



Innovative Medicines Initiative

**For immediate release**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **IMI LAUNCHES SEVEN NEW PROJECTS TO BOOST DRUG DEVELOPMENT**

**THE PROJECTS HAVE A COMBINED BUDGET OF OVER €237 MILLION AND TACKLE ISSUES SUCH AS STEM CELLS, DATA INTEGRATION AND MANAGEMENT, 'GREEN' DRUG DEVELOPMENT, DRUG BEHAVIOUR IN THE BODY, AND MORE.**

**BRUSSELS, 5 December 2012** – Today, the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) announces the kick-off of its 4<sup>th</sup> wave of projects, which have been set up to tackle some of the biggest challenges in drug development. The new projects should ultimately accelerate the development of safer and more effective drugs for patients.

With a total budget of €55.6 million, **STEMBANCC** is one of IMI's biggest projects to date. It aims to generate and characterise 1 500 **human induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cell lines** that researchers could use to study diseases and test drugs for safety and efficacy. iPS cells were the subject of this year's Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

Integrating and managing data from diverse sources is a key theme for two of the new projects. For example, the €56.4 million **EMIF** project has the goal of creating a **common information framework of patient-level data** that will link up and facilitate access to diverse medical and research data sources. In its initial phase, the project team will focus on obesity and Alzheimer's disease research. Meanwhile the **eTRIKS** project is setting up a **research data and analysis platform** for use by all IMI projects that need to integrate and share data from different sources.

Another cluster of projects focuses on the delivery of drugs and their behaviour once in the body. **ORBITO** is developing new ways to study **how drugs are absorbed by the gut**; currently, our understanding of this issue is limited.

Biopharmaceuticals, novel drugs based on biological molecules like proteins, could prove effective at treating many diseases, but **getting these drugs to where they are needed in the body** is far from easy; tackling this problem is the goal of the **COMPACT** project.

Drugs work by **interacting with a target molecule**; the **K4DD** project aims to develop new tools that will allow researchers to study this interaction in greater detail; this information will help scientists determine whether a potential drug is safe and effective.

Finally, **CHEM21** takes a green chemistry approach to the drug development process, as it aims to **make the process more environmentally friendly**, something that will also cut costs for the pharmaceutical sector.

**Michel Goldman**, IMI Executive Director commented: "Issues like data management and our need for greater understanding of how drugs behave in the body are currently hampering drug development. By addressing these key issues, IMI's exciting new projects will help to dramatically improve the drug development process and ultimately speed up the generation of safer and more effective drugs for patients."

The new projects mean that IMI now has 37 ongoing projects with a combined budget of almost €800 million. Furthermore, IMI has a number of major projects in the pipeline; an initiative to create a Joint European Compound Collection and Screening Centre, and a major programme on antimicrobial resistance, will be launched in the near future.





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**Press contact:**

Catherine Brett – Communication and Events Manager  
Tel: +32 2 541 8214 - catherine.brett@imi.europa.eu

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**About IMI**

IMI is the world's largest public-private partnership in health. 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 37 projects, many of which are already producing impressive results. The projects all address major bottlenecks which will accelerate the development of safer and more effective treatments for patients.

More info on IMI: [www.imi.europa.eu](http://www.imi.europa.eu)

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**Annex - The IMI 4th Call projects in brief**

- More detailed factsheets about each project, including project participants and contact details, are attached and also online at [www.imi.europa.eu/content/ongoing-projects](http://www.imi.europa.eu/content/ongoing-projects)

**CHEM21**

**Full project title:** Chemical manufacturing methods for the 21st century pharmaceutical industries

**About the project:** The CHEM21 project plans to generate a range of **methods** to make the drug development process **more environmentally friendly**. What's more, as well as being **good for the planet**, the methods developed by CHEM21 will also help the pharmaceutical industry to **cut costs**, resulting in **cheaper medicines** for patients.

