



PRESS RELEASE

Reference: AB/04/05

Release Date: 5th December 2005

AERES staff to join new Therapeutic Antibody Group at MRC Technology

London, UK, 5th December, 2005 –Medical Research Council Technology (MRCT) today announced the creation of the Therapeutic Antibody Group (TAG) which will comprise former AERES scientists. As part of MRCT's evolving strategy of adding significant value to key MRC intellectual property assets, TAG will collaborate with MRC scientists to translate innovative drug targets into potent and selective therapeutic antibody candidates which can then be partnered with industry for progression into pre-clinical and clinical studies. In addition, MRCT will provide the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry access to the world-class antibody humanisation expertise of TAG as part of a research collaboration.

"TAG scientists have a proven track record of success in antibody humanisation which extends over 17 years and has produced 8 clinical candidates and two regulatory approved humanised antibodies", commented Tarran Jones, TAG Director. "This is a tremendous opportunity to exploit a clinically proven technology on a steady stream of important MRC targets and antibodies and to make a significant contribution to creating new medicines".

MRCT CEO, Dr Roberto Solari added; "The unique skill set present within the AERES scientists will add considerable value to MRC antibodies and their associated targets. The therapeutic antibody approach will also complement our new small molecule drug discovery programme, which together will provide significant strategic synergies to MRCT.

Concurrent with this announcement AERES Biomedical Ltd. announced today that due to staff re-structuring, the Company will no longer enter into new agreements to humanise monoclonal antibodies on behalf of third parties. AERES will, however, fulfil all obligations arising under its ongoing contracts, which are due to be completed in 2005/2006.

Over the past 6 years, AERES has successfully exploited its portfolio of antibody engineering skills and established a world-wide reputation for its expertise in antibody humanisation. Its many collaborators include Acorda Therapeutics (USA), Antisoma (UK), Biotest Pharma (Germany), Peregrine Pharmaceuticals (USA) and the National Cancer Institute (USA). More recently, the Company has signed a partnering agreement with Syngenta Biopharma (Switzerland) to co-develop one of its humanised antibodies. Going forward, AERES will continue to develop its assets, including intellectual property rights relating to its technology and to monoclonal antibodies of potential therapeutic significance on an ongoing basis.

About AERES Biomedical, Ltd.

AERES Biomedical Ltd. Is a privately-owned drug development company which was spun-out of MRC Technology in 1999. Its scientists have been active in the development and exploitation of antibody humanisation since 1988, applying their expertise to the development of humanised therapeutic antibodies both in-house and with its collaborative partners.

About MRC Technology

Medical Research Council Technology (MRCT) is the technology transfer company of the UK's Medical Research Council (MRC) and is responsible for commercialisation of the MRC's biomedical research. The company works with MRC scientists to identify research with commercial potential, facilitates research collaborations, adds value to new technologies through strategic patent protection and markets new technologies to industry. It also helps establish start-up companies based on MRC technology.

The Drug Discovery Group (DDG) has recently been established by MRCT in order to link academic research with pharma style medicinal chemistry, and thereby create an engine to drive the translation of MRC science into healthcare products. The DDG is based in dedicated laboratories in Mill Hill, North London and collaborates with MRC scientists to translate innovative drug targets into potent and selective lead molecules, which can be partnered with industry, or alternatively Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), for progression into lead optimisation and pre-clinical studies.

Media Contact

Dr Roberto Solari
CEO, MRC Technology

E-mail : roberto.solari@tech.mrc.ac.uk

Dr Tarran Jones
Director, Therapeutic Antibody Group

E-mail: tarran.jones@tech.mrc.ac.uk

MRC Technology
1-3 Burtonhole Lane
Mill Hill
London.
NW7 1AD. UK.

Website: www.mrcotechnology.org
Phone: +44 (0)20 8906 7100
Fax: +44 (0)20 8906 7200

Note for Editors

Antibody humanization, also known as CDR-grafting (CDR is a synonym for complementarity determining region) was first invented at the Medical Research Council (MRC) Laboratory of Molecular Biology in the UK by Dr. Greg Winter and patented by the MRC in the late 1980's. CDR-grafting involves the genetic transfer of mouse CDRs (which are responsible for antigen target binding) into human frameworks of a variable region. A variable region is one domain of a immunoglobulin chain, a whole antibody itself comprising of one light and one heavy immunoglobulin chain. An important aid to the process of humanization is molecular modelling, which allows the 3-dimensional structure of the antibody to be carefully analysed and key mouse framework residues important for antibody function to be identified for preservation in the humanised antibody.