



Innovative Medicines Initiative

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PRESS RELEASE

IMI FUNDS PLATFORM TO DISCOVER NOVEL MEDICINES

A partnership of industrial and public (academic) teams will build the screening facility and the unique joint collection of up to 500 000 candidate drug compounds.

BRUSSELS, 06 March 2012 – In an unprecedented effort to speed up the discovery of new medicines, the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) has today announced the construction of an EU-wide public-private partnership, the **"European Lead Factory"**, to combine a comprehensive collection of candidate drug molecules – a **Joint European Compound Collection** – with an industry-like **European Screening Centre**.

The pharmaceutical companies involved in the future project have committed to contributing at least 300 000 chemical compounds from their otherwise safeguarded corporate chemical collections. The teams of universities and small and medium-sized enterprises in the project will have access to this unique library of chemicals, and are expected to add another 200 000 compounds. The **Screening Centre** will build on industry's expertise in so called 'high-throughput screening' – a testing method in which robots test hundreds of thousands of unique chemicals for biological activity.

The **European Lead Factory** will provide to public partners an 'industry-like' discovery platform to translate cutting-edge academic research into high-quality candidate drug molecules on a scale and speed that was not possible previously. Such candidates will be directly introduced to the drug development process for further refinement or will serve as research tools to improve our understanding of disease mechanisms.

Michel Goldman, IMI's Executive Director commented: 'The joint screening centre will give academic teams a unique opportunity to work in conditions that meet industry standards, facilitating the translation of their findings into actual treatments for patients. This shared facility, together with the joint European Compound Collection, will greatly advance the chances of success in the discovery of new medicines for researchers in Europe.'

The total **budget** for the project announced in IMI's 5th Call for proposals amounts to **€169 million**. Up to €80 million will be provided by the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme for Research (FP7), and the remaining amount of up to €89 million will be provided in kind contributions by the participating companies that are members of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA).

Simplified rules and improved funding for project participants

The participants in this project and future IMI projects will benefit from the administrative simplifications and changes in the IMI financial rules that were announced in December 2011. For instance, actual indirect (overhead) costs can now be reimbursed, whereas previously, only a flat rate of 20% was applicable. Funding of personnel costs is being made more convenient, and reporting and accounting procedures for project participants are simplified, reducing the administrative burden and expenses required for management and administration. The improved rules also apply to ongoing IMI projects.

More recently, IMI has also simplified the application procedure and has optimised the evaluation process, resulting in a faster time to grant.

The changes and simplifications are incorporated in the revised IMI Grant Agreement, in the new IMI Financial Guidelines and in the forms related to the 5th Call for proposals.





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More information:

- 5th Call for proposals: www.imi.europa.eu/content/5th-call-2012
- Simplified rules and improved funding: www.imi.europa.eu/content/documents#grant_agreement

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About IMI

IMI is the world's largest public-private partnership in health care. IMI is improving the environment for pharmaceutical innovation in Europe by engaging and supporting networks of industrial and academic experts in collaborative research projects. The European Union contributes €1 billion to the IMI research programme, which is matched by in kind contributions worth at least another €1 billion from the member companies of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA).

The Innovative Medicines Initiative is currently funding 30 projects, many of which are already producing impressive results. The projects do not aim to develop new medicines as such, but focus on new methods and tools that will enable the entire sector to accelerate the development of safer and more effective treatments for patients. More info: www.imi.europa.eu.

