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## **Cellestia Biotech launches new drug discovery program to target Transcription Factors**

Basel, Switzerland – December 7<sup>th</sup> 2020 – Cellestia Biotech, specialized in targeting Transcription Factors (TFs) involved in human diseases initiates a new drug discovery program focused on TFs. The Program, which addresses unmet medical needs in cancer, autoimmune and inflammatory disorders (AIDs), is launched in collaboration with Prof. Vincent Zoete from the Department of Oncology UNIL CHUV, Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Lausanne and the SIB Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics and co-financed by Innosuisse. Prof. Zoete's laboratory specializes in the development of computer-aided algorithms, programs and databases for protein engineering and drug design.

Cellestia has in-depth experience in the area of TFs. Cellestia's lead molecule CB-103 is a first-in-class inhibitor of the NOTCH TF complex. Clinical phase 1 data showed that CB 103 is the first drug that can control oncogenic pathway activation effectively and safely, in absence of any severe toxicities.

The new drug discovery program targets a TF called MYB. MYB is a validated target for drug development in cancer. The protein is constitutively activated in several human cancers (ACC, BC, AML, Angiocentric gliomas) due to gene fusions and overexpression. The two-year program aims to design, discover and develop drugs against TF MYB using state of the art computer aided drug design (CADD) and novel chemistry.

Dr. Raj Lehal, CSO of Cellestia Biotech stated: "Cellestia has been at the forefront of tackling challenging targets previously considered undruggable, to develop drugs against cancer and AIDs. Having already delivered a first-in-class inhibitor to clinics, we are excited to launch a new program that holds potential to bring other innovative drugs to the clinic"

Prof. Vincent Zoete said: "We look forward to collaborating with Cellestia in its development of this class of TF inhibitors, which holds exciting promise for therapeutic targeting of cancer and several human diseases".

### **About Transcription Factors (TF)**

Transcription refers to the first step of gene expression where an RNA is created from a DNA template. Transcription factors (TF) are DNA-binding proteins that play a key role in gene transcription. Through their ability to initiate or repress site-specific transcription, each cell in our bodies can differentiate into a different cell type despite containing the same exact genetic code. Transcription factors also make genetic fine-tuning possible. Modulating the activity and the amount of transcription factor can increase or decrease the rates of the chosen gene's transcription. Ultimately, transcription factors can be thought of as the "gatekeepers" that determine if a gene is expressed or not.

### **About Cellestia Biotech**

Cellestia is a biopharmaceutical company specialised in research and development of first-in-class drugs targeting gene transcription factors enabling the treatment of multi-drug resistant cancers as well as a wide range of non-cancer indications. This innovative approach has successfully led to a pipeline of proprietary drug candidates. Cellestia's lead molecule CB-103 is a first-in-class inhibitor of the TF complex. Clinical phase 1 data showed that CB 103 is the first drug that can control oncogenic pathway activation effectively and safely, in absence of any severe toxicities. Cellestia holds a worldwide exclusive license on the intellectual property rights

for CB-103 and related series of analogues, for development and commercialization. The company pursues an integrated approach combining drug and personalized medicine development for patient selection.

**About the SIB Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics**

SIB is an internationally recognized non-profit organization, focusing on biological and biomedical data science. Its data scientists are passionate about solving complex questions and offer their expertise and services to academic, clinical, and industry groups. SIB also federates the Swiss bioinformatics community of some 800 scientists. The Institute contributes to keeping Switzerland at the forefront of innovation by supporting progress in biological research and enhancing health.

**About UNIL University of Lausanne**

The University of Lausanne was founded in 1537 as the theological "Académie de Lausanne" and was given the name and status of a university in 1890. Jointly with the École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) it forms the largest education and research center in Switzerland.

**About CHUV Lausanne University Hospital**

The CHUV is one of five university hospitals in Switzerland. Renowned for its academic achievements in health care, research and teaching it has been ranked among the World's best Hospitals by Newsweek magazine.

**About Ludwig Cancer Research**

Ludwig Cancer Research is an international collaborative network of acclaimed scientists that has pioneered cancer research and landmark discovery for nearly 50 years. Ludwig combines basic science with the ability to translate its discoveries and conduct clinical trials to accelerate the development of new cancer diagnostics and therapies. Since 1971, Ludwig has invested \$2.7 billion in life-changing science through the not-for-profit Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research and the six U.S.-based Ludwig Centers.

**About Innosuisse**

Innosuisse is the Swiss Innovation Promotion Agency. Innosuisse's role is to promote science-based innovation in the interests of industry and society in Switzerland.

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