



## **Oncodesign® announces EUR 10 million funding for oncology biomarker program IMAkinib®**

### **French innovation agency OSEO provides finance towards eight-year collaborative project to improve cancer treatment through new specific radiotracers**

Dijon, France, August 6 2009—Oncodesign, an oncology-focused biotechnology company, announces today that French innovation agency, OSEO, will provide more than 40 percent of the funding for the IMAkinib program, aimed at oncology biomarker development. The total cost of the program will be around EUR 24.7 million over eight years. Oncodesign heads the project in collaboration with two partners: Guerbet for the development of radiotracers and clinical trials for the biomarkers and Ariana Pharmaceuticals for the analysis of chemical and biological data.

Cancer is still growing fast in terms of incidence, mortality rates and associated costs. WHO estimates that cancer-related deaths will climb 51 percent between 2002 and 2030, with approximately 11.5 million deaths linked to this pathology in 2030 worldwide. Cancer therapies are still relatively ineffective and are evolving towards personalized treatment and targeted therapies. This explains why it is important to develop specific biomarkers to rationalize treatments and measure their efficacy. This is the aim of IMAkinib.

"The development will take place while we work on lead optimization programs for kinase inhibitors for our pharmaceutical customers," said Philippe Genne, Oncodesign CEO. "This synergy has the added advantage of benefiting our customers while we work on biomarkers adapted to the clinical environment and to the prescription of their therapies. IMAkinib means that Oncodesign will be clearly positioned on the drug discovery and pharmaco-imaging biomarker markets. The program will be a cornerstone of our strategy, which we started a year ago, to become a key player in therapeutic and diagnostic oncology discovery over the next three years."

Radiotracers are diagnostic molecules that can be marked by a radioactive fluoride (F18) to allow the creation of an image using a scanner to follow the reaction of patients undergoing anti-tumor treatments. They also give a precise location of the tumor and any metastases. Radiotracers use imaging technology that is already well known and understood in the hospital environment.



"Using our radiotracers, we can segment patients to evaluate through imaging the most effective and appropriate treatment," said Claire Corot, Research Director at Guerbet. "Guerbet's know-how in imaging products and technology means that we can play an essential role in the clinical development of these products and their marketing."

The OSEO financing comes as part of France's ISI program for strategic industrial innovation (Innovation Stratégique Industrielle). ISI aims are to foster the emergence of European or global champions. Oncodesign as project leader will deploy its vast experience in the pharmacology of anticancer therapies and achievements in other projects such as CReMEC and PharmImage® supported by local and national authorities.

"We were totally convinced by the quality and originality of the IMAkinib project which will fill a large therapeutic gap in clinical oncology," said François Drouin, president of OSEO. "Our mission is to finance innovation and the growth of SMEs and IMAkinib is a perfect example."

"IMAkinib is a significant growth opportunity for Ariana, providing a new application for our leading multi-objective data analysis technology (KEM®) for the development of *in vivo* biomarkers," added Mohammad Afshar, Ariana Pharma's CEO. "We are delighted to be partnering with Guerbet and Oncodesign, bringing to the consortium our state of the art data analysis and drug design capacities."

### **About Oncodesign® Biotechnology**

Oncodesign® Biotechnology's prime goal since its conception has been the identification of novel anticancer therapies. The company has developed an innovative preclinical research platform dedicated to establish *in vitro* and *in vivo* proof of concept of potential therapeutic agents. Its pharmacology based "Qualifying Approach", aimed at the rapid evaluation of the therapeutic potential of new molecules, and the translational perspective of Oncodesign® create a continuum from drug target to patient.

In addition to its service offering, Oncodesign® has significantly invested in its own technological R&D programs to increase its innovation base. Currently, Oncodesign® has taken the lead in two important national initiatives, CReMEC (Medicen, Paris), which aims at the creation of a French resource centre for experimental oncology models based on primary tumor material, and PharmImage®, a centre of excellence in pharmaco-imaging (Dijon, France). Starting from these research platforms, Oncodesign® has continued to develop its business scope over the last year and is now offering capability and experience to discover novel therapeutic and diagnostic agents through an integrated stand-alone approach.

Founded in 1995, by Dr Philippe Genne, Oncodesign® Biotechnology is based in Dijon, France. It employs 60 people including 12 PhDs and has a worldwide client-base of over 400 large and small companies.

For more information on Oncodesign® Biotechnology's R&D platform and its services: [www.oncodesign.com](http://www.oncodesign.com).



**About Guerbet** <http://www.guerbet.com>

Guerbet is the only pharmaceutical group fully dedicated to medical imaging. It has the most comprehensive range of x-ray and MRI contrast media available worldwide. These products assist medical professionals (radiologists, cardiologists, oncologists, etc.) in better diagnosing and treating their patients (cardiovascular, cancer, inflammatory and degenerative diseases). To develop new products and assure its future growth, every year Guerbet devotes significant resources to research and development with 170 R&D employees representing an amount equivalent to approximately 10% of sales. Guerbet's research programs are mainly focused on MRI and nuclear medicine. Guerbet is solidly positioned in Europe with a market share of 25% and is expanding its presence in the United States and Japan. Guerbet, listed on Eurolist Euronext Paris in compartment B had sales in 2008 of €321 million with a total workforce of 1,270 employees.

**About Ariana Pharma** <http://www.arianapharma.com/>

Ariana™ Pharma delivers pioneering multi objectives decision support tools to dramatically accelerate and improve the discovery, development and safety of pharmaceutical products. Its KEM® knowledge extraction and management platform comprehensively mines data, including data other systems neglect, and helps scientists take simultaneous decisions involving multiple criteria and objectives. The Company has established a rapidly growing software business through collaboration and licensing agreements with some of the largest pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Ariana was founded in 2003 and is headquartered in Paris, France.

**About OSEO's Strategic Industrial Innovation Program**

The Strategic Industrial Innovation Program –or ISI, due to its French acronym– promotes the emergence of European champions. It supports innovative, ambitious, collaborative projects, which are industry-oriented and led by intermediate companies (less than 5000 staff members) and SMEs (less than 250), all advancing state-of-the-art technologies. When successful, these projects have a very promising outcome, as they aim at commercializing the innovations arising from technological breakthroughs, which would not be otherwise carried out without public funding. Funds are allocated in the form of grants and loans, ranging from 3 to 10 M€.

More information: <http://www.oseo.com>

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