

PRESS RELEASE

Seeding tomorrow's priority medicines

The European Lead Factory, Europe's largest collaborative drug discovery platform, continues its success story

2 May 2019, Utrecht (the Netherlands) The European Lead Factory (ELF) secured a total project budget of EUR 36.5 million under the second framework of the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI). Over the next 5 years, 20 partners in 7 countries will push forward the transformation of potential drug targets to new medicines in the new project ESCulab (European Screening Centre: unique library for attractive biology) under the European Lead Factory brand.

Jon de Vlieger, coordinator of the ESCulab consortium at Lygature, commented: "It's truly exciting to continue the onboarding of new and innovative proposals for screening and provide high quality starting points for drug discovery to academics and SMEs throughout Europe. In an effort to broaden our scope we are not only looking for target-based approaches, but now also enable phenotypic screens."

Proven platform for smart new ideas

Universities, research organisations and SMEs have a diverse range of potential drug targets but cannot easily access suitable compound libraries and screening facilities. Pharmaceutical companies need access to high quality targets to bring innovative therapies to the patient. The European Lead Factory combines the large high-quality compound libraries derived from the pharmaceutical industry and the Public Compound Collection and Europe's leading screening facility with the innovative targets held by academic organisations in a public-private partnership. This offers an ideal platform to translate early-stage fundamental biological research into credible and investable starting points for drug discovery campaigns.

Stefan Jaroch, project lead of Bayer AG, confirms that: "the European Lead Factory has clearly shown how crowd sourcing and collective intelligence can indeed advance biological concepts into drug discovery projects that benefit academia, industry, society and ultimately patients."

New ideas + New partners = New chances

Over the next five years, the European Lead Factory will initiate 185 new drug discovery projects by screening medically relevant drug targets from European researchers, small and medium-sized enterprises and pharmaceutical industry against the ELF library of 550,000 unique chemical compounds.

The successful concept of the European Lead Factory has already encouraged additional private partners to join. The ESCulab Project welcomes the two pharmaceutical companies Servier and Grünenthal as well as the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), the leading product development partnership in the field of antimalarial drug research and development.

Tim Wells, Chief Scientific Officer at MMV, adds: "We are thrilled to participate as ESCulab and the European Lead Factory represent a chance for new partnerships for MMV, both with the EU through IMI and with a variety of highly creative companies. These partnerships give access to a novel, high quality chemical library that we believe is important to be screened against high priority malaria targets."

About the European Lead Factory

The European Lead Factory is a pan-European platform for drug discovery that is giving a major boost to drug discovery in Europe by connecting innovative drug targets to a high-quality compound library and high-throughput screening facilities.

Please visit www.europeanleadfactory.eu to learn more about collaborative drug discovery.

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**For the media (not for publication)**

Jon de Vlieger, Coordinator European Lead Factory at Lygature and/or Stefan Jaroch, Project Leader of the European Lead Factory are available for interviews. Interview requests and other media questions can be directed towards Anne Kwak (Project Communications Manager European Lead Factory): communications@europeanleadfactory.eu or +316-285 394 27.

¹ www.imi.europa.eu