

Press Release

LDC Receives 1 Million Euros from the Max Planck Foundation for the Development of New Drug Candidates

Dortmund, March 10, 2015 – The Lead Discovery Center (LDC) receives two grants of EUR 0.5 Million each for the development of two innovative drug discovery approaches for treating inflammation and cancer. The funds originate half-and-half from the Max Planck Foundation (MPF) and the Dr Helmut Storz Foundation, which is managed by the MPF.

“We are very pleased to have attracted Dr Helmut Storz as a sponsor for these two exciting projects,” says Dr Bert Klebl, CEO of the LDC. “His focus on translational research fits our mission perfectly, and the grants enable us to advance the designated projects to a stage where they can be channelled into pharmaceutical drug development.”

The first project is a new anti-inflammatory compound being jointly developed by the LDC, the Max Planck Institute of Microstructure Physics and the Max Planck Research Unit for Enzymology and Protein Folding. It targets a group of enzymes called cyclophilins, which play an important role in the development of acute inflammation. The first-in-class compound uses a novel and more targeted mode of action that could reduce the dosing requirements and side-effects associated with traditional cyclophilin inhibitors, which include immune suppression and kidney or liver damage. The project holds strong potential for the treatment of inflammatory diseases in cardiology and autoimmunity.

The second project addresses a highly innovative molecular target that plays a pivotal role in various cancer forms, including breast and ovarian cancer. The project will benefit from the LDC’s extensive know-how in the discovery of small molecule inhibitors for the enzyme class in question. The LDC will collaborate closely with the Center of Advanced European Studies and Research (Caesar), which is associated with the Max Planck Society.

Without this generous support, it would not have been possible to advance these projects into translational development. The goal is to identify an appropriate industry partner for each project at the end of the funding period to ensure further development towards the clinic. The LDC is particularly strong in linking academia and industry to effectively integrate the players in a collaborative drug discovery approach – as proven by the many successful partnerships the LDC has created with top research institutions and pharma companies across the world. In the event of a commercial success, licensing revenues will be shared between the LDC, the originating institutions and the supporting foundations.

About the LDC

The Lead Discovery Center (LDC) was established in 2008 by the technology transfer organization Max Planck Innovation as a novel approach to capitalize on the potential of excellent basic research for the discovery of new therapies for diseases with high medical need.

The LDC takes on promising early-stage projects from academia and transforms them into innovative pharmaceutical leads that reach initial proof-of-concept in animals. In close collaboration with high-profile partners from academia and industry, the LDC is building a strong and growing portfolio of small molecule leads with exceptional medical and commercial potential. The LDC sustains a preferred partnership with the Max Planck Society and has formed alliances with AstraZeneca, Bayer, Merck Serono and Daiichi Sankyo as well as leading academic drug discovery centers around the globe.

Further information at: www.lead-discovery.de

About the Max Planck Foundation and the Dr Helmut Storz Foundation

The Max Planck Foundation (MPF) is a charitable foundation that finances outstanding and pioneering research projects from the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science (MPG). It is a public foundation under German civil law, and is supported by a nationwide initiative of private sponsors.

The Dr Helmut Storz Foundation was established previously to and independently from the MPF. It has been managed by the MPF since 2013. Its benefactor, Dr Storz, is particularly interested in scientific projects on the threshold of application, as very little public funding is available at this stage in their development. Projects are selected by the benefactor and the MPG in close consultation, and their quality is thoroughly examined.

Further information: www.maxplanckfoerderstiftung.org

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