

NextCell announces Eurostars grant for developing an innovative cell therapy production platform

NextCell Pharma AB (“NextCell” or the “Company”) announces today that the Company together with 3 partner organizations have been awarded a €1.6M Eurostars grant of which NextCell’s share is €470,000. The aim of the project entitled Bioscale, is to optimise automated bioreactors to manufacture the drug candidate ProTrans. The SCINUS expansion system presents cost-efficient cell culturing, designed for standardised cell therapy production, leading to improved quality consistency and reduced cost.

- NextCell has been granted €470,000 of a Eurostar grant totalling €1.6M. The total budget of the project is €2.7M.
- The Eurostar “Bioscale project” will run from 2020 to 2023 and involves cross-border collaborations with partners from the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, and Sweden.
- ProTrans, NextCell’s drug candidate based on the Company’s proprietary cell-selection algorithm, will be used to test and validate the capabilities of the SCINUS bioreactor to provide a method for cost-efficient cell therapy production.

“Our vision is to improve treatment options for thousands, maybe millions of patients and reducing healthcare costs with the aid of cell therapy.” Mathias Svahn, CEO of NextCell, adds, “the Bioscale project will provide the next step in production optimization and upscaling of ProTrans for the treatment of autoimmune diseases, initially focusing on type-1 diabetes.”

The Bioscale project

To address the need for efficient production platforms, the Eurostars project Bioscale has been defined and allocated a budget of €2.7M. The Eurostars programme supports innovative international projects led by R&D-performing SMEs and is co-funded by the Eurostars partner states and the EU (through Horizon 2020).

The Bioscale project focuses on the stem cell expansion technology, for cost-efficient cell culture. The project will use NextCell’s drug candidate ProTrans to test and validate the capabilities of the SCINