PRESS RELEASE

CONDOR PROJECT FOR PRECISION MEDICINE AND SARCOMA IMMUNOTHERAPY AWARDED CLOSE TO €10M IN THE FIFTH CALL FOR HOSPITAL-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH IN HEALTH (RHU) PROJECTS

January 27, 2022 – The **CONDOR** consortium, led by **Pr. Antoine Italiano of the Bergonié Institute (Bordeaux, France)** is one of the 17 national awardees in the fifth call for projects in Hospital-University Research in Health (RHU5), selected from the 89 applications submitted. This €30M ($34M) project will benefit from a grant of more than €9.8M ($11.1M) to implement a multi-modal project combining precision medicine and immunotherapies for the management of patients with Soft Tissue Sarcomas (STS).

STS are a group of rare and heterogeneous tumors - representing 1% and 15% of adult and childhood cancers, respectively. Despite well-conducted locoregional treatment, up to 40% of patients develop a metastatic relapse. Standard treatment at the metastatic stage has not evolved since the 1970's. It is based on the use of chemotherapy protocols whose effectiveness is very limited, with a median survival of less than 18 months. While immunotherapy today represents a therapeutic revolution in the management of many cancers, it is to date not part of the therapeutic arsenal for patients with STS.

The **CONDOR** project is a consortium combining three expert centers in the management of sarcomas – including project leader **Institut Bergonié**, **Gustave Roussy,** the **Centre Léon Bérard** and **Inserm** via the **Pole de Recherche Clinique** and the **Centre de Recherche des Cordeliers**, as well as three French companies, each recognized for their expertise in their respective fields. These companies are **Domain Therapeutics**, a worldwide player in the discovery and development of anti-cancer therapies targeting G Protein-Coupled Receptors (GPCRs); **Explicyte**, experts in tumor and peripheral multiparametric profiling for immuno-oncology biomarker discovery and development, and **Owkin**, a leader in the field of digital pathology and artificial intelligence. Many of these partners have collaborated together for several years, which increases the ability for the consortium to deliver results within five years of funding.

CONDOR is a unique approach aiming to deliver a therapeutic arsenal based on better knowledge of the STS tumor microenvironment, predictive tools and biomarkers to stratify patients, as well as new immunotherapeutic approaches. The ultimate goal is to double the life expectancy of patients with metastatic STS. More specifically, the consortium will:

   i)   Establish an immunological atlas of sarcomas, thanks to a unique tumor bank comprising more than 20,000 samples with annotated clinical data
   ii)   Develop artificial intelligence tools - predictive of response to treatment

iii) Identify immunological signatures and develop non-invasive biomarker assays
iv) Develop new immunotherapies targeting GPCRs involved in the immune responses to STS

"This consortium represents tremendous hope for STS patients who are still waiting for effective treatments. I sincerely thank the National Research Agency and the French government for their support for medical innovation and their trust in the **CONDOR** project," says **Pr. Antoine Italiano of the Institut Bergonié in Bordeaux**.

"This project represents a unique opportunity to better understand the impact of the immune system in the pathophysiology of sarcomas; to be able to develop innovative and effective treatment strategies," says **Pr. Wolf-Hervé Fridman of the Centre de Recherche des Cordeliers in Paris.**

"We are pleased to be participating in this project, which we believe will help to change the standards of treatment for this type of cancer with such a poor prognosis," adds **Dr. Sophie Postel-Vinay of Gustave Roussy in Villejuif, near Paris.**

"The **CONDOR** RHU will allow us to accelerate knowledge in the field of sarcoma immunotherapy and to propose innovative therapeutic approaches that will change the prognosis for our patients," says **Dr. Armelle Dufresne of the Centre Léon Bérard, in Lyon**.

"Given the complexity of treatment resistance mechanisms and precision medicine - through biomarker approaches, this brings a definite advantage, by offering treatments adapted to each patient," adds **Alban Bessede, CEO of Explicyte.**

"We are delighted to be able to bring our expertise in artificial intelligence to the **CONDOR** project. The heterogeneity of STS and the very large amount of data that will be generated by the consortium require the implementation of a machine learning strategy that is essential for the development of precision medicine," explains **Charles Maussion, Director of Biomarkers at Owkin**.

"Through **CONDOR,** we will deliver several candidates and aim to rearm the immune system by targeting GPCRs involved in immunosuppressive mechanisms. These new immunotherapies will be an integral part of a personalized medicine strategy, for greater patient benefit," adds **Dr. Xavier Leroy, CSO of Domain Therapeutics**.

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CONTACTS PRESSE

ANDREW LLOYD & ASSOCIATES
Emilie Chouinard / Juliette Schmitt - emilie@ala.com / juliette@ala.com
Tel: +33 1 56 54 07 00 - @ALA_Group

INSTITUT BERGONIE - Carmona Gérald : g.carmona@bordeaux.unicancer.fr - 06 14 96 57 94
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