
Press Release

Stockholm, Sweden, and Leiden, The Netherlands, April 14, 2022

Immunicum to Participate in the New Cancer Research Consortium Oncode-PACT

Immunicum AB (“Immunicum” publ; IMMU.ST), a biopharmaceutical company focused on therapies addressing tumor recurrence and hard-to-treat established tumors, today announced that the company will participate in the public-private partnership Oncode-PACT, which will be supported by the National Growth Fund, an initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and the Ministry of Finance.

The National Growth Fund invests 325 million euros in the Oncode-PACT plan to accelerate the preclinical development process of cancer drugs. This has just been announced during the press conference by Jeroen Dijsselbloem, chairman of the National Growth Fund Committee. With this investment, Oncode-PACT will develop valuable drug candidates faster and cheaper and thus bring them to patients sooner. This will improve the quality of life of cancer patients while strengthening the future economic earning capacity of the Netherlands.

The development of a medicine takes on average 10 to 15 years, from the first scientific insights obtained in the laboratory, to the moment that patients can have access to it. However, it is a common occurrence that a drug candidate is not effective enough, or it does not reach the right patient for other reasons during this lengthy process. Low success rates due to often late failures in drug development come at the price of high investments that ultimately do not lead to new drugs for patients. The current development process of anti-cancer drugs is therefore expensive, takes too long, and usually works only for a subset of the intended target patients. Oncode-PACT aims to provide solutions to these problems.

Patients in the lab

Oncode-PACT has the ambition to develop new demonstrably effective cancer drugs faster and more cost-effectively. The medical need is urgent, because cancer remains the number one cause of death in our country. Alain Kummer, Managing Director Oncode Institute and Chairman of Oncode-PACT, explains: “Oncode-PACT places the patient at the center of the entire drug development chain. In the current situation, the preclinical development process is still insufficiently connected with the clinical practice, and we focus on the patient too late in the drug development process. By deploying patient data and tissues from patients early in the development process – for example organoid technology and artificial intelligence – it is possible to assess whether a potential drug could be effective and safe much earlier in the process than is currently possible, and with greater certainty. In addition, animal testing can be decreased with this new approach.”

This way, Oncode-PACT brings the patient into the lab. This reduces the chance that drug candidates drop out during late-stage clinical studies. With the approach envisioned by Oncode-PACT, it will be clearer before the start of clinical research, in which patient group the greatest effectiveness can be expected and under which circumstances. This makes it possible to approach the important phase of clinical research in a more targeted and faster way.

Significant market potential for anti-cancer drugs

Kummer continues: “Global sales of innovative cancer drugs and contract research for drug development present enormous economic opportunities for the Netherlands. Dutch knowledge institutions and (SME) companies will have access to the expertise and facilities offered by Oncode-PACT and will be able to go through the preclinical development process faster and more effectively. This way, Oncode-PACT will create new business, knowledge and technology in drug development and contract research, strengthen the business climate for foreign companies and develop affordable cancer treatments.”

Impact on patients

The way of working within Oncode-PACT ensures that patients receive more viable treatments as early as possible. Thanks to this new way of drug development, it will be possible in the future to offer tailor-made treatment at a much earlier stage of a patient's disease and make a difference that way.

"The quality of the science captured in Oncode-PACT is clearly outstanding. We are excited and proud to be working as part of the Oncode-PACT consortium to bring breakthrough scientific discoveries from one of the world-leading biopharma ecosystems to patients faster and more efficiently," commented Erik Manting, PhD, Chief Executive Officer of Immunicum. "Within the Oncode-PACT consortium, Immunicum will continue to leverage its expertise in dendritic cell biology to design novel cancer immunotherapies, including the combination with other cell-based therapies."

About Oncode-PACT

Oncode-PACT is a unique national consortium of public and private partners, in which Oncode Institute is the lead party. Within Oncode-PACT, researchers, oncologists, knowledge institutes and the business community work together to develop better and affordable cancer medicines more quickly. There is close coordination with the Ministry of EZK (applicant) and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. In addition to the planned own investment by the Oncode-PACT partners, a contribution has been requested from the National Growth Fund to be able to realize the national plan. See also <http://www.oncode.nl/Oncode-PACT>

About the National Growth Fund

With the National Growth Fund, the government will invest 20 billion euros between 2021 and 2025 in projects that ensure long-term structural and sustainable economic growth. It concerns projects in the field of research, development and innovation in the areas where the Netherlands has the most opportunities

All submitted projects are carefully assessed by an independent committee against specific criteria. In the event of a positive recommendation from the committee, the cabinet decides whether money will be allocated immediately or whether money will be reserved for a project. In the case of a reservation, a better substantiation will be requested, after which the project will be reassessed by the committee.

More information about the National Growth Fund and the investment proposals of projects can be found at www.nationaalgroeifonds.nl

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ABOUT IMMUNICUM AB (PUBL)

Immunicum is a biopharmaceutical company focused on therapies addressing tumor recurrence and hard-to-treat established tumors, two key challenges in oncology. We are leveraging our unparalleled expertise in allogeneic dendritic cell biology to develop an advanced clinical pipeline of novel, off-the-shelf, cell-based therapies for blood-borne and solid tumors. Based in Sweden and the Netherlands, Immunicum is publicly traded on the Nasdaq Stockholm. www.immunicum.com