCB Pharma SA, Belgium

Universities, research organisations, public bodies, non-profit groups

- Foundation Top Institute Pharma (Stichting Top Instituut Pharma), the Netherlands
- Leiden University, the Netherlands
- Max Planck Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften E.V., Germany
- Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands
- Stichting Het Nederlands Kanker Instituut, the Netherlands
- Technical University of Denmark, Denmark
- Universität Duisburg-Essen, Germany
- University of Dundee, UK
- University of Groningen, the Netherlands
- University of Leeds, UK

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- University of Nottingham, UK
- University of Oxford, UK
- VU-University Amsterdam, the Netherlands

SMEs

- BioCity Scotland Ltd, UK
- ChemAxon, Hungary
- Edelris S.A.S, France
- Gabo:Mi Gesellschaft für Ablauforganisation:Milliarium Mbh & Co Kg, Germany
- Lead Discovery Center GmbH, Germany
- Mercachem B.V., the Netherlands
- Pivot Park Screening Centre B.V, the Netherlands
- Sygnature Discovery Limited, UK
- Syncom, the Netherlands
- Taros Chemicals GmbH & Co KG, Germany

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About the Innovative Medicines Initiative

The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) is the world's largest public-private partnership in health. 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 European Union contributes €1 billion to the IMI research programme, and this 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). The Innovative Medicines Initiative currently supports 40 projects, many of which are already producing impressive results. The projects all address major bottlenecks in drug development, and so will accelerate the development of safer and more effective treatments for patients.

More info on IMI: www.imi.europa.eu

About Bayer HealthCare

The Bayer Group is a global enterprise with core competencies in the fields of health care, agriculture and high-tech materials. Bayer HealthCare, a subgroup of Bayer AG with annual sales of €17.2 billion (2011), is one of the world's leading, innovative companies in the healthcare and medical products industry and is based in Leverkusen, Germany. The company combines the global activities of the Animal Health, Consumer Care, Medical Care and Pharmaceuticals divisions. Bayer HealthCare's aim is to discover, develop, manufacture and market products that will improve human and animal health worldwide. Bayer HealthCare has a global workforce of 55,700 employees (Dec 31, 2011) and is represented in more than 100 countries.

More information on Bayer HealthCare: www.healthcare.bayer.com

About TI Pharma

Top Institute Pharma (TI Pharma), a non-profit organization, enables groundbreaking pharmaceutical research for the development of new medicines by establishing and managing international public-private partnerships. Within an open innovation model, scientists, the business world, patient organizations and others collaborate in frontrunner, multidisciplinary research aimed at improving the development of socially valuable medicines.

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About Taros Chemicals

Taros Chemicals, an independent and privately owned contract research company based in Dortmund, Germany, has been serving the needs of biotech, pharmaceutical and chemical companies since 1999. More than 6.000 synthesis, research and process chemistry projects have successfully been delivered to the ever since growing global customer base. Taros Chemicals runs state-of-the art lab facilities and employs a team of graduates (50% of whom hold post-graduate degrees in Chemistry) who are committed to supporting the diverse needs of its customers in efficient drug discovery and medicinal chemistry,. Being committed to supporting our customers in efficient drug discovery and medicinal chemistry initiatives, we have developed Taros Gate. Taros Gate is a unique software suite putting cost, time and chemistry information at a Project Leader's finger tips - 24h/7 from anywhere in the world.

More information on Taros Chemicals: www.taros.de

