



## **F-star Awarded Biomedical Catalyst Feasibility Grant to Apply its Antibody Technology to Antibody-Drug Conjugates**

Cambridge, UK – 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2013 -- F-star, a biopharmaceutical company focused on developing novel bispecific antibody products, today announced the company has received a Biomedical Catalyst Feasibility grant from the Technology Strategy Board, the UK's innovation agency, to support the evaluation of a target-specific conjugate for cancer therapy. Antibody-drug conjugates consist of an antibody (or antibody fragment) linked to a payload drug, often a cytotoxin. The antibody component enables the therapeutic to bind directly to the target cancer cells where the drug can then be released. This targeting effort allows for a potential reduction in side effects and a wider therapeutic window. F-star has already used its proprietary technology platform to generate an Fc fragment of an antibody (an "Fcab™" or an "Fc with antigen binding") that binds potently to a unique domain within a breast cancer target. Over-expression of the target plays an important role in the pathogenesis and progression of certain aggressive types of breast cancer and in recent years it has evolved to become an important biomarker and target of therapy for the disease.

F-star will utilise technology created by Heidelberg Pharma GmbH to conjugate a toxin to the target-specific Fcab. Heidelberg Pharma has developed a technology for antibody-drug conjugates based on the conjugation of novel toxins to antibodies. In this collaboration with F-star, Heidelberg Pharma will take a new approach and apply its technology to an Fc fragment of an antibody. F-star will then evaluate the resulting antibody-drug conjugate alongside current standard of care treatments. The unique properties of Fcabs suggest that they will be particularly well suited to an antibody-drug conjugate approach.

"This grant, awarded by the Technology Strategy Board, will help us realise the exciting potential for the development of antibody-drug conjugates derived from our versatile Modular Antibody Technology platform," said John Haurum, M.D., D.Phil., Chief Executive Officer of F-star. "The funds from this award will enable F-star to continue our efforts to create superior, novel anti-cancer therapies that have the potential to make a significant difference in the treatment of disease."

### **About Biomedical Catalyst:**

The £180 million Biomedical Catalyst is an integrated translational funding programme jointly operated by the Medical Research Council and the Technology Strategy Board providing responsive and effective support for the best life science opportunities arising in the UK. Support through the Biomedical Catalyst is available to UK businesses (SMEs) and academics looking to develop innovative solutions to healthcare challenges either individually or in collaboration.

### **About Heidelberg Pharma:**

Heidelberg Pharma GmbH offers services for the pre-clinical development of anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory drugs to the pharmaceutical and biotech industry with a focus on lead optimization and pre-clinical drug profiling. Heidelberg Pharma's R&D flagship is its proprietary 2nd generation ADC technology for more effective anti-cancer drugs. ADCs combine the well-established principle of targeted antibodies (safety and tolerability) with the effectiveness of ultra-potent toxins (anti-tumour efficacy) using special chemical linkers. The antibody transports the cytotoxin specifically to – and into – the cancer cell. The released cytotoxin should then kill the tumour cell while having no effect on healthy tissue. Key USP of Heidelberg Pharma's technology is the potential to treat multi resistant tumours and 'dormant or quiescent' tumour cells, which are regarded as a main reason for metastasis and resistance. 2nd generation ADCs are designed on the basis of a new class of toxin which has a mode of action and chemical / biological properties that are entirely innovative and relate to potential clinical benefits of great importance.

The Company is located in the former Max-Planck Institute in Ladenburg, Germany, and has an excellent infrastructure with laboratories for in vivo pharmacology, bioanalytics, molecular biology, and chemistry. Heidelberg Pharma is a wholly owned subsidiary of WILEX AG – an oncology focused biopharmaceutical company with a broad and late stage portfolio of anti-cancer drug and diagnostic candidates. WILEX is listed on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange (ISIN DE0006614720). For more information please visit [www.heidelberg-pharma.com](http://www.heidelberg-pharma.com) and [www.wilex.com](http://www.wilex.com).

### **About F-star:**

F-star is a biopharmaceutical company dedicated to developing novel bispecific antibody products that provide a significant improvement over the current standard of care. Given its strong patent position, it is the only biopharmaceutical company with the ability to create and develop Fcabs and bispecific antibodies by modifying the constant region of an antibody. In particular, F-star's Modular Antibody Technology enables rapid discovery and development of bispecific antibodies by introducing additional binding sites to the constant region of an antibody and offers unprecedented ease in the development and manufacturing of genuine bispecific antibody products. Using the Modular Antibody Technology, F-star generates bispecific antibodies (mAb<sup>2</sup><sup>™</sup>) that possess the favourable characteristics of traditional monoclonal antibodies, without the production challenges often associated with other antibody formats. F-star is now applying its proprietary technology to the development of a pipeline of product candidates.

Since its founding in 2006 the company has secured funding and support from leading VC investors: Aescap Venture, Atlas Venture, Novo Ventures and TVM Capital; as well as from renowned strategic corporate investors: Merck Serono Ventures, MP Healthcare Venture Management and SR One. The company has major alliances with Boehringer Ingelheim and Merck Serono, each covering multiple targets. In 2011, F-star was selected by the industry newsletter FierceBiotech as one of the Fierce 15 winners, designating it as one of the most promising private biotechnology companies in the industry. F-star currently employs over 30 people at its research site in Cambridge, UK.

For more information visit [www.f-star.com](http://www.f-star.com).

### **About the Technology Strategy Board:**

The Technology Strategy Board is the UK's innovation agency. Its goal is to accelerate economic growth by stimulating and supporting business-led innovation. Sponsored by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Technology Strategy Board brings together business, research and the public sector, supporting and accelerating the development of innovative products and services to meet market needs, tackle major societal challenges and help build the future economy. For more information please visit [www.innovateuk.org](http://www.innovateuk.org).

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