

## Press Release

### **Lead Discovery Center and Merck KGaA Enter Collaboration for the Discovery of Anti-Cancer Compounds**

#### **Research collaboration may realize the potential of kinase inhibitors as a means for cancer treatments in the future**

January 20, 2011, Dortmund, Germany --- The Lead Discovery Center GmbH (LDC), a small molecule drug discovery spin-off of Max Planck Innovation GmbH, announced today that it has signed a cooperation agreement with Merck KGaA for the discovery of kinase inhibitors as potential cancer treatments.

The collaboration is supported by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) under the BioPharma initiative to strengthen the pharmaceutical value chain in Germany.

Using an innovative kinase technology platform originating from the Chemical Genomics Centre of the Max Planck Society (CGC, Dortmund), Merck Serono, a division of Merck KGaA, and the LDC aim to identify inhibitory compounds against at least one undisclosed kinase target and advance them through the drug discovery process up to pharmaceutical lead compounds.

Kinases are key components of biochemical signalling pathways that control cellular growth, metabolism and differentiation. They have therefore become prime targets for drug discovery and development in many diseases, especially in oncology. "Our proprietary technology allows for the identification of innovative allosteric kinase inhibitors that hold strong potential for improved potency and selectivity," says Prof. Dr. Daniel Rauh, group leader at the CGC. "We are excited about the alliance between the LDC and Merck Serono as it provides us with the unique chance to translate our approach into application."

Under the terms of the agreement, the LDC and Merck Serono will work closely together, with each partner contributing its particular expertise and infrastructure as well as their own resources in the fields of assay development, screening, medicinal chemistry and pharmacology.

"We are delighted about this agreement with the LDC and believe that this collaboration has a great potential to provide the basis for the development of further treatment options in oncology," said Dr. Bernhard Kirschbaum, Executive Vice President, Research and Development, at Merck Serono.

"Merck Serono is a recognized leader in drug discovery and development and we are extremely pleased to team up with them," Dr. Bert Klebl, Managing Director of the LDC, adds. "The alliance is a major milestone for the LDC and could well become a role model for highly efficient and professional collaboration between academia and industry. It verifies LDC's positioning as a translational research center with the aim of leveraging excellent academic research for industrial application and the development of medicines."

###

## **Contacts**

### **Contact for the Lead Discovery Center**

Thomas Hegendörfer, Head of Business Development  
Tel: +49 231 97 42-7000, Email: [info@lead-discovery.de](mailto:info@lead-discovery.de)  
Emil-Figge-Straße 76a, 44227 Dortmund, Germany

### **Contact for the Chemical Genomics Center**

Prof. Dr. Daniel Rauh  
Tel: +49 231 9742 6480, Email: [daniel.rauh@cgc.mpg.de](mailto:daniel.rauh@cgc.mpg.de)  
Otto-Hahn-Str. 15, 44227 Dortmund, Germany

**###**

## **Notes to editors**

### **About the LDC**

The Lead Discovery Center GmbH (LDC, [www.lead-discovery.de](http://www.lead-discovery.de)) was jointly developed by Max Planck Innovation and the Max Planck Society as a novel approach to advance findings from excellent basic research into the development of medicines.

With a world-class team of drug discovery experts and seasoned managers, the LDC offers the full scope of drug discovery services – from target to lead – according to the highest industry standards. As an independent enterprise with an entrepreneurial outlook, it is positioned as a translational research center specialized in small molecule drug discovery. LDC collaborates with research institutions and universities as well as with industry. The aim is to transform promising and early-stage projects into pharmaceutical leads that reach initial proof-of-concept in animals and that meet the increasing need for novel therapeutic agents.

The LDC forms the core of Max Planck Innovation's Drug Discovery & Development Center (DDC) that won the "BioPharma strategy competition for medicine of the future", a support program of the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

### **About the CGC**

The Chemical Genomics Centre is an initiative of the Max Planck Society in cooperation with four companies. It stands for high quality research and strong collaborations between industry and Max Planck research. Key to the research strategy of the CGC is that chemical and biological expertise are being combined and interconnected. Within the CGC small molecules are developed as modulating ligands for proteins enabling cell biological studies of biological systems and the understanding of the function of gene products.

### **About the BioPharma Initiative**

The nationwide "BioPharma strategy competition for medicine of the future" is the key element of The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium fuer Bildung und Forschung - BMBF) "Pharmaceuticals Initiative for Germany". The "BioPharma" strategy competition aims to promote innovative partnerships between academic institutions, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies in order to strengthen the pharmaceutical value chain in Germany.