



## **MPI of Biochemistry, LDC and Qurient Close License Deal on a New Compound against Metastatic and Drug-resistant Cancers**

March 12, 2013, Dortmund/ Martinsried, Germany and Gyeonggi-do, Korea – The Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry (MPIB), the Lead Discovery Center GmbH (LDC) and Qurient Co., Ltd have entered into a license agreement providing Qurient with world-wide, exclusive rights to a new kinase inhibitor for the treatment of metastatic cancer.

The lead compound belongs to a family of highly selective Axl kinase inhibitors that was jointly developed by LDC and Max-Planck researchers around Prof. Axel Ullrich at MPIB. Together they have shown that the new Axl kinase inhibitor interferes with key mechanisms of metastasis formation and significantly reduces the number of metastases *in-vivo*. The project originally emerged from a collaboration of MPIB with Vichem Chemie Research Ltd.

During the coming year, Qurient, LDC and MPIB will work closely together to ensure a smooth transition of the project into preclinical and clinical development at Qurient. The company plans to continue the project at least to clinical proof-of-concept before sublicensing it to a partner for further development and marketing. Under the terms of the agreement, LDC and MPIB will receive an upfront payment as well as milestone and royalty payments, in line with the project's progress.

This agreement would not have been possible without the support of Max Planck Innovation, the technology transfer organization of the Max Planck Society.

The new Axl kinase inhibitor addresses a severe unmet medical need. According to the WHO, the number of cancer deaths worldwide is still on the rise, with 13.1 million deaths predicted in 2030. Up to 90% of cancer deaths are thought to be due to metastasis. So far, there is no effective treatment available for metastasis, and there are only very few projects under development.

"It is a very exciting opportunity for Qurient to develop a promising Axl kinase inhibitor discovered at the world renowned research institutes LDC and MPIB," says Kiyean Nam, CSO of Qurient. "This program will be a front runner in our strategy to turn cancer into a chronic disease enabling patients to lead a normal life style."

Axel Ullrich, Director at MPIB comments: "We are delighted that we have concluded an agreement with such a competent partner. This partnership will be crucial to rapidly advance this completely novel approach to fight cancer to a successful product. While certain genetically well characterized cancers can be treated effectively today, metastasis formation remains a key threat to patients' lives. A drug based on this novel mechanism of action will hopefully improve the quality of life of numerous cancer patients in the future."

"Our new Axl kinase inhibitor addresses this challenging field, which has fallen behind in the industry's development pipelines," adds Bert Klebl, CEO of LDC. "With Qurient we have now attracted a partner who has not only the expertise and capability, but also the drive to move such an exciting project forward and help realize the potential of academic innovation for patients who lack satisfactory treatment options."



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#### **About Qurient:**

Starting operation in 2009, Qurient is a venture capital funded spin-off biotechnology company of Institut Pasteur Korea (IPK) and dedicated to developing novel therapeutics for unmet medical needs. Qurient has in-house expertise in research and development project management and operates in a large part as a development management company using its network of drug development capabilities.

Qurient works from discovery to human proof-of-concept programs, where transformation takes place from a high potential research program into a solid product portfolio. Further information available at: [www.qurient.com](http://www.qurient.com)

#### **About LDC:**

The Lead Discovery Center (LDC) was established in 2008 by the technology transfer organization Max Planck Innovation, as a novel approach to capitalize on the potential of excellent basic research for the discovery of new therapies for diseases with high medical need.

With a world-class team of interdisciplinary scientists, drug discovery experts, pharmacologists and seasoned project managers, LDC takes on promising early-stage projects from academia and transforms them into innovative pharmaceutical leads that reach initial proof-of-concept in animals.

LDC sustains a long-term partnership with the Max Planck Society and closely collaborates with leading Max-Planck researchers such as Prof. Axel Ullrich on a portfolio of small molecule drug discovery projects with exceptional medical and commercial potential. Further information available at: [www.lead-discovery.de](http://www.lead-discovery.de)

#### **About MPIB:**

The Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry (MPIB) is an international basic research institute elucidating the structure and function of proteins to better understand cellular mechanisms as well the pathogenesis of diseases such as cancer, diabetes or Alzheimer's as well as to develop new strategies for therapy. With around 850 employees, the Institute is one of the largest biologically-medically oriented research institutes of the Max Planck Society. Since the founding of the Max-Planck-Institute of Biochemistry in 1972, MPIB scientists have twice been awarded the Nobel Prize.

The research of the Axel Ullrich lab is especially focused on the molecular analysis of cellular signal transduction mechanisms such as receptor tyrosine kinases and their role in cancer.

Further information available at: [www.biochem.mpg.de/ullrich](http://www.biochem.mpg.de/ullrich)

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