

# **Cytheris acquires license from leading US research labs for a new immuno-modulating agent activating NKT cells**

## **New family of ligands may represent big advance in immune system enhancement**

Paris, May 23, 2005—Cytheris, a biopharmaceutical company focused on immuno-modulation, announced today that the company has acquired an exclusive worldwide license for a new immuno-modulating agent from New York University, the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center and the City University of New York. Under the terms of the agreement, Cytheris acquires development and marketing rights for a new family of molecules in the field of immuno-modulation resulting from research carried out by these three leading academic institutions.

The agreement represents a major step forward for Cytheris in its on-going development of a powerful portfolio of innovative immuno-modulator agents to restore and activate the immune system on demand. It also offers a unique opportunity to collaborate on very promising drugs with prestigious US academic centers.

The family of new molecules is made up of highly potent and specific ligands that activate NKT and dendritic cells. NKT cells, considered as a critical hinge between the innate and adaptive arms of the immune system, play a pivotal role to prompt many infection- and disease- fighting immune cells to act against pathogens and cancer. Dendritic cells are at the heart of the immune system's operations and process and present antigens to the immune system. The interaction of NKT cells with dendritic cells results in the production of many immune-enhancing cytokines acting on immune system cells so that they can expand or differentiate, or develop into, helpers or killers focused on removing an antigen.

This very specific in-vitro activity has been already translated into impressive efficacy in animal models in anti-infectious and anti-tumor settings.

“This new project represents a strategic fit and will strengthen further Cytheris’s already significant product portfolio in immune modulation,” said Michel Morre, CEO of Cytheris. “Our lead compound, Interleukin-7 (IL-7) is currently in various clinical studies. We have already completed a Phase I study in oncology and four other Phase I/II studies are either on-going or about to start in cancer and other immune deficit settings. IL-7 is a recombinant Interleukin-7, a pivotal growth factor with unique features to rebuild the immune system and enhance global and specific immune response.”

### **About Cytheris**

Cytheris, Paris, is a product-oriented biopharmaceutical company focused on the research and development of new and critical agents for immune modulation. These drugs aim at reconstituting, enhancing or modulating the immune system activity of patients suffering from life-threatening diseases. Cytheris has a strong network of collaborations with internationally renowned academic and clinical teams as well as industrial partners. The company was founded in 1999 and employs today around 20 experienced people in Europe and in the USA. The company, based in Vanves-Paris, has a subsidiary in Rockville (MD-USA), and is currently raising a Series B round to fund early Phase II clinical trials. Current investors include AXA Private Equity, BIOAM/Biogestion, Crédit Agricole Private Equity, T2C2/Bio 2000 (Canada) and CDP Capital-Technologies (Canada).

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