



## **CasInvent Pharma Raises € 1.6 million in Pre-Series A Financing to Support the Development of CK1 Inhibitors for Treatment-Resistant Solid and Hematological Tumours**

- *The financing will boost the development of innovative casein kinase 1 (CK1) inhibitors with the potential to treat conditions like acute myeloid leukaemia, pancreatic cancer, and certain types of breast cancer.*
- *This investment round was supported by the existing and two new investors.*
- *The syndicate includes i&i Biotech Fund (i&i Bio), KHAN Technology Transfer Fund I (KHAN-I), i&i Prague, the Holeček Family Foundation, and BIOINVESTIMED a. s.*

CasInvent Pharma, a university spin-off focused on developing anti-cancer compounds, has successfully closed the Pre-Series A funding round, raising a total of € 1.6 million from both existing and new investors. Founded in 2020 as a spin-off from Masaryk University in Brno and with the support of i&i Prague, CasInvent Pharma specializes in the development of highly selective inhibitors targeting the casein kinase 1 enzyme family. These enzymes play an important role in several disease-related processes, including the migration of leukaemia cells into lymphoid organs. The small-molecule inhibitors are designed to target individual isoforms of CK1 and thereby selectively eradicate leukemic cells.

"It's gratifying to have convinced both new and existing partners to support our quest in developing effective treatment options and giving hope to patients suffering from these cancers with a very low survival rate," says Alexander Scheer, CEO of CasInvent Pharma. He believes these inhibitors have the potential to treat patients with conditions like acute myeloid leukaemia, pancreatic cancer, certain types of breast cancer (TNBC), and other diseases with limited treatment options.

"The company's ability to attract new investors reaffirms not just the project's quality, but also the combined expertise of the team at CasInvent Pharma," says Ivan Vohlmuth, a partner at i&i Bio. "The team has worked really hard over the past 18 months and achieved promising data in the development of their CK1 inhibitor portfolio. We are pleased to continue to support the company," add Michael Krebs and Peter Nussbaumer from KHAN-I.

Joining the investment round, alongside i&i Bio, KHAN-I and i&i Prague, are two new partners: the Holeček Family Foundation and BIOINVESTIMED a. s. "Supporting this innovative project allows us to participate in the important development of new treatment methods and therapeutic strategies in the field of oncological diseases. At the same time, we are impressed that a Czech entity has embarked on this difficult and financially demanding path. With our engagement, we would like to motivate other investors to fund promising life science companies in the Czech Republic," says Ondřej Novák, Director of the Holeček Family Foundation.

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## **About CasInvent Pharma**

CasInvent Pharma is a drug discovery spin-off company established in 2020 by Masaryk University and Bio-Innovation Centre i&i Prague, s.r.o. (Ltd). The mission of the company is to develop new therapeutic options for the treatment of resistant tumours. The CasInvent platform is based on the use of proprietary, best-in-class, highly selective inhibitors of enzymes belonging to the casein kinase 1 (CK1) family that are responsible for the regulation of different cellular mechanisms leading to resistance to targeted therapies.

Further information available at: [www.casinvent.com](http://www.casinvent.com)

## **About i&i Biotech Fund (i&i Bio)**

i&i Bio is a Luxembourg-based venture capital firm that invests in innovative European life science companies focused on drug discovery, medical devices, diagnostics, and digital health. The Fund was created thanks to the cooperation of the biotech incubator i&i Prague and the European Investment Fund (see below). With over € 53 million under management, i&i Bio plans to invest in about 20 early-stage companies. i&i Bio is led by an experienced team of professionals with backgrounds in private equity, healthcare and venture capital, supporting entrepreneurs on their journey to global success. Thanks to close cooperation with the fund's main sponsor, the biotech academic incubator i&i Prague, i&i Bio is supporting and advancing transformative Central European technology companies.

Further information available at: [www.inibio.eu](http://www.inibio.eu)

## **About the European Investment Fund (EIF)**

The Fund is supported by an investment from the EIF, with the support of

- InnovFin Equity, with the financial backing of the European Union under Horizon 2020 Financial Instruments and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) set up under the Investment Plan for Europe. The purpose of the EFSI is to help support financing and implementing productive investments in the European Union and to ensure increased access to financing; and
- the Pan-European Guarantee Fund (EGF), implemented by the EIF with the financial support of the Participating Member States. The objective of the EGF is to respond to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by ensuring that companies in the Participating Member States have sufficient short-term liquidity available to weather the crisis and can continue their growth and development in the medium to long term.

Further information available at: [EIF to invest €25 million to support biomedical tech transfer in Central Europe](#)

## **About KHAN-I**

KHAN Technology Transfer Fund I GmbH & Co KG (KHAN-I) is an early-stage life sciences venture fund with € 70 million under management. Their mission is to create value through cooperative drug development partnerships with academic innovators in Europe. KHAN-I focuses on first-in-class therapies for attractive markets with a high unmet medical need. The fund is managed by Khanu Management GmbH, an experienced team of professionals with proven track records in early-stage

drug development and academic spin-offs as well as pharma licensing and partnering. KHAN-I received an investment from the European Investment Fund (EIF) with the support of InnovFin Equity, and with the financial backing of the European Union under Horizon 2020 Financial Instruments and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) under the Investment Plan for Europe.

KHAN-I is also supported by Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH (AWS with funds provided by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs and the Austrian Foundation for Research, Technology, and Development), Max Planck Foundation, and Thyssen'sche Handelsgesellschaft mbH. In addition, KHAN-I sustains a preferred partnership with the Max Planck Society (Max-Planck-Gesellschaft e.V.).

Further information available at: [www.khanu.de](http://www.khanu.de)



### About i&i Prague

i&i Prague focuses on the transfer of new technologies into practice. It was established at the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences and is dedicated to innovations in the field of drug development, diagnostics and medical devices originating from academic institutions. It supports the creation of spin-off companies and the sale of licenses. So far, the company has participated in the creation of or otherwise supported 15 spin-off companies from 5 countries, has an equity stake in 9 of them and has invested over CZK 70 million. Overall, the spin-offs in i&i Prague's portfolio have raised more than CZK 1.8 billion from other investors. In 2021, i&i Prague established the i&i Bio Investment Fund in cooperation with the European Investment Fund.

Further information available at: [www.iniprague.com](http://www.iniprague.com)

### Holeček Family Foundation

We support people with knowledge, experience and vision in areas we consider important for the development of our society. We provide support in the form of an open opportunity to receive funding from the Foundation and we leave it up to the beneficiaries to decide how to best use the support we grant. We would like to inspire others with our actions, because we believe that giving back to society brings value to us all.

Our main area of focus is the Czech educational system. Educated people are a prerequisite for the development of any society and there is therefore a close focus on educational projects in the Foundation's activities. Good health is a prerequisite for a full and active life for all of us. Therefore, the quality of health care, social care and the health care system is also in the Foundation's focus. Last but not least, the Foundation supports science and research projects as the main drivers of progress and development in any society. The Foundation mainly supports organisations such as universities or hospitals, which already have a strong potential in the fields mentioned above, but their funding does not always allow them to fully develop their potential. In addition to these main areas of focus, the Board of Trustees also looks at specific innovative projects with the potential of bringing new discoveries or practices.

Further information available at: [www.holecekfoundation.cz](http://www.holecekfoundation.cz)

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