

## **MISSION THERAPEUTICS, A NEW CAMBRIDGE-BASED SPIN-OUT COMPANY, SECURES £6M IN SERIES-A FUNDING LED BY SOFINNOVA PARTNERS**

Cambridge, UK. 24th August 2011. A team led by Professor Stephen Jackson together with Cancer Research Technology (Cancer Research UK's commercial arm) and the University of Cambridge has today announced the launch of *MISSION* Therapeutics Ltd, with Series A funding from a top venture capital syndicate. The new spin-out company will translate cutting edge cell biology research on DNA repair from Professor Jackson's laboratory at the Gurdon Institute, University of Cambridge, into drugs that will markedly improve the management of life-threatening diseases, particularly cancer. The company will be based on the Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge, UK.

*MISSION* Therapeutics is developing a broad platform of technologies for the discovery and development of first-in-class drugs targeting enzymes involved in cancer and other diseases. The company will predominantly exploit new and exciting research on ubiquitin pathways that control cellular responses to DNA damage.

The company has raised £6 million in Series A funding from a strong venture capital syndicate led by Sofinnova Partners, and comprising Imperial Innovations, SR One and Roche Venture Fund.

The founding scientists of *MISSION* Therapeutics, which include Professor Jackson, Dr Niall Martin, Dr Xavier Jacq and Dr Keith Menear, comprise a highly successful team with extensive experience and a proven track-record in translating new scientific concepts all the way to clinical trials. Each of the founders was until recently a key scientist at KuDOS Pharmaceuticals, a Cambridge-based biotech company also founded by Professor Jackson.

Professor Jackson said: "It is very exciting to be part of this venture to develop new drugs to improve the lives of people with cancer. Importantly, while having the potential to be effective by themselves, these drugs could also improve the

effectiveness of existing cancer treatments, such as radiotherapy and certain chemotherapies.”

Graziano Seghezzi, Partner at Sofinnova, said on behalf of the investors: “Novel effective treatments for cancer remain in high demand. Mission Therapeutics, under Professor Jackson’s scientific leadership, has the potential to discover new molecularly targeted drugs that could revolutionize the way cancer patients are treated”.

Dr Keith Blundy, CEO of Cancer Research Technology added: “It’s fantastic that the cutting-edge science funded by Cancer Research UK can attract additional cancer drug discovery funding from commercial sources to develop exciting new treatments for cancer patients in the future.”

## **ENDS**

For media enquiries please contact Dr. Niall Martin, *MISSION* Therapeutics (01223 497451 or email [nmartin@missiontherapeutics.com](mailto:nmartin@missiontherapeutics.com)) or Emma Rigby in the Cancer Research Technology press office on 020 3469 8309 or, out-of-hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264 059.

### **Notes to editors:**

The founding technology is technology and knowledge generated in the academic laboratory of Professor Steve Jackson at the Gurdon Institute, University of Cambridge. Most of the research in Prof Jackson’s lab has been funded by Cancer Research UK, although it also receives funding from other sources, including the European Research Council and The European Union. Steve Jackson is the University of Cambridge Professor of Biology, and is a Senior Group Leader and Head of Cancer Research UK Laboratories at the Gurdon Institute. ([www.gurdon.cam.ac.uk/~jacksonlab/](http://www.gurdon.cam.ac.uk/~jacksonlab/)).

### **About Sofinnova Partners**

Sofinnova Partners is an independent venture capital firm based in Paris, France. For 40 years, the firm has backed nearly 500 companies at different stages of their

development – pure creations, spin-offs, as well as turnaround situations – and worked alongside Europe’s key entrepreneurs in the Life Sciences, Technology and Cleantech sectors. With €1.1 billion of funds under management, Sofinnova Partners’ experienced team and hands-on approach in building portfolio companies through to exit have created market leaders, from landmark historical investments including Genentech, Actelion and Vistaprint to more recent successes such as Corevalve, Novoxel, Fovea, Movetis and Preglem. With a global mindset, the firm has a sister organization in San Francisco, California. For more information, please visit [www.sofinnova.fr](http://www.sofinnova.fr)

### **About Imperial Innovations**

Innovations creates, builds and invests in pioneering technologies addressing global problems in healthcare, energy, engineering and the environment. It combines deep understanding of science and technology with commercial acumen and strong investment expertise. In December 2010 Innovations raised £140m to accelerate the making of, and increase the size of, investments in companies established under its existing intellectual property pipeline agreement with Imperial College London. The Group also intends to invest in companies founded by or based on technology from the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge and University College London. For more information, please visit [www.imperialinnovations.co.uk](http://www.imperialinnovations.co.uk)

### **About SR One**

SR One is the corporate venture capital arm of GlaxoSmithKline. The firm invests globally in emerging life science companies that are pursuing innovative science that will significantly impact medical care. Since 1985, SR One has invested approximately \$650 million in more than 140 companies. For more information, please visit [www.srone.com](http://www.srone.com).

### **About Roche Venture Fund**

The Roche Venture Fund invests in early stage biotech and diagnostics companies to develop commercially successful innovative life science companies. Based in Basel, Switzerland with an office in South San Francisco, the Roche Venture Fund invests globally with a portfolio of over 35 companies in 10 countries. For more information, please visit [www.venturefund.roche.com](http://www.venturefund.roche.com).

### **About Cancer Research Technology**

Cancer Research Technology (CRT) is a specialist commercialisation and development company, which aims to develop new discoveries in cancer research for the benefit of cancer patients. 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 a wholly owned subsidiary of 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)

### **About Cancer Research UK**

Cancer Research UK is the world's leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research.

- The charity's groundbreaking work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has helped save millions of lives. This work is funded entirely by the public.
- Cancer Research UK has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival rates double in the last forty years.
- Cancer Research UK supports research into all aspects of cancer through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses.
- Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research UK's vision is to beat cancer.

For further information about Cancer Research UK's work or to find out how to support the charity, please call 020 7121 6699 or visit [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

### **About University of Cambridge:**

The University of Cambridge's mission is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence. It admits the very best and brightest students, regardless of background, and offers one of the UK's most generous bursary schemes.

The University of Cambridge's reputation for excellence is known internationally and reflects the scholastic achievements of its academics and students, as well as the world-class original research carried out by its staff. Some of the most significant

scientific breakthroughs occurred at the University, including the splitting of the atom, invention of the jet engine and the discoveries of stem cells, plate tectonics, pulsars and the structure of DNA. From Isaac Newton to Stephen Hawking, the University has nurtured some of history's greatest minds and has produced more Nobel Prize winners than any other UK institution with over 80 laureates.

[\(www.cam.ac.uk/\)](http://www.cam.ac.uk/)