

Ascenion Mediates License Agreement on Novel Vaccine Adjuvant between HZI and AmVac

Munich, December 12th, 2007 – The Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research in Braunschweig (HZI) and AmVac AG entered into a license agreement providing AmVac with exclusive rights to develop and commercialize a synthetic lipopeptide called MALP-2 and its derivatives as vaccine adjuvants. In return, HZI receives upfront and milestone payments, as well as royalties on future sales. In addition, Ascenion GmbH obtained an equity stake in AmVac.

MALP-2 was discovered and developed by the HZI researchers Prof. Peter Mühlradt and Prof. Carlos A. Guzmán and their teams. In preclinical studies using various animal models, they demonstrated that MALP-2 can effectively enhance immune responses when co-administered with vaccines by either the parenteral (e.g., subcutaneous) or mucosal (e.g. intranasal) route. When given by the mucosal route, MALP-2 also promotes strong immunity at different mucosal sites, a property exhibited by only few compounds. These activities are based, at least in part, on the ability of MALP-2 to trigger the activation and maturation of dendritic cells, which in turn present vaccine antigens to other immune cells.

“Our data support the value of MALP-2 as an immune adjuvant in many indications, ranging from respiratory infections caused by bacteria and viruses, to Chagas’ disease and HIV/AIDS,” Carlos A. Guzmán, Head of the Department of Vaccinology at HZI, says. “As it can be administered by the mucosal route, it helps to fight microbial infections right at the point of entry. This not only improves disease prevention but also reduces horizontal transfer of pathogens in the community. Moreover, needle-free application is highly accepted by the public and simplifies the implementation logistics.”

So far, there is no mucosal adjuvant on the market and only very few are in development.

Peter Ruile, COO of Ascenion adds: “With a growing pipeline of innovative vaccines, AmVac is an ideal partner to exploit the potential of MALP-2 as a mucosal adjuvant. We are looking forward to a long-term and sustainable partnership between HZI, AmVac and Ascenion.”

With the help of Ascenion, HZI has built a substantial IP portfolio around MALP-2 including the compound, its derivatives and several applications. Besides vaccination, these include wound healing, cancer immunotherapy and sepsis prophylaxis. For these indications, MALP-2 is still available for licensing and Ascenion is currently in talks with a number of potential licensees.

Overall, Ascenion has initiated and closed more than 50 deals with industry on behalf of HZI since it first began to collaborate with the institute at the end of 2002.

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Press Conference

A press conference on the topic "Milestone in the Development of Vaccines" with representatives of AmVac AG, the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry, Max Planck Innovation GmbH, the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research and Ascenion GmbH will take place:

- In Zurich on Wednesday, December 12, at 11:00 AM at Park Hyatt Zurich, Beethoven-Str 21, 8002 Zurich, Switzerland
- In Munich on Thursday, December 13, at 11:00 AM at Hotel Bayerischer Hof, Promenadeplatz 2-6, Munich, Germany

The conference will be held in German. For further information, please contact:
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Background information

MALP-2

For further information see www.malp-research.de

About Ascenion GmbH

Ascenion GmbH is an IP asset management company focused on the life sciences. Ascenion supports and advises scientists and research institutions with regard to the protection and exploitation of their intellectual property (patents, know-how, materials), and initiates and mediates license agreements between research institutions and industry. Ascenion was founded in 2001 as a 100% subsidiary of the Life-Science Foundation for the Promotion of Science and Research and has since acquired 12 research institutes in the Helmholtz and Leibniz Associations and also the Hanover Medical School as exclusive partners. On behalf of these institutes, Ascenion currently markets around 600 technologies and closes an average of about 60 agreements between research and industry per year. The team has also accompanied numerous spin-offs through their foundation and early growth and Ascenion holds equity in 12 of these companies. Ascenion's headquarters are in Munich, with further offices in Berlin, Braunschweig, Hamburg, Hanover and Neuherberg. Further information at www.ascenion.de

About AmVac AG

AmVac AG is a young biopharmaceutical company based in Switzerland that is concentrating in the high-yield pharmaceutical industry on an especially high-growth market segment. An average annual growth rate of 13% is forecast until 2010 for the vaccines market, compared with 6% for pharmaceuticals in general. AmVac products are further characterized by meeting unfulfilled therapy requirements in the fields of urology and gynecology. AmVac has to date licensed and further developed two advanced immunotherapeutic drugs with gold standard potential. Further products are in the planning stage. For further information, please contact :

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