**Total cost:** €26.4 million

**Project coordinator:** GlaxoSmithKline Research and Development Ltd

**Managing entity:** University of Manchester

**COMPACT**

**Full project title:** Collaboration on the optimisation of macromolecular pharmaceutical access to cellular targets

**About the project:** Many **new medicines** are based on **biological molecules** such as proteins, peptides or nucleic acids. The goal of the COMPACT project is to shed new light on the **obstacles** these drugs (which are known as **biopharmaceuticals**) need to overcome to **get to where they are needed** in the body. The team will then use this information to develop and validate **biopharmaceutical formulations** to **deliver** these novel drugs to their **targets**.

**Total cost:** €30 million

**Project coordinator:** Sanofi-Aventis Deutschland GmbH

**Managing entity:** Universiteit Utrecht

**EMIF**

**Full project title:** European Medical Information Framework

**About the project:** The EMIF project aims to develop a **common information framework of patient-level data** that will link up and facilitate **access** to diverse medical and research data sources, opening up **new avenues of research** for scientists. To provide a focus and guidance

**Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) - Executive Office**

**Kim De Rijck External Relations Manager**

kim.derijck@imi.europa.eu – www.imi.europa.eu – Tel: +32 (0)2-221 81 83

Postal mail: IMI JU, TO56, Office 6/3, 1049 Brussels

Visiting address: Ave de la Toison d'Or 56-60, 1060 Brussels, Belgium





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for the development of the framework, the project will focus initially on questions relating to **obesity** and **Alzheimer's disease**.

**Total cost:** €56.4 million

**Project coordinator:** Janssen Pharmaceutica NV

**Managing entity:** Erasmus Universitair Medisch Centrum Rotterdam

#### eTRIKS

**Full project title:** Delivering European translational information & knowledge management services

**About the project:** Many IMI projects involve the **integration of data** from **different sources**, and until now every project has had to devise its own solutions to the problems raised by data sharing. Enter eTRIKS, which aims to create and run an **open, sustainable research informatics and analytics platform** for use by IMI (and other) projects with knowledge management needs. In addition, the project partners will provide associated **support, expertise** and **services** to ensure users gain the maximum benefit from the platform.

**Total cost:** €23.7 million

**Project coordinator:** AstraZeneca AB

**Managing entity:** Imperial College London

#### K4DD

**Full project title:** Kinetics for drug discovery

**About the project:** Drugs work by **binding with molecules** in the body and to either **block** or **alter the action** of the target molecule. The goal of the K4DD project is to improve our understanding of **how potential drugs bind with their target**, and develop methods and tools to allow researchers to study drug-target interactions with greater ease. These tools would help researchers to determine whether a drug candidate is likely to be **safe** and **effective** much earlier in the drug development process.

**Total cost:** € 20.9 million

**Project coordinator:** Bayer Pharma AG

**Managing entity:** Universiteit Leiden

#### ORBITO

**Full project title:** Oral biopharmaceutics tools

**About the project:** Most drugs are taken **orally**, as **tablets** or **capsules** for example. However, designing these pharmaceutical products in such a way that the active ingredient is absorbed at an appropriate rate and extent by the gut is far from easy. The ORBITO project aims to enhance our understanding of **how orally-administered drugs are taken up** from the gastrointestinal tract into the body, and apply this knowledge to create **new laboratory tests** and computer **models** that will better **predict the performance** of these drugs in patients.

**Total cost:** € 24.5 million

**Project coordinator:** AstraZeneca AB

**Managing entity:** Uppsala Universitet

#### STEMBANCC

**Full project title:** Stem cells for biological assays of novel drugs and predictive toxicology

**About the project:** The aim of the STEMBANCC project is to **generate** and **characterise 1 500** high quality **human induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cell lines** that can be used by researchers to **study** a range of **diseases**, including diabetes and dementia, and **test** for **drug efficacy** and **safety**. The cell lines will help to **improve** and **speed up** the drug development process, and ensure that **patients** benefit from **more effective** and **safer drugs**.

**Total cost:** € 55.6 million

**Project coordinator:** F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd

**Managing entity:** University of Oxford

