

Stable dust for preventing hay fever and allergic asthma

Ascenion receives equity in Protectimmun

June 30, 2008, Munich – March 2007 saw the founding of a new company, Protectimmun GmbH, to exploit groundbreaking research in allergy prevention from the Research Center Borstel (FZB) and the Ruhr-Universität Bochum. The goal of the company is to develop a drug that will protect children from developing hay fever and allergic asthma. As the FZB's exclusive commercialization partner, Ascenion has structured the licensing agreement between the FZB and the company's founders for the necessary patents, and has provided support during the company's founding and development. Ascenion has now received equity in Protectimmun in return for these services.

"In just under two years' collaboration with several life-science institutes in the Leibniz Association, we are delighted to have helped a start-up get off the ground" said Dr Christian Stein, CEO of Ascenion. "More and more children are suffering from allergic respiratory diseases. Protectimmun's business idea therefore addresses an acute medical need and an attractive market."

In 2001, international studies showed that children who regularly spent time in farm stables during the first year of life were virtually immune to hay fever and allergic asthma later in life. In light of this, scientists at the FZB and the Ruhr-Universität Bochum have developed procedures for making a stable dust extract that can be administered in aerosol form, e.g. as a nose spray. The preventative effect of the extract has already been confirmed in animal models. The next steps are the identification of the active components in stable dust and the appropriate expansion of the patent position. Ascenion will continue to assist the team on this front.

"In addition, we are concentrating on completing the preclinical toxicology studies, in order to clear the way for clinical trials", said Dr Marion Kauth, CEO of Protectimmun. "The increasingly comprehensive set of preclinical data also supports our position in negotiations with investors."

The team received its first start-up funding in February 2008, via the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) and a partial R&D payment from an industry partner.

Ascenion has already coached numerous spin-offs and currently holds equity in 14 of these companies, including Protectimmun. Revenue from its spin-off business flows to the Life-Science Foundation for the Promotion of Science and Research, which in turn assigns the funds to suitable research projects.

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Background information

Ascenion GmbH

Ascenion GmbH is an IP asset management company focused on the life sciences. Ascenion advises and supports public 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. The company places particular emphasis on coaching company founders and on active equity management. 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. Ascenion currently markets around 600 technologies on behalf of these institutes, and closes an average of about 60 agreements between research and industry per year. The team has also coached numerous spin-offs through their foundation and early growth and Ascenion holds equity in 14 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