

Joint Press Release

EMBL scientists found start-up company to develop anti-cancer drugs

Elara Pharmaceuticals GmbH provides a fast track from bench to clinical application

Heidelberg, 9 August 2006 – Today EMBL scientists, EMBL's commercial affiliate, EMBL Enterprise Management Technology Transfer GmbH (EMBLEM) and EMBL's venture vehicle, EMBL Ventures GmbH, announce the foundation of Elara Pharmaceuticals GmbH, a start-up company that will translate basic research findings into new anti-cancer drugs. Elara is a spin-out company dedicated to drug development and will follow-up on promising small molecule leads that have shown powerful anti-cancer actions in screening experiments. Elara receives seed funding from EMBL Ventures and has been granted exclusive license rights to selected discoveries made at EMBL.

“Elara draws on the skills and know-how of some of Europe's leading molecular biologists and the cutting-edge technology of EMBL's Chemical Biology Core Facility”, says George Reid, researcher at EMBL and CEO of Elara. “The EMBL core facility, led by Joe Lewis, who is also a co-founder of ELARA, has tested thousands of small molecules in screens developed during our basic research activities, and identified several series with anti-cancer action. Elara will now take the most promising of these compounds, further develop them and then evaluate their activity in animal models of various types of tumours, such as lung and

breast cancer. Through creating a direct flow of information from basic research, preclinical development and application studies, we will greatly speed up the process of drug development.”

Elara will follow-up on promising leads of molecules that block the signaling protein Aurora Kinase A, which is strongly over-expressed in cancer cells, and on inhibitors that affect estrogen receptor signaling, a process essential in the development of breast cancer. EMBO Executive Director, EMBL Senior Scientist and Elara co-founder Frank Gannon heads the world-leading research group studying these receptors. Five lead series of bio-active molecules with different modes of action and diverse chemical structures have already been identified from the two cancer-related signaling pathways.

“Traditionally, there is a significant gap between basic research and drug development”, says Christof Antz, Managing Director of EMBL Ventures. “It often takes years to get from promising findings to a therapeutic approach. With Elara we aim to bridge this gap and create a direct pipeline from the Laboratory by way of animal testing to clinical development.”

Contacts:

EMBL: Anna-Lynn Wegener, EMBL Press Officer, Heidelberg, Germany, Tel: +49 6221 387 8452, wegener@embl.de

Elara Pharmaceuticals GmbH: Dr George Reid, Chief Executive Officer, Heidelberg, Germany, Tel: +49 6221 387 8160, reid@embl.de

EMBL Ventures GmbH: Edeltraut Günterberg, Press Officer, Heidelberg, Germany, Tel: +49 6221 389330, press@embl-ventures.com

EMBLEM Technology Transfer GmbH: Dr Martin Raditsch, Deputy Managing Director, Heidelberg, Germany, Tel: +49 6221 3632222, raditsch@embl-em.de



About Elara Pharmaceuticals GmbH

Elara Pharmaceuticals GmbH is a start-up drug discovery and development company based on outstanding scientific research originating at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory in Heidelberg. Elara has discovered promising lead series of small, bioactive molecules that have promising anti-tumour activity, based on inhibitors of estrogen signalling and Aurora kinases. Elara will progress these through preclinical development to efficacy studies in patients.



About EMBL

The European Molecular Biology Laboratory is a basic research institute funded by public research monies from 19 member states (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). Research at EMBL is conducted by approximately 80 independent groups covering the spectrum of molecular biology. The Laboratory has five units: the main Laboratory in Heidelberg, and Outstations in Hinxton (the European Bioinformatics Institute), Grenoble, Hamburg, and Monterotondo near Rome. The cornerstones of EMBL's mission are: to perform basic research in molecular biology; to train scientists, students and visitors at all levels; to offer vital services to scientists in the member states; to develop new instruments and methods in the life sciences and to actively engage in technology transfer activities. EMBL's International PhD Programme has a student body of about 170. The Laboratory also sponsors an active Science and Society programme. Visitors from the press and public are welcome. www.embl.org



About EMBLEM

EMBL Enterprise Management Technology Transfer GmbH (EMBLEM) is an affiliate and the commercial arm of EMBL. EMBLEM, established in 1999, identifies, protects and commercialises the intellectual property developed at EMBL, from EMBL alumni and from non-EMBL third parties. EMBLEM facilitates and accelerates the transfer of innovative technology from basic research to industry by working closely with scientists and industrial partners spanning the biotech, pharmaceutical, information technology (IT) and mechanical/electrical engineering markets. www.embl-em.de



About EMBL Ventures

EMBL Ventures is an early stage venture capital investor currently managing € 26 million on behalf of major institutional investors in Europe. The close relationship and proximity of EMBL Ventures to the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and its co-operation partners guarantees a positive impulse for the establishment of new biotech companies. EMBL Ventures invests in core technologies with global potential and is focused on life-science investments, including therapeutics, target validation and drug design, technology platforms, medical devices and diagnostics. www.embl-ventures.com

Policy regarding use

EMBL press releases may be freely reprinted and distributed via print and electronic media. Text, photographs & graphics are copyrighted by EMBL. They may be freely reprinted and distributed in conjunction with this news story, provided that proper attribution to authors, photographers and designers is made. High-resolution copies of the images can be downloaded from the EMBL web site: www.embl.org