CasInvent Pharma raises €1.3M from KHAN-I and i&i Bio for the development of CK1 inhibitors for the treatment of cancers

With the funding, CasInvent Pharma will be strengthening its portfolio of CK1 inhibitors and progressing its lead compound to the development candidate status.

CasInvent Pharma team

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC, September 13, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- CasInvent Pharma, an early-stage drug discovery company developing small-molecule compounds with anticancer properties, has raised a follow-up investment round of €1.3 million provided by KHAN Technology Transfer Fund I (KHAN-I) and i&i Biotech Fund (i&i Bio). With this funding, CasInvent Pharma will be strengthening its portfolio of casein kinase inhibitors and progressing its lead compound to the development candidate status.

> The ability of CasInvent Pharma to convince renowned international investors confirms its ambition to be successful on a global scale. It is great to be part of this journey."
>
> *Ivan Vohlmuth, one of the partners of i&i Biotech Fund*

The company CasInvent Pharma is developing proprietary, highly selective inhibitors of enzymes belonging to the casein kinase 1 (CK1) family, which play an important role in several disease-related processes, including the migration of leukemia cells into lymphoid organs. The small-molecule inhibitors are designed to target individual isoforms of CK1 and thereby selectively eradicate leukemic cells. The CasInvent inhibitors have shown promising effects on hard-to-treat leukemias, suggesting their potential use in diseases that currently have limited treatment options. Overall, approximately 500,000 new cases and more than 300,000 deaths due to leukemia were recorded worldwide in 2020.

CasInvent Pharma will also explore the potential of its CK1 inhibitors for the treatment of other cancers, such as solid tumors. “We are confident that through the support of our investors, we will be able to advance our compounds faster into the clinic and to demonstrate the therapeutic anticancer effects of CK1 inhibition in patients. This step will render CasInvent attractive for larger pharma companies, as it will enable them to expand their portfolio with new compounds useful in single-agent as well as combination therapies,” says Vojtěch Helikar, CEO of CasInvent Pharma. “CK1 inhibition provides a novel mechanism of action in different cancer indications, which needs to be exploited in the clinic. We believe that our compounds have the potential to offer novel alternatives of cancer treatment for patients with a high unmet medical need,” adds Alexander Scheer, CSO of CasInvent Pharma.

Kamil Paruch with his colleagues

Vítězslav Bryja, Scientific Advisory

High quality of the research team and the strong support

The company CasInvent Pharma was established in 2020 as a spin-off of Masaryk University (MU) in cooperation with the investment partner i&i Prague. “The investment of €1.3 million further confirms the quality of the scientific project that was created and developed for several years at Masaryk University. The establishment of the spin-off company CasInvent Pharma was thus a logical step to advance, and ultimately commercialize, these efforts. I am very pleased that the Technology Transfer Office of MU was part of such an important achievement,” says Radoslav Trautmann, Head of Technology Transfer Department, Masaryk University.

“We are looking forward to our first investment in a Czech start-up and our first co-investment with the recently launched i&i Biotech Fund. From the beginning, we were impressed by the high quality of CasInvent's research team and the strong support from Masaryk University and the biotech incubator i&i Prague to make this investment possible. With our deep experience in preclinical development of small molecules, we will be able to make valuable contributions to the design and achievement of the key R&D milestones. We look forward to working with Vojtěch, Alexander and the R&D team,” comment Michael Krebs and Peter Nussbaumer, managing partners of KHAN-I.

CasInvent Pharma is i&i Bio’s most recent investment announced this year. It marks yet another successful cooperation with the biotech incubator i&i Prague, one of the main investors of i&i Bio. "We are excited to welcome another promising Czech project to our portfolio. The ability of this spin-off to convince renowned international investors confirms its ambition to be successful on a global scale. It is great to be part of this journey. We are also pleased to use our investment to support research that could help treat serious diseases such as leukemia in the future," says Ivan Vohlmuth, one of the partners of i&i Bio.

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