



Press release

PEP-Therapy, Institut Curie and Gustave Roussy obtain 2,9 M€ to develop a novel peptide in oncology

*The partners join together to develop this new therapeutic approach
up to clinical proof of concept*

Paris and Villejuif (France), 17 April 2018 – PEP-Therapy, Institut Curie and Gustave Roussy join together to conduct the Clever-Peptide project.

It aims at the development of an innovative anti-cancer peptide, firstly for the treatment of triple-negative breast cancer, and its companion biomarker, predictive of treatment efficacy. Approved by the Medicen Paris Region cluster, this collaborative project obtains 2,9 M€ funding.

Driven by PEP-Therapy, a biotechnology company, Genopole's member, which develops peptide targeted therapies in oncology, the Clever-Peptide project aims to develop a therapeutic peptide and its companion biomarker up to clinical proof of concept.

PEP-Therapy, in association with Institut Curie and Gustave Roussy, among the leading comprehensive cancer centers in Europe, combine their complementary skills - the design of innovative peptides, translational research, pharmaceutical development and oncology clinical trials - that they will use to the benefit of this new therapeutic approach, to make it accessible to patients.

The project will also be supported by a partnership with a biopharmaceutical company focused on oncology, a pioneer in translational medicine. The consortium will receive a total of 2,9 M€ funding from Bpifrance and the Ile-de-France Region.

The peptide, named PEP-010, is based on a patented technology of bi-functional penetrating and interfering peptides. These peptides act as smart shuttles, by penetrating into the heart of the cell to deliver an agent, which specifically blocks targets implicated in pathological mechanisms.

They act in a targeted fashion, without altering physiological mechanisms, thereby limiting the risk of toxicity. PEP-010 causes cancer cells to die without harming healthy cells. The peptide has demonstrated its anti-tumor efficacy in pre-clinical models, predictive for clinical trials as well as its safety in animals. Furthermore, predictive companion biomarkers associated with efficacy of treatment have been identified and patented. They could make it possible to identify patient populations that may respond to treatment.

"We are seeing a resurgence in peptides as an effective therapeutic solution and in particular as a targeted therapy. Our technology is the proof of this. On this innovative basis, I am looking forward to developing a new therapeutic approach with prestigious partners", says Antoine Prestat, CEO and co-founder of PEP-Therapy.

Regulatory toxicology studies are ongoing, the final stage before Phase I/II clinical trials. They will be conducted at Institut Curie and Gustave Roussy, in patients with cancer for whom conventional therapies are no longer an option, starting with triple-negative breast cancer.

“This project is a prime example of what is the essence of Institut Curie, with a molecule developed at the Institut Curie’s research center in the Preclinical Investigation Laboratory, and a Phase I first- in-human trial that will be conducted at the Institut Curie’s hospital complex within D³i (Department of Drug Development and Innovation)” says Professor Christophe Le Tourneau, head of D³i at Institut Curie, and who has worked on the project for several years and will be the coordinating investigator of the clinical trial. *“We are very pleased with the funding of the Clever-Peptide project that adds a new dimension to the partnership that Institut Curie has developed in recent years with PEP-Therapy, a spin-off of the Institut”* commented Amaury Martin, Director of Tech Transfer and Industrial Partnerships at Institut Curie.

“This partnership with PEP-Therapy and our colleagues at Institut Curie is a perfect fit with the missions of the Department of Therapeutic Innovation and Early Trials (DITEP) at Gustave Roussy that aim at evaluating in Phase I new molecules coming from academic and biotechnological research” said Dr Eric Angevin, Alliance Manager and Investigating Physician at DITEP. *“The Clever-Peptide project is a new example of the commitment of Gustave Roussy in research and innovation industrial partnerships, in particular with young biotechnology healthcare companies such as PEP-Therapy”* declared Isabelle Pelletier-Bressac, General Manager at Gustave Roussy Transfert, the Gustave Roussy tech transfer subsidiary.

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About PEP-Therapy : PEP-Therapy is a medical biotechnology company, which develops peptide targeted therapies in oncology. PEP-Therapy operates a Cell Penetrating and Interfering Peptides (CP&IP, Cell Penetrating & Interfering Peptides) technology for the development of therapeutic products. These innovative molecules penetrate cells and then specifically block relevant intracellular protein-protein interactions, thus inhibiting key pathological mechanisms.

Founded in January 2014, PEP-Therapy builds on research results from Sorbonne University (formerly Pierre and Marie Curie University, UPMC) and Institut Curie. PEP-Therapy is a member of Genopole biocluster. Since its inception, PEP-Therapy has raised 2,5 M€ from Quadrivium 1 Seed Funds, managed by Seventure Partners, and from Dr Bernard Majoie, former Chairman and CEO of Laboratoires Fournier, Founding Chairman of Fournier-Majoie Foundation for Innovation (FFMI). www.pep-therapy.com

About Institut Curie : Institut Curie, a key player in the fight against cancer, combines a leading French research center in oncology and a state-of-the-art hospital group that treats all types of cancer, including the rarest. Founded in 1909 by Marie Curie, Institut Curie brings together more than 3,300 researchers, physicians and healthcare professionals around its three missions: care, research and teaching. As a private foundation recognized for public utility, Institut Curie is authorized to receive donations and bequests and can, thanks to the support of its donors, accelerate the discoveries and thus improve the treatment and the quality of life of the patients.
For more information: <http://www.institut-curie.org>

About Gustave Roussy : Gustave Roussy, the largest comprehensive cancer center in Europe, is a pole of expertise dedicated to the comprehensive care of patients, employing 3100 health professionals for health care, research and teaching. www.gustaveroussy.fr/en

About Genopole : Genopole is the leading French biopark dedicated to research in genetics and biotechnologies for healthcare and the environment. Genopole unites 19 research laboratories, 86 biotech companies and 25 technical platforms as well as university training programs (Evry-Val-d’Essonne University). Its objectives are to favor the development of research in genomics, post-genomics and other related fields, assure the transfer of resulting technology to the industrial sector, establish academic - level training programs for these fields, and finally to create and support biotech companies. Genopole is funded mainly by the Ile -de-France Regional Council, the Essonne Department Council and the French State www.genopole.fr