

Press release

Biomunex signs exclusive licensing agreement with Institut Curie to develop MAIT engagers, a new class of bispecific antibodies in immuno-oncology

- **With this agreement, Biomunex, already co-inventor and 50% co-owner of this innovative approach, has licensed complementary exclusive rights from Institut Curie for the identification, discovery, development and exploitation of bi- and multi-specific antibodies capable of specifically targeting and engaging a sub-population of T cells: MAIT cells (Mucosal Associated Invariant T cells), leading to the killing of cancer cells.**
- **This agreement stems from the historic collaboration established in 2019 between Biomunex and Institut Curie, for the development of a new immunotherapy approach in oncology, based on MAIT cell redirection, in particular for the treatment of solid tumors.**
- **Discovered by Dr. Olivier Lantz of Institut Curie, MAIT cells are present throughout the body, notably in mucosal and barrier tissues, and boast unique properties, paving the way for the development of a new class of T-cell engagers: MAIT engagers.**

Paris, France, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, March 4th, 2024 - **Biomunex Pharmaceuticals**, a French biopharmaceutical company specialized in the development of cutting-edge therapies through the discovery and development of bi- and multi-specific antibodies for the treatment of cancer, announced today the signature of an exclusive license and exploitation agreement with Institut Curie. This agreement covers the development of a new class of antibodies, capable of specifically targeting and engaging MAIT cells to kill cancer cells. Biomunex, which was already co-inventor and a 50% co-owner of this unique innovative approach, now holds full worldwide rights.

First identified and described in 1999 by Dr. Olivier Lantz, Director of the Clinical Immunology Laboratory at Institut Curie and scientific advisor to Biomunex, MAIT cells are a subpopulation of non-conventional T cells found throughout the body, particularly in mucosal and barrier tissues. MAIT cells are potent cytotoxic T cells capable of proliferating, migrating and infiltrating solid tumors.

Biomunex's objective is to use these unique properties to develop MAIT engagers, a new class of antibodies capable of redirecting MAIT lymphocytes to eliminate cancer cells and induce the destruction of tumors, particularly solid tumors, while significantly reducing "dose-limiting" toxicity. This novel approach should also reduce the risk of cytokine release syndrome¹, a serious adverse event often observed in immunotherapies based on T cell redirection targeting CD3, which are widely used today in cancer treatment.

In addition, MAIT cells present the MDR-1² protein on their surface, providing them with a natural resistance to some major chemotherapies. This property could enable the combination of MAIT engagers with chemotherapy, or their use directly before or after treatment: a key advantage compared with other T cell engagers.

¹ Cytokine release syndrome can cause a variety of symptoms ranging from fever or flu-like symptoms to severe, life-threatening manifestations.

² MultiDrug Resistance Protein, P-glycoprotein (P-gp)

This new approach has been developed through several collaborations with the Cancer Immunotherapy Center (Institut Curie, Inserm) headed by Dr. Sebastian Amigorena, Biomunex's scientific advisor, and Dr. Olivier Lantz's team at Institut Curie.

Building on its collaboration with Institut Curie, France's first and leading cancer research center, and its advanced work on MAIT cells, Biomunex should soon initiate a Phase 1 clinical trial for the evaluation of its first MAIT engager in the treatment of solid tumors with a high unmet medical need, and in which MAIT cells are particularly present (e.g. colorectal, liver, gastric, lung, esophageal cancers, etc.). Biomunex currently develops two MAIT engager programs in preclinical stage with several others in discovery. Biomunex is currently expanding this approach in several directions (e.g. novel antibodies targeting MAIT cells, trispecific engagers, etc.).

*"We are very pleased to announce the signing of this major agreement with Institut Curie, a leading institute in global oncology research and a major historical partner of Biomunex", said **Dr. Pierre-Emmanuel Gerard**, Founder and CEO of Biomunex. **Dr. Simon Plyte**, Chief Scientific Officer of Biomunex, added: "This agreement positions Biomunex as the world's leading player in the disruptive field of MAIT engagers, based on the unique BiXAb best-in-class bi- and multi-specific antibody platform."*

*"The development of new immunotherapy approaches in oncology has become a key challenge if we are to provide an answer to the millions of cancer patients for whom standard treatments can no longer do anything," continued **Dr. Sebastian Amigorena**. "The research performed at Institut Curie has led to a major discovery which now opens up promising new therapeutic options. This agreement will enable Biomunex to initiate clinical development to harness the unique properties of MAIT cells and thus bring to life this breakthrough therapies for the benefit of patients", concluded **Dr. Olivier Lantz**.*

About Biomunex Pharmaceuticals: www.biomunex.com

Biomunex Pharmaceuticals is a biopharmaceutical company based in Paris (France) and Cambridge, MA, USA, led by an international and experienced team. Biomunex is specialized in the discovery and development of breakthrough therapeutic approaches, based on solid data and proven biological and clinical evidence, to address unmet medical needs in oncology.

Biomunex has created and developed BiXAb[®], a robust, 'Plug and Play', next-generation bi- and multi-specific antibody technology platform, using a proprietary computational modeling approach, with a very robust IP and patent portfolio. The BiXAb platform, which allows the generation of bispecific antibodies from any pair of monoclonal antibodies in a simple, fast and cost-effective manner, has been validated through licensing agreements and collaborations with the pharmaceutical and biotech industry, with Sanofi then Onward Therapeutics.

Biomunex is the first company worldwide developing an immuno-oncology approach that allows, through bispecific antibodies from its BiXAb platform, to specifically target, engage and redirect MAIT cells, a subpopulation of T cells naturally present throughout the body, most specifically in mucosal and barrier tissues, to kill cancer cells, for the treatment of solid tumors.

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