

Fifteen projects researching major diseases now underway through EU-Industry joint venture

Brussels, 14 June 2010 – The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) presents today its first 15 research projects that are now up and running. The research will help speed up the discovery and development of new medicines for some of the most serious illnesses.

The successful take-off of the projects marks a key milestone for IMI, a public-private partnership between the European Union and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA).

Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, stated: *"The 15 research projects that IMI has already set in motion can make a major contribution to alleviating pain and distress for countless patients and their families. Stimulating medical innovation will also better position Europe as an attractive and competitive environment, aiding economic recovery."*

Through the projects, innovative approaches are being used to help bring about faster access to better medicines across major illnesses including Alzheimer's disease, asthma, cardiovascular disease, chronic pain, depression, diabetes, and schizophrenia.

Michel Goldman, Executive Director of IMI, added, *"The disease areas in the IMI projects have been chosen because they are important areas of unmet medical need in Europe. The ongoing and future projects will address the main causes of delay in the R&D processes and will help bring safer and more effective medicines more quickly to the patients."*

Today, IMI opened its Stakeholder Forum to bring leading scientists from across the projects together to present and share key developments¹. During the Stakeholder Forum, IMI also presented its plans for

¹ Please see detailed overview of the ongoing projects, the public and private participants across EU member states and the funding and contributions.



Innovative Medicines Initiative

the future. According to an indicative list, the 3rd Call for proposals, which will be launched later this year, will include research topics in the area of autism, diabetes, tuberculosis and drug and vaccine safety.

IMI forms a key strategy in helping Europe regain its place as a world leader in pharmaceutical research. Escalating drug development costs, low public and private investment, and the loss of leading experts and technology to the United States and recently Asia are some of the obstacles to the discovery and development of new medicines in Europe that the initiative hopes to address.

The initiative uses an innovative funding scheme currently reaching €281 million for the first 15 ongoing projects, in which EFPIA member companies at least match the funding of the European Union by mainly in kind contributions. The projects aim to improve the safety and efficacy of medicines, data exchange between researchers and education and training of the health workforce.

Brian Ager, Director General of EFPIA, stated, *“IMI is a clear demonstration of how the Commission and the research-based pharmaceutical industry can partner to deliver real benefits to Europe’s science and research community, ultimately helping to deliver innovation for patients. By bringing together the best of academia with the expertise of industry, IMI will help remove the bottlenecks and speed new therapies to market.”*

IMI is the largest public-private partnership in life sciences R&D worldwide, involving the European Union and the EFPIA. IMI receives funding from the European Union’s Seventh Framework programme.

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