



## **AstraZeneca and Astex announce new anti-cancer drug discovery alliance**

### **Cambridge, UK, 27th July 2005 AstraZeneca and Astex form new strategic alliance to discover, develop and commercialise novel small molecule inhibitors of the anti-cancer target Protein Kinase B (Akt).**

Cambridge, UK, 27th July 2005. AstraZeneca and Astex Therapeutics today announced a new alliance to discover, develop and commercialize novel small molecule inhibitors of Protein Kinase B (PKB; also known as Akt) for use as anti-cancer agents.

The Collaboration and License Agreement grants AstraZeneca worldwide rights to PKB inhibitors discovered under Astex's existing PKB drug discovery collaboration with The Institute of Cancer Research and Cancer Research Technology. Astex and its collaboration partners will be responsible for providing drug candidates which meet pre-defined criteria to AstraZeneca which, in turn, will be responsible for progressing these candidates through development and into the market.

Under the Agreement, AstraZeneca will provide Astex with an upfront payment of £2.75 million (\$5 million), research funding, as well as milestone payments of up to £150 million (\$270 million), subject to the satisfactory achievement of development, regulatory and sales targets. In addition, Astex is eligible to receive up to double-digit royalties on commercial sales of approved products. Astex also retains an option in the USA to co-promote products arising from the collaboration.

Jan Lundberg, Executive Vice President, Research of AstraZeneca, said, "We have been impressed by Astex's ability to discover novel drug candidates using its proprietary Pyramid™ fragment-based drug discovery technology. This is our third alliance agreement with Astex and follows our successful collaborations in the areas of cytochromes P450 and the discovery of novel inhibitors of the Alzheimer's target beta-secretase."

Tim Haines, Chief Executive of Astex, commented: "Astex has established a leading position in discovering novel molecularly-targeted drugs against the PKB/Akt pathway through our successful collaboration with The Institute of Cancer Research and Cancer Research Technology. We are delighted to have AstraZeneca as Astex's partner for this programme going forward."

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#### **Note to News Editors**

#### **About PKB/Akt**

PKB/Akt is one of the most exciting new targets for the development of new classes of molecularly-targeted anti-cancer agents. The enzyme is an important component of one of the best-understood tumour survival pathways and one that is frequently activated in tumours as a result of disruption of the tumour suppressor PTEN. PKB/Akt is a protein ser/thr kinase that is activated by many growth factors and has key roles in both the growth and survival of many tumours as well as being implicated in resistance of tumours to chemotherapy.

Recently it has become clear that resistance to many therapeutic agents, as seen, for example, with EGFR kinase inhibitors and with cytotoxics such as doxorubicin and cisplatin is associated with an up-regulation of PKB activity by one or other of the above mechanisms. Thus, inhibitors of PKB have potential in both monotherapy and in combination with existing therapies.

## **About Astex**

Astex is a biotechnology company producing novel small molecule therapeutics. Using its pioneering fragment-based drug discovery approach, Astex has rapidly established a broad pipeline of next generation, molecularly-targeted oncology drugs, the first of which has received both FDA and MHRA approval to commence clinical studies in the USA and in the UK.

Astex's leading position in fragment-based drug discovery derives from its integrated discovery engine, Pyramid™. High throughput X-ray crystallography and other biophysical techniques are used to identify drug fragments bound to target proteins and to transform the fragments, using efficient medicinal chemistry, into potent, selective drug candidates. Pyramid™ has been successfully applied across a wide variety of therapeutic targets, including those regarded as 'intractable' by the pharmaceutical industry, resulting in lead compounds for the potential treatment of cancer, inflammation and Alzheimer's disease.

Astex's unprecedented productivity in lead discovery has been endorsed by drug discovery alliances with major pharmaceutical companies including AstraZeneca, sanofi-aventis, Boehringer Ingelheim, Astellas Pharma, Mitsubishi Pharma and Schering AG. Astex was established in 1999 and is well financed by leading, blue chip US and European investors (Abingworth, Advent International, Alta Partners, Apax, GIMV, HypoVereinsbank, Oxford Bioscience Partners, Schering AG and the University of Cambridge).

For further information on Astex please visit the Company's website at [www.astex-therapeutics.com](http://www.astex-therapeutics.com)

## **About AstraZeneca**

AstraZeneca is a major international healthcare business engaged in the research, development, manufacture and marketing of prescription pharmaceuticals and the supply of healthcare services. It is one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies with healthcare sales of over \$21.4 billion and leading positions in sales of gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, respiratory, oncology and neuroscience products. AstraZeneca is listed in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (Global) as well as the FTSE4Good Index.

For more information, please visit [www.astrazeneca.com](http://www.astrazeneca.com)

## **About The Institute of Cancer Research**

The Institute of Cancer Research is Europe's leading cancer research centre with expert scientists working on cutting edge research. It was founded in 1909 to carry out research into the causes of cancer and to develop new strategies for its prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care. For more information please visit [www.icr.ac.uk](http://www.icr.ac.uk)

The Institute works in a unique partnership with the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, forming the largest comprehensive cancer centre in Europe. The Institute is unrivalled in its record in cancer drug discovery and development.

The Institute is a charity that relies on voluntary income. The Institute is a highly cost-effective major cancer research organisation with over 90p in every £ directly supporting research.

## **About Cancer Research Technology Limited.**

Cancer Research Technology Limited (CRT) is the leading oncology focused technology transfer and development company, which aims to maximise cancer patient benefit. CRT works closely with leading international cancer scientists and their institutes to protect intellectual property arising from their research and to establish links with commercial partners. CRT facilitates the discovery, development and marketing of new cancer therapeutics, vaccines, diagnostics and enabling technologies. CRT is

wholly owned by Cancer Research UK, the largest independent funder of cancer research in the world. Further information about CRT can be found at [www.cancertechnology.com](http://www.cancertechnology.com)

Cancer Research UK is Europe's leading cancer charity, dedicated to research into the causes, prevention and treatment of cancer. The charity supports the work of 3,000 scientists, doctors and nurses in over 80 academic centers across the UK, with an annual scientific spend of more than £213 million. Further information about Cancer Research UK can be found at [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)