



## ZIKAVAX Press Release

Heidelberg, 14 December 2016

### The quest for an effective vaccine against Zika virus infection

#### European Union funded consortium begins collaboration towards the development of a Zika vaccine based on measles vector

The European Vaccine Initiative, Institut Pasteur Paris, Themis Bioscience and the Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives have joint forces and announce the start of the ZIKAVAX project. This consortium aims at developing a safe fast-track, effective and affordable preventive vaccine against Zika virus infection based on specific know-how and technology existing at each partner.

The recent rapid spread of the Zika virus in previously unaffected regions such as South Pacific islands and Latin America has provided strong epidemiological evidence that infection with this virus might be associated with neurological complications in adults and with an increase in severe congenital brain malformations of new-borns. Consequently, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the recent outbreak of the Zika virus a public health emergency.

The ZIKAVAX project aims at addressing this urgent public health issue by proposing a vaccine based on a measles vaccine vector developed at Institut Pasteur by Dr Frédéric Tangy. This vector has demonstrated proof of principle in humans and a preclinical track record of rapid adaptability and effectiveness for a variety of pathogens. Following antigen selection and expression, immunisation studies will be conducted with the Zika vaccine candidate in mice and in a non-human primate challenge model that is to be developed by the consortium. The most effective vaccine candidate generated will be introduced in phase I clinical trial.

“Developing an effective Zika vaccine has become a global health priority for preventing the further spread of the virus. We are convinced that the use of the measles vaccine delivery platform, one of the safest and most efficacious vaccines available to date, will allow for a rapid and cost-effective development of a Zika vaccine” says Dr Odile Leroy, Executive Director of the European Vaccine Initiative and coordinator of the ZIKAVAX project.

Dr. Erich Tauber, CEO and co-founder of Vienna based Themis Bioscience adds: “The combined expertise of this consortium will no doubt accelerate the further development of our vaccine platform for the use as a Zika vaccine. It has already been validated in phase II for a chikungunya

vaccine, and we are confident that our established manufacturing and development processes will further support a rapid and efficient vaccine development for Zika.”

ZIKAVAX is funded by approximately €5 million grant received from the EU’s Horizon 2020 programme, which is investing €45 million in research to combat the outbreak of the Zika virus disease and other emerging infections transmitted by mosquitoes. Over the next 48 months, the consortium will work to ultimately demonstrate the safety and immunogenicity of a recombinant measles-Zika vaccine candidate in adults in a phase Ia clinical trial.

### **Quick Facts about ZIKAVAX:**

**Start Date:** 1 October 2016

**End Date:** 30 September 2020

**Coordinator:** Odile LEROY, European Vaccine Initiative

**Project Funding:** EU H2020



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#### **Partners**

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##### **European Vaccine Initiative, Heidelberg Germany**

Representative: Odile LEROY

The European Vaccine Initiative (EVI) is a non-profit Product Development Partnership supporting the development of vaccines for diseases of poverty by bridging conceptual and operational gaps in translational research. EVI supports the strengthening of the vaccine Research and Development (R&D) infrastructure in Europe, harmonisation, knowledge sharing and aligning of major vaccine R&D stakeholders. Areas of EVI's expertise in vaccine development from preclinical to clinical proof-of-concept include process development, development of quality control assays, optimisation of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) production, selection of the most appropriate delivery system, development of formulation with adjuvants and early stage clinical development. EVI has extensive experience of more than a decade in coordinating large scale infrastructure and collaborative research projects funded by the EU and other funding agencies.

[www.euvaccine.eu](http://www.euvaccine.eu)

##### **Institut Pasteur, Paris, France and the Institut Pasteur International Network**

Representative: Frédéric TANGY

The Institut Pasteur, a private foundation with officially recognised charitable status set up by Louis Pasteur in 1887, is today an internationally renowned centre for biomedical research with a network of 33 institutes worldwide. In the pursuit of its mission to prevent and fight against diseases in France and throughout the world, the Institut Pasteur operates in four main areas: scientific and

medical research, public health and health monitoring, teaching, and business development and technology transfer.

More than 2,500 people work on its Paris campus. The Institut Pasteur is a globally recognised leader in infectious diseases, microbiology, and immunology. Its 130 units also focus their research on certain cancers, genetic and neurodegenerative diseases, genomics and developmental biology. This research aims to expand our knowledge of living organisms in a bid to lay the foundation for new prevention strategies and novel therapeutics. Since its inception, 10 Institut Pasteur scientists have been awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine, including two in 2008 for the 1983 discovery of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS.

[www.pasteur.fr/en](http://www.pasteur.fr/en)

### **Themis Bioscience GmbH, Vienna, Austria**

Representative: Erich TAUBER

Themis Bioscience GmbH develops prophylactic vaccines from the preclinical to the early clinical phase, focusing on emerging tropical infectious diseases, with initial vaccine candidates currently being developed against Chikungunya and Zika. The company's highly innovative and fully patent-protected measles virus vaccine vector technology platform, licensed from the internationally respected Institut Pasteur Paris, forms the basis for all current vaccine candidates of the Vienna-based company.

[www.themisbio.com](http://www.themisbio.com)

### **Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives, Gif sur Yvette, France**

Representative: Roger LE GRAND

The Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives (CEA) is a key player in research, development and innovation in four main areas:

- defence and security,
- nuclear energy (fission and fusion),
- technological research for industry,
- fundamental research in the physical sciences and life sciences.

Drawing on its widely acknowledged expertise, the CEA actively participates in collaborative projects with a large number of academic and industrial partners.

The CEA is established in ten centers spread throughout France. It works in partnership with many other research bodies, local authorities and universities. Within this context, the CEA is a stakeholder in a series of national alliances set up to coordinate French research in energy (ANCRE), life sciences and health (AVIESAN), digital science and technology (ALLISTENE), environmental sciences (AllEnvi) and human and social sciences (ATHENA).

[www.cea.fr/english](http://www.cea.fr/english)

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