

Technology Strategy Board

Driving Innovation

Press release

5 December 2011

£8.5 million grant funding to boost UK's regenerative medicine capabilities

Fourteen commercially-focused research and development projects that will lead to innovation in regenerative medicines are to benefit from nearly £8.5 million of government grant award funding.

Ten of the collaborative projects will address generic challenges in the development of cell based therapies, and will lead to demonstrators with commercial applicability. Four projects will engage in the development of regenerative medicine therapeutics.

The investment in the projects, part of the Technology Strategy Board managed £21.5 million Regenerative Medicine Programme, will see funding from the Technology Strategy Board, the Medical Research Council (MRC), the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

The news of funding for these projects comes on the day that the Prime Minister announces a range of measures to boost the UK's life sciences industry, including setting up a £180 million catalyst fund – to be managed by the Technology Strategy Board and the Medical Research Council – to speed-up the commercialisation of medical discoveries.

Iain Gray, Chief Executive of the Technology Strategy Board, said:

“The UK is a world leader in regenerative medicine, with a strong academic science base and a supportive clinical and regulatory environment. For UK businesses to fulfil their potential in this field, gaining a commercially competitive edge and exploiting promising discoveries, a number of development challenges need to be overcome. This is why we launched the Regenerative Medicine Programme, to underpin and enable the best regenerative medicine businesses in the UK and build a connected regenerative medicine community.”

The fourteen projects will be led by: Altrika Ltd, Asymptote Ltd, Cell Medica Ltd, CellSeed Europe Ltd, Cellzome Ltd, ImmunoSolv Ltd, Intercytex Ltd, Kirkstall Ltd, Lonza Biologics, Neotherix Ltd, Orthox Ltd, Plasticell Ltd, Stabilitech Ltd and TAP Biosystems.

The collaborative R&D projects include work that will develop:

- Stem cells treatments to repair corneal damage to the eye that can lead to blindness;
- Novel stem cell manufacturing technologies;

[RegenMed/results/NS/Dec11/AB](#)

- Cell labelling and tracking technologies for quality control and monitoring in the body;
- Novel "Cell-Sheet" therapy for the treatment of heart failure.

Regenerative medicine is an interdisciplinary approach that spans tissue engineering, developmental and stem cell biology, gene therapy, cellular therapeutics, biomaterials, nanoscience, bioengineering and chemical biology. Regenerative medicine has already provided significant medical advances in areas such as skin regeneration for burns patients, and it has the potential to go much further, with next-generation products offering cures or treatments with long-term benefits.

The funding awards follow successful applications by the consortia to two Technology Strategy Board competitions for research and development funding within the Regenerative Medicine Programme. The challenge set by the *Tools and Technologies* competition was to develop enabling platform tools and technologies to overcome key development challenges in safety and efficacy testing and the manufacturing of cell-based regenerative medicine therapeutics. The challenge of the Developing Therapeutics competition was to enable the preclinical and clinical development of previously identified therapeutic candidates (that can replace or regenerate human cells, tissues or organs to restore or establish normal function) to create regenerative products.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

1. The **Technology Strategy Board** is a business-led government body which works to create economic growth by ensuring that the UK is a global leader in 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: [Technology Strategy Board website](#).
2. The vision of the Technology Strategy Board is for the UK to be a global leader in innovation and a magnet for innovative businesses, where technology is applied rapidly, effectively and sustainably to create wealth and enhance quality of life. Our approach to accelerating the pace of innovation in the UK is captured in our strategy document, *Concept to Commercialisation*, published in May 2011. This builds on our first strategy, developed in 2008, and sets out new directions, taking into account the challenges and exciting opportunities that lie ahead. To see the new strategy please visit: [Concept to Commercialisation](#).
3. The Technology Strategy Board's [connect](#) platform provides an effective and powerful way to collaborate online, network and share knowledge with other innovators. It provides a place to work together securely and share information & knowledge. Users can utilise the online tools to work collaboratively, discuss ideas and find events. The networks offer up-to-the minute news on funding, events, articles and publications, plus information about all 16 Knowledge Transfer Networks. Through the networks, users can find potential business partners, entrepreneurs, collaborators, other innovators, researchers and academics.

4. For almost 100 years the Medical Research Council has improved the health of people in the UK and around the world by supporting the highest quality science. The MRC invests in world-class scientists. It has produced 29 Nobel Prize winners and sustains a flourishing environment for internationally recognised research. The MRC focuses on making an impact and provides the financial muscle and scientific expertise behind medical breakthroughs, including one of the first antibiotics penicillin, the structure of DNA and the lethal link between smoking and cancer. Today MRC funded scientists tackle research into the major health challenges of the 21st century. www.mrc.ac.uk
5. For background information about these competitions please visit: [RegenMed Tools and Technologies](#) and [RegenMed Developing Therapeutics 2](#).
6. The offer of funding is conditional and remains subject to the successful completion of Technology Strategy Board compliance and financial review processes and the processes of the other funding organisations. To view and/or download a list of all the projects please visit: [Regen Med project list](#).
7. The Technology Strategy Board is providing £5.87m of the funding while MRC, BBSRC and EPSRC are jointly providing funding of £2.61m.
8. Media enquiries **only** should be addressed to the Technology Strategy Board's media relations consultant or manager:
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9. Companies and other organisations seeking information about Technology Strategy Board funding competitions should visit the Competitions page of the Technology Strategy Board website – [Competitions page](#) , email competitions@innovateuk.org or phone the Competitions Helpline at 0300 321 4357.
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