

THE PROVENCE PARTNERSHIP  
**NEWS**  
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## FOCUS ON LIFE SCIENCES IN PROVENCE

### LABEL OF EXCELLENCE IN INFECTIOUS DISEASES

#### Two Marseilles Projects Retained: Polmit and Phenomix

Further to the government's call for project submissions for its "Investment for the future" program, it was announced recently that six new University Hospital Institutes (Instituts Hospitalo-Universitaire - IHU) had been retained. Marseilles' "Polmit" project, supported by the Université de la Méditerranée, the INSERM and the AP-HM (Marseilles hospital authority), has received the label of excellence, a tremendous reward for all its teams. Specializing in infectious and tropical diseases and unique in Europe, this international institute will cover an area of nearly 5 acres and include sections for the treatment and care of patients, research laboratories and researcher accommodation and for teaching excellence.

Instigator of the grand project and 2010 INSERM Grand Prize winner Professor Didier Raoult will be the founding coordinator.

Expected to commence operations in 2014, Marseilles' IHU is certain to make a real contribution to advances in the field, thanks to its collaborative and partnership-based approach. With one quarter of deaths in the world due to infectious and tropical diseases, the stakes are high.

"Phenomix" is another project to have sprung up in Marseilles, part of the government's Equipex investment loan program. The project is being carried by the Université de la Méditerranée and Dr Bernard Malissen, director of research at the Marseille-Luminy Center for Immunology (CIML). The aim of this major public health project is to provide better understanding of the mechanisms of infectious diseases and, in particular, the body's defense mechanisms against infections.

The funds allocated to Phenomix (€1.5 M) will provide a boost to the growth of the CIPHE cell grouping center being set up at Marseille University's Luminy campus.

A project that federates on both a regional and national level, Phenomix will put France at the forefront of the cell grouping field.

### FOCUS ON LIFE SCIENCES COMPANIES AND SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE IN PROVENCE

**Supersonic Imagine** is a company based in Aix-en-Provence that innovates in the field of medical imaging. Together with Provence Promotion, it is working on a project to set up a campus entirely dedicated to ultrasonics. The declared intention is to root Supersonic Imagine more firmly into its home region by creating an ultrasonic center that will set the standard worldwide and by strengthening ties with the major clients.

Since its founding in 2005, Supersonic Imagine has carried out three fundraising campaigns, which have brought in €71.3M in total. This fresh capital has enabled the company to finance its research activities and to initiate a clinical study on a world scale. Supersonic Imagine has unveiled some of the results of the largest clinical breast study ever undertaken in ultrasound imaging (1,800 patients across 16 American and European sites). The worldwide multicenter study, involving top clinicians in the breast radiology community, is assessing the clinical benefits of ShearWave™ Elastography in the ultrasonic evaluation of breast lesions (source: PR Newswire).

Boosted by this technological achievement, the president of Supersonic Imagine, Jacques Souquet, is planning to list his company in 2013 when turnover reaches €40M or €50M.

**Provepharm**, based in Marseille, is an affiliated company of the Provence Technologies Group, devoted to developing and marketing pharmaceutical drug products from active pharmaceutical ingredients synthesized and patented by its parent company.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has approved Provepharm's marketing authorization for Methylthionium Chloride ProveBlue®.

ProveBlue is the first pure pharma grade Methylene Blue produced under cGMP in the World.

The marketing authorization allows the clinicians to treat with this injectable drug based on the active principal methylthionium chloride ProveBlue®.

Thanks to its improved safety profile, ProveBlue® opens the way to a wide variety of applications.



## TESTIMONIAL

### The Synprosis story

#### From Start-Up to Industrial Laboratory!

With its motto of “creative peptide design”, Synprosis has rapidly gone from start-up to industrial-scale laboratory, to the point that, in July 2010, it swapped its 1600 sq. ft. offices in Château-Gombert for 27,000 sq. ft. premises at the Actipôle St-Charles in Fuveau! This exceptional growth is due to the choices made by a company that has, from the beginning, specialized in the manufacturing of synthetic peptides for therapeutic use, mainly for use in vaccines.

Very active in the field of synthetic vaccines, the company conducts its own research into infectious and parasitic diseases (HIV, bilharzia). Certified by the AFSSAPS (French Health Agency) since 2006 for the manufacture of peptides for therapeutic use, it also develops products for its clients, including candidates for malaria vaccines (Pasteur Institute). Within this context, it was forced to consider eventually manufacturing vaccine material to satisfy the potential demand of 200 million vaccine doses per year. Relocating to industrial-sized facilities was now essential. Synprosis opted for an industrial building that had previously been used by BASF for storing and distributing chemicals for the micro-electronics industry and moved in in July 2010.



The investment plan set out for the next 4 years provides for an overall investment in equipment of €1.5 M (excluding real estate), of which €500,000 already has been invested this year in manufacturing equipment. The purchase of this type of premises has reassured the existing clients and attracted new ones. The recognized expertise in research and development had to be backed up by a large-scale production facility.

Today, the company employs eight staff and this figure is set to double by the end of 2011... The eventual aim is to set up a center for the development and production of polypeptides and to create 40 jobs over the entire program.

## PARTNERSHIPS AGREEMENTS

#### Sanofi-Aventis and Aviesan Sign Remarkable Deal with CIML

**Researchers** : a research cooperation agreement has just been put in place between Sanofi-Aventis, Aviesan and the CIML (Marseilles-Luminy Center for Immunology). This remarkable three-year scientific partnership focuses on immunology in the field of inflammatory diseases of the skin and intestines. The ultimate aim of this joint venture is to better understand the biological mechanisms of inflammation and to identify new therapeutic targets. To make project follow-up easier, exchanges lasting several months are planned between researchers from the various teams in France and the US.

Sanofi-Aventis is a world leader in the pharmaceutical industry. Aviesan, founded in April 2009, brings together all the main stakeholders in the life and health sciences sectors in France. The CIML is a world-renowned centre of excellence in immunology research.

**Ipsogen**, the Marseilles-based cancer profiling company that designs and markets molecular diagnostic tests, was the target of a takeover bid by Qiagen on June 15 last. The Dutch group, a world leader in sample and assay technologies, intends acquiring 100% of Ipsogen's capital. Qiagen has undertaken to pay shareholders a premium of more than 70% and to retain the entire Marseilles site (70 staff). If this acquisition goes through, it will be the first foreign takeover of a listed French biotechnology company.

**Sartorius Stedim Biotech (SSB), Aubagne, France**, leading international laboratory and process technology provider with core areas of expertise in biotechnology and mechatronics, announces the signing of a global partnership agreement with RAUMEDIC and an exclusive cooperation agreement with Südpack Medica AG. The first one concerns the mutual development of innovative fluid systems and marketing of single-use tubing produced by RAUMEDIC. The second one covers the development, manufacture and supply of polymer plastic films for the biopharmaceutical market. These strategic alliances allow SSB to continue offering his customers a real added value in the future.

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## FACTS & FIGURES

#### Facts & figures

- 4500 Life Science researchers, 1500 PhD students, approximately 400 Life Science companies (incl. 70 biotechnology);
- Nr 2 area in France for life science research, Nr 2 area for new business creation, Nr 2 area for clinical trials;
- Local resources: Eurobiomed biocluster, Cancéropôle (regional cancer center), CERIMED imaging platform, infectious diseases University Hospital Institute (IHU).

#### Fields of Excellence

- Infectious, tropical and emerging diseases;
- Rare and orphan diseases;
- Medical devices, biomarkers & diagnosis;
- Immunology & its therapeutic applications;
- Treatment and care in the fields of ageing, neurological diseases and handicaps.

In the area of medical devices, the main fields concerned are medical imaging (linked to Provence's expertise in optics-photonics), diagnostic, biomechanics, IT for healthcare and instrumentation.



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