



Start-up CalTIC secures up to EUR 3 million in seed financing to develop a new class of drugs targeting TRPC channels

Dortmund, Germany, and Leeds, UK– September 28th, 2022. The KHAN Technology Transfer Fund I (KHAN-I) has committed up to EUR 3 million in milestone dependent payments to CalTIC, a Dortmund based start-up, for the discovery of a new class of drugs. The start-up builds on a long-term collaboration between the Lead Discovery Center GmbH (LDC), the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Physiology (MPI-MP) and the University of Leeds (UoL) which resulted in the validation of transient receptor potential canonical (TRPC) channel inhibition as a promising new approach for the treatment of widespread conditions including metabolic diseases, obesity, and heart hypertrophy. Using the proceeds, the founding partners will continue their collaboration to advance their results to preclinical stage. CalTIC's stakeholders are UoL, LDC, the Max Planck Society (MPG), and Prof. Marc Freichel, at the Institute of Pharmacology at Heidelberg University, and KHAN-I.

"The inhibition of TRPC channels presents an entirely new approach to treating metabolic and heart disease," says Bert Klebl, CEO & CSO of LDC. "It holds significant potential for patients, and we are very much looking forward to continuing our collaboration with this group of excellent scientists and clinicians to translate it into practice."

CalTIC's TRPC inhibitors block binding sites that were originally discovered by Prof. David J. Beech (UoL) and Prof. Herbert Waldmann (MPI-MP) as targets of Englerin A. Results from various *in vivo* models support both the potency and safety of the approach of the newly developed TRPC channel inhibitors in metabolic and heart disease.

"We are delighted that KHAN-I has placed great confidence in CalTIC," says Klaus Dinkel, CEO of CalTIC, "With KHAN's investment and our partners' continued commitment, we are perfectly positioned to exploit the exciting project."

"For drugs that inhibit receptors, we refer to receptor subtypes, beta-adrenoceptor blocking drugs and so on. But for calcium channels, we refer to calcium-channel blockers as if there is only one type of calcium channel, yet we now know this isn't the case - there are many. Our CalTIC therapeutic innovation partnership will target some of these new calcium channels. It's a hugely exciting moment to see the potential for new medicines after years of effort getting to this point," states Prof. David Beech, UoL School of Medicine.

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About LDC

Lead Discovery Center GmbH (LDC) was established in 2008 by the technology transfer organization Max Planck Innovation, as a novel approach to capitalize on the potential of excellent basic research for the discovery of new therapies for diseases with high medical need. The LDC takes on promising early-stage projects from academia and transforms them into innovative pharmaceutical leads and antibodies that reach initial proof-of-concept in animals as well as candidate nomination. In close collaboration with high-profile partners from research and industry, the LDC is building a strong and growing portfolio of small molecule and antibody leads with exceptional medical and commercial potential. LDC sustains a long-term partnership with the Max Planck Society, KHAN-I GmbH & Co. KG and has formed alliances with AstraZeneca, Bayer, Boehringer Ingelheim, Merck KGaA, Daiichi Sankyo, QuriEnt, Roche, Apeiron, e.g. In addition, LDC also works with leading translational drug discovery centers and with various investors to provide its assets for company creation.

Further information at: www.lead-discovery.de

About KHAN Technology Transfer Fund I GmbH & Co KG (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. Our 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, academic spin-offs as well as pharma licensing and partnering.

KHAN-I received an investment from the European Investment Fund (EIF) with 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") 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. For more information visit www.khanu.de

About University of Leeds

The University of Leeds is one of the largest higher education institutions in the UK, with more than 38.000 students from more than 150 different countries, and a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities. The University plays a significant role in the Turing, Rosalind Franklin and Royce Institutes. We are a top ten university for research and impact power in the UK, according to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, and are in the top 100 of the QS World University Rankings 2020. The University was awarded a Gold rating by the Government's Teaching Excellence Framework in 2017, recognising its 'consistently outstanding' teaching and learning provision. Twenty-six of our academics have been awarded National Teaching Fellowships – more than any other institution in England, Northern Ireland and Wales – reflecting the excellence of our teaching.

Further information at: www.leeds.ac.uk

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