

## **ADVISORY NOTE**

Strasbourg, France, October 8th 2009

### **Details on SHIP-In R&D project revealed, a world-class project for French Research supported by the Alsace BioValley Cluster**

**The SHIP-In research-and-development project has a single goal: developing new and innovative cellular systems for the biopharmaceutical industry. It received the label of the Alsace BioValley cluster in Alsace, France, in November 2008 and is co-sponsored by France's Cancer Bio Santé and Medicen research poles.**

The pharmaceutical industry's development of new therapeutic molecules requires the development and utilization of experimental cellular models that are both efficient and reliable. For a long time, the only possibility was to use stem cells extracted from human embryos. Apart from the difficulty of ensuring their availability, the use of such cells is also circumscribed by stringent ethical and regulatory constraints, which considerably hamper and slow the discovery of new medicines.

Today, a new scientific approach offers an alternative to the use of embryonic stem cells, which is to start with adult human cells and reprogram them as multi-purpose cells.

The SHIP-In project consists in optimizing this new technology to cater for the demands of the biopharmaceutical industry. The aim is to provide pharmaceutical and cosmetics companies with an unlimited supply of human cells which meet quality criteria that are not available today. Eventually, SHIP-In should facilitate the discovery of new molecules and generally speed up the therapeutic innovation process.

SHIP-In presents a unique opportunity for participating in the development of scientific advances that have been unanimously hailed at a world level, declared Nicolas Carboni, the Director of the Alsace BioValley cluster, a partner in the project. Alsace BioValley is proud to have supported and endorsed a project of this importance, which can only enhance the competitiveness of French researchers on the world stage.

SHIP-In is one of three Alsatian R&D projects to have been selected and retained by the French government following its seventh call for projects issued in September 2008. Three organizations based in Alsace are involved in the project: the biotech company Polyplus Transfection, the Institute of Genetics and Molecular and Cellular Biology (IGBMC), one of Europe's leading biomedical research centers, and the Institut Charles Sadron (ICS). The SHIP-In project was selected from more than 190 that were submitted, proof that it is considered to have exceptionally strong innovative and commercial potential. The project is due to run for 36 months.

## SHIP-In in detail

**Total project funding: €4.4 million**

**Amount of state aid: €2.1 million**

### Sources of funding:

- Essonne Departmental Council
- Seine-Saint-Denis Departmental Council
- Ile-de-France Regional Council
- CUS
- FEDER
- FUI
- Oseo (France's innovation and small-business promotion agency)
- Midi-Pyrénées Region
- Alsace Region

### Project coordinator:

#### Vectalys

Vectalys is a biotechnology company based in Labège, in the French department of Haute-Garonne, which is developing tools for firms that are developing cellular and animal models for validating gene candidates and screening new compounds.

[www.vectalys.com](http://www.vectalys.com)

### Project participants:

#### Polyplus Transfection

Based in Illkirch, near Strasbourg, Polyplus Transfection is a biotechnology company that is developing synthetic transfection reagents and is specialized in the development of reagents for the *in vitro* and *in vivo* intracellular transfer of biomolecules.

[www.polyplus-transfection.com](http://www.polyplus-transfection.com)

#### IGBMC (Institute of Genetics and Molecular and Cellular Biology)

Team led by Stéphane Viville.

The IGBMC, which is also based in Illkirch and is headed by Olivier Pourquié, is specialized in the study of multi-purpose cells in mice and humans and is one of the leading biomedical research centers in Europe. It is involved in numerous projects entailing both fundamental research and clinical research. Together with France's National Scientific Research Center (CNRS), the French Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm) and the University of Strasbourg, the IGBMC is leading the scientific and technological advances being made in the field of genetics, which are opening up new areas for the application of modern medicine.

[www.igbmc.fr](http://www.igbmc.fr)

#### Institut Charles Sadron (ICS)

Headed by Gero Decher and based in Strasbourg, the ICS is a CNRS laboratory associated with the University of Strasbourg. It was created in 1954 for undertaking fundamental research to support the development of the nascent polymers industry.

[www-ics.u-strasbg.fr](http://www-ics.u-strasbg.fr)

### About the Alsace Biovalley(TM) cluster

The Alsace BioValley cluster brings together and encourages the development and growth of public and private entities based in Alsace, France, which are involved in life sciences and healthcare. The Alsace BioValley cluster includes the main aid agencies which offer simplified and effective access to all the region's services

and sources of state aid.

Among Alsace BioValley's missions are:

- \* Helping industry in Alsace to obtain finance and the services of a body designated by the French government as a world-class competitive pole of development;
- \* Making the Alsace region even more attractive by accelerating the connections between industry, research and regional and national aid agencies;
- \* Offering different products and services to companies and laboratories in the area, including help with projects, the search for partners, company incubators, enterprise creation, international expansion, economic intelligence, communication tools, and scientific and market information
- \* Ensuring that the region has a world-class infrastructure in place, including specialized buildings, scientific service platforms, logistics, and shared services
- \* Offering an entry point to BioValley, a tri-national network of excellence encompassing the Alsace region in France, the Basel region in Switzerland and the Fribourg region in Germany.

Situated as it is in the heart of Europe and hosting 200 companies, 60 laboratories and 15,000 employees, Alsace BioValley believes it is a real catalyst and one of the largest European clusters for life sciences and healthcare.