European Commission

PRESS RELEASE

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BRITISH SME IMMUNOCORE PUTS €10 MILLION FUNDING TO GOOD USE IN RESEARCHING NEW TYPE 1 DIABETES TREATMENT

Oxfordshire based SME Immunocore, which is developing novel biological drugs to treat cancer and viral disease, has used European Union research funding to invest in researching novel future treatments for Type 1 diabetes. The €10 million EU grant – coordinated by the European research university, KU Leuven involves the British biotech company working closely with 14 universities and research companies across Europe. Immunocore has developed for the first time a T cell receptor based drug that directly targets the affected human beta cells within the pancreas and can be used to provide localised immunosuppression, placing Immunocore at the leading edge of potentially developing a treatment for Type 1 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition, where the immune system mistakes the cells in the pancreas as harmful and attacks them, destroying them completely or damaging them enough to stop them producing insulin. About two million people in Europe and several million people world-wide suffer from this disease. Type 1 diabetes is already the most common metabolic disease in the young and the incidence of Type 1 diabetes in childhood is increasing by about 3% per year. Type 1 diabetes is a major public health concern worldwide, emphasising the urgent need for safe and effective intervention and prevention strategies. Immunocore's T cell receptor based drug has shown promise in stopping this disease in its tracks. Alongside its 14 partners, Immunocore forms part of an EU research group – the NAIMIT Consortium, which is developing three additional distinct approaches to treating the disease, in addition to Immunocore's approach.

Two of these approaches, led by academics across Europe are investigating promising peptide and dendritic cell vaccines to re-educate the immune system and prevent it from mistaking cells in the pancreas. The third approach, led by the Belgian biotech, ActoGeniX has developed a novel probiotic based vaccine delivery system that has shown the ability to reverse the disease in 60% of cases in initial testing. The NAIMIT consortium is unique in that it is both trying to improve the understanding of the disease at the molecular level and immediately trying to use that knowledge to develop four completely different therapeutic approaches to hopefully cure the disease. By developing four therapeutic approaches in partnership, the consortium is well placed to be the birthplace of a treatment that could improve the lives of countless patients in the future.

James Noble, CEO of Immunocore said *"our T Cell Receptor technology platform is well established and has already yielded an ImmTAC clinical candidate, IMCgp100, that is in Phase IIa clinical trials with melanoma patients in both the US and UK. The availability of EU funding enables Immunocore to also research the application of its platform with harder to treat diseases such as type 1 diabetes, potentially developing new treatments for patients around the world"*

EU's support to SME Research

Research and Innovation

Immunocore is one of more than 2,780 SME grant holders in the UK that have benefitted from EU research funding since 2007, altogether receiving over €805 million. The United Kingdom is the second most successful EU-28 member in terms of the number of EU grant participants and in terms budget share, supporting the UK as one of the most innovative countries in Europe. By the end of 2013, in the European Union as a whole, more than 15,000 SMEs will have been supported directly for an amount exceeding €5 billion.

At the start of the current EU research framework programme, the European Union set a target for SMEs to share 15 per cent of funding available for cross-border cooperative research projects. UK SMEs are exceeding this target, representing close to 18 per cent of all UK participation and with a higher SME applicant success rate than the EU average.

In the next EU research programme, Horizon 2020, due to launch in January, the target will be higher – 20 percent of the budget available for research on societal challenges and leading technologies – meaning that almost €9 billion in grants over seven years will be available to small companies. Of this amount, €3 billion will be provided through a dedicated "SME instrument" to fund feasibility studies and demonstration projects to help speed ideas to the market. Part of the EU research budget will also be used to back loans to SMEs by public and private lenders.

Michael Jennings, spokesman for European Research, Innovation and Science Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, said: "The €9 billion should be seen as a minimum. SMEs are the backbone of the European economy and account for two thirds of total employment. We want as many SMEs as possible to benefit from EU research and innovation funding to generate new products, services and jobs. Full details of how they can get involved will be announced when we launch our first calls for proposals in December."

About Immunocore

Immunocore, headquartered in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, United Kingdom, is a privately owned, clinical-stage, biotechnology company discovering and developing highly innovative bio-therapeutics known as ImmTACs for the treatment of cancer and a range of other serious diseases. Its world-leading proprietary T Cell Receptor (TCR) technology exploits the power of the body's own immune system to find and kill diseased cells.

Founded in 2008, Immunocore traces its roots to Avidex, which was founded in 1999 as a spin-out from the University of Oxford to develop novel T Cell Receptor technology invented by the founder and Chief Scientific Officer, Dr Bent Jakobsen. Immunocore has very experienced management and a highly qualified scientific team that have successfully developed immunotherapies for the treatment of serious diseases including cancer.

Immunocore has established a robust technology platform which has yielded an ImmTAC clinical candidate, IMCgp100, currently in Phase I/II clinical trials in melanoma patients in both the US and UK.

Immunocore has a robust ImmTAC technology platform allowing for the generation of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) compliant, fully scalable manufacturing processes. The Company has established regulatory pathways approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) that will form the basis for development of future ImmTAC programmes.

http://www.immunocore.com/our-company/

About the NAIMIT Consortium

The NAIMIT consortium brings together 14 research and industry from 6 Member States. It is led by KU Leuven (Belgium) and also involves the Goethe University Frankfurt (Germany), The University of Bristol (UK), Cardiff University School of Medicine (UK), Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian (Portugal), Universita degli Studi di

Siena (Italy), Université Libre Bruxelles (Belgium), Medizinische Hochschule Hannover (Germany), Universita di Pisa (Italy), Kings College London (UK), LUMC (The Netherlands), The University of Cambridge (UK), ActoGenix (Belgium and Immunocore (UK).
http://naimit.eu/
http://cordis.europa.eu/result/brief/rcn/6723_en.html
http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/241447

About European research and innovation funding

In 2014 the European Union will launch a new, seven year research and innovation funding programme called Horizon 2020. Since 2007 the EU has already invested nearly €50 billion in research and innovation projects to support Europe's economic competitiveness and extend the frontiers of human knowledge. The EU research budget represents around 12 percent of total public spending on research by the EU's 28 member states and is focused mainly in areas like health, the environment, transport, food and energy. Research partnerships with the pharmaceutical, aerospace, car and electronics industries have also been formed to encourage private sector investment in support of future growth and high skill job creation. Horizon 2020 will have an even greater focus on turning excellent ideas into marketable products, processes and services. For the latest information on European research and innovation, go to:
http://www.facebook.com/innovation.union
http://twitter.com/innovationunion

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