

## Press Information

### **Helmholtz Zentrum München and SIRION BIOTECH Initiate Research Cooperation to Develop New Anti-Cancer Gene Therapy Approach Using Lentiviral Vectors**

Neuherberg, March 25, 2010. **Helmholtz Zentrum München has launched a new cooperative project with SIRION BIOTECH GmbH in Martinsried to develop new therapeutic approaches against lymphoid tumors. With a two-year grant from the Federal Ministry for Economics and Technology, the two partners will seek to further develop lentiviral vector systems to better understand the disease mechanisms of this cancer form and to devise approaches for treatment.**

The future of gene therapy approaches in cancer treatment is especially dependent on the quality of the vectors involved in the regulation of gene expression in the tumor cells. Lentiviruses are a very promising vector system for this – they even reach difficult-to-access cell types such as the hematopoietic cells of the blood-forming system.

With their new research cooperation Helmholtz Zentrum München and SIRION BIOTECH seek to optimize the use of lentiviruses as gene vectors for hematopoietic cells. Over the long term this may result in an important step forward in the therapy of malignant lymphomas. The Federal Ministry for Economics and Technology is funding the project over the next two years with approximately 500,000 euros.

“We quite consciously decided on a cooperation partner from the biotech sector,” said Professor Günther Wess, scientific-technical director of Helmholtz Zentrum München. “The symbiosis of our scientific expertise in the field of lentiviruses with the technical know-how of SIRION BIOTECH promises to yield valuable insights about the molecular disease mechanisms and the function of disease-relevant genes in the blood cells.”

Dr. Nataša Anastasov, who is in charge of the project at the Institute of Radiation Biology of Helmholtz Zentrum München, and her colleagues from SIRION BIOTECH already have concrete ideas regarding the new generation of lentiviruses: “We want to specifically refine the lentiviral vectors to target the tumor cell markers.” To achieve this, the researchers first want to develop new cell lines in the laboratory with improved binding characteristics for virus production.

“We are very pleased that Helmholtz Zentrum München has chosen to cooperate with our company due to our specialization in genetically modified cells and viral vector technologies,” said Dr. Jürgen Flach, CEO of SIRION BIOTECH. Both cooperation partners are confident that over the long term they can make an important contribution to the treatment of lymphomas.

**Helmholtz Zentrum München** is the German Research Center for Environmental Health. As leading center oriented toward Environmental Health, it focuses on chronic and complex diseases which develop from the interaction of environmental factors and individual genetic disposition. Helmholtz Zentrum München has around 1700 staff members. The head office of the center is located in Neuherberg to the north of Munich on a 50-hectare research campus. Helmholtz Zentrum München belongs to the Helmholtz Association, Germany's largest research organization, a community of 16 scientific-technical and medical-biological research centers with a total of 26,500 staff members.

**SIRION BIOTECH GmbH** is a biotech company that produces genetically modified cells and is a technology provider in the field of viral vector systems. The company, founded in 2006, is located in the Innovation Center for Biotechnology (IZB) in Martinsried near Munich. As leading specialist in RNAi technologies, SIRION BIOTECH offers a wide range of more than 100 products and services. Using state-of-the art techniques and assay systems, the company provides reliable project execution and documentation in target validation, screening and drug development.

With its strong expertise in cell line development, SIRION BIOTECH is thus an ideal partner for the development and optimization of cell lines for various applications such as the production of vaccines or antibodies or the development of cellular assay systems. SIRION BIOTECH is currently conducting projects for most of the major pharmaceutical companies in Europe and the USA and has ongoing collaborations with leading academic and governmental research institutes.

---

**Editor:** Sven Winkler, Helmholtz Zentrum München – German Research Center for Environmental Health, Ingolstädter Landstr. 1, 85764 Neuherberg, Germany. Phone: +49(0)89-3187-3946. Fax +49(0)89-3187-3324, Internet: [www.helmholtz-muenchen.de](http://www.helmholtz-muenchen.de). E-mail: [presse@helmholtz-muenchen.de](mailto:presse@helmholtz-muenchen.de)

**Press Contact at SIRION BIOTECH GmbH:** Holger Schmidt, SIRION BIOTECH GmbH, Am Klopferspitz 19, 82151 Planegg/Martinsried, Germany Phone.: +49(0)8106-37 97 171 Fax: +49(0)8106-37 97 171, Internet: [www.sirion-biotech.de](http://www.sirion-biotech.de), E-mail: [holgerachim.schmidt@web.de](mailto:holgerachim.schmidt@web.de)

---

**Disclaimer:** You have received our newsletter/our press information because you have registered for it with Helmholtz Zentrum München or are an accredited press office. If you want to unsubscribe to our newsletter/our press information, please send an e-mail to [presse@helmholtz-muenchen.de](mailto:presse@helmholtz-muenchen.de).