



Aelix Therapeutics completes Series A funding of €11.5M (\$12.7M) for therapeutic HIV vaccine

Funds will support proof of concept studies for lead candidate HTI immunogen as a therapeutic vaccine against HIV infection

Barcelona, January 11, 2016 - Aelix Therapeutics, a drug development company specialized in the discovery and development of immunotherapies against HIV infection, today announces that it has completed a Series A funding round of €11.5 M (\$12.7 M). Ysios Capital, a Spanish investment fund, led the round. The fundraising was also supported by a syndicate of new investors including Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JJDC Inc. ("JJDC"), and Caixa Capital Risc, the venture capital division of Spain's leading financial group, 'la Caixa'.

With this fundraising, the company welcomes four new board members: Dr. Karen Wagner from Ysios Capital, José Antonio Mesa from Caixa Capital Risc, Jordi Naval, co-founder of the company, and Jeanne Bolger from JJDC.

The proceeds will support the development of the HTI immunogen as a therapeutic vaccine against HIV infection up to the completion of a Phase 2 proof-of-concept efficacy trial in HIV-infected individuals. Clinical trials are expected to start by third quarter of 2016. The HTI immunogen has the potential to become the first immunotherapy to produce a 'functional cure' for HIV infection. It works by eliciting an effective T-cell immune response to the virus in vaccinated individuals. It is estimated that more than 36.9 million people in the world are HIV-positive, with 2 million new cases in 2014¹.

"We are delighted to have closed such an important equity round. The investment syndicate includes many complementary parties, specifically the corporate investors from pharmaceutical companies with expertise in virology and vaccine development. We also look forward to working with the research community to test this concept," said Dr. Christian Brander, ICREA investigator at Irsicaixa and chief scientific officer and co-founder of Aelix Therapeutics.

"We believe that Aelix's innovative approach, based on a disruptive design of a T-cell immunogen that is able to elicit a strong, broad and focused response against HIV, has the potential to radically transform the treatment of HIV infection, still one of the largest health problems in the world," said Karen Wagner from Ysios Capital. "We were impressed by the science and the preclinical data supporting the HTI immunogen. We believe that this may indeed change the future of how HIV infection is treated and also help to improve the health of millions of people globally."

¹ http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/20150714_FS_MDG6_Report_en.pdf

"We are very proud that the quality of Drs. Brander, Clotet, Gatell and HIVACAT's scientific work for more than 20 years has attracted such a high caliber investor group," said Jordi Naval, co-founder of Aelix Therapeutics and board director. "We look forward to working with them to build the company further and make Aelix a powerhouse for HIV therapeutics."

"HIV still has a high-unmet medical need, even in the western world. Achieving a functional cure would allow people living with HIV to discontinue anti-retroviral therapy and thereby ease the overall burden on treatment and healthcare systems, as well as reduce the social stigma associated with daily medication," said José Antonio Mesa, from Caixa Capital Risc. "We are proud to continue the work done for years by Obra Social 'la Caixa', turning IrsiCaixa into a pioneering center where highly innovative projects such as Aelix are developed."

About the HTI immunogen

The HTI immunogen (HIVACAT T-cell Immunogen) constitutes a completely new approach to T-cell immunogen design. Starting from data of more than 1,000 HIV-infected patients in four continents, Drs. Brander and Mothe and their team identified the T-cell targets against which those with lower viral load mounted a protective response. They then designed a polypeptide sequence covering those T-cell targets (16 segments spanning certain sequences of the HIV genes gag, pol, vif and nef) and integrated it in DNA and Modified Ankara Virus (MVA) vectors. The preclinical data show excellent breadth, strength and focus of the elicited response after prime-boost regimens in animal models. An independent analysis in human samples shows a strong correlation between the presence of T-cell response against the regions in HTI and their ability to limit the growth of HIV in vitro and in vivo. HTI can also lay the foundations for new preventive vaccine designs against HIV. It is included in combination approaches in the ongoing work of the HIVACAT program.

About Aelix Therapeutics

Aelix Therapeutics develops therapeutic vaccines and immunotherapies to treat HIV infection. The company is a spin-off of HIVACAT, the Catalan project for the development of effective vaccines against HIV. The company was created under the leadership of its founders, Drs. Christian Brander, Bonaventura Clotet, Josep Maria Gatell and Mr. Jordi Naval; all of whom have several decades of experience in HIV and biotech development. The company's know-how will further expand through unique immunogen designs. It will also benefit from ready access to large cohorts of HIV infected patients in several continents through its partnership with the HIVACAT consortium.

www.aelixtherapeutics.com

About Ysios Capital

Ysios Capital is a leading Spanish venture capital firm that provides private equity financing to early and mid-stage human healthcare and life science companies with a special focus on pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and medical devices. Founded in 2008, Ysios Capital currently has over €130M (\$142M) in assets under management, distributed over two funds. The second fund has a target size of €100M (\$111M). It will remain open to new investors until March 2016.

www.ysioscapital.com

About Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JJDC

Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JJDC, Inc. is the venture capital subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson. It has been investing since 1973 in the medical device, diagnostic, pharmaceutical and consumer health areas. JJDC's goal is to create opportunities that

meet the strategic needs of its operating affiliates while providing visibility to innovative emerging technology, businesses and business models. JJDC invests in companies across the continuum from early stage seed investments to advanced stages of series venture management.

www.jjdc.com

About Caixa Capital Risc

Caixa Capital Risc, the venture capital division of 'la Caixa', invests in the early stages of innovative startups. In 2004 'la Caixa' launched a set of initiatives and specific funds to facilitate the financing of these companies, depending on the sector and the stage of development.

Currently, Caixa Capital Risc manages €160M (\$179M). It invests in companies with a global vision, keeping the focus on perceived emerging sectors: technology, digital industries, technologies for industry and life sciences.

www.caixacapitalrisc.es

About HIVACAT

HIVACAT is the Catalan project for the development of vaccines against HIV, included under the IrsiCaixa umbrella. The organization is a joint public and private sector consortium composed of Catalonia's two longest established and leading AIDS research centers; the Institute for AIDS Research IrsiCaixa, and the AIDS and Infectious Diseases Service at Barcelona's Hospital Clínic. The project also works in conjunction with the pharmaceutical company ESTEVE, and with the support of the 'la Caixa' Foundation, the autonomous Catalan government's Department of Economy and Knowledge, ICREA, plus the Clinic Foundation at Barcelona's Hospital Clínic.

www.hivacat.org

Andrew Lloyd & Associates:

Hillary Rock-Archer / Sandra Régnavaque

hillary@ala.com / sandra@ala.com

Tel: + 44 1273 675 100

US: + 1 617 202 4491

@ALA_Group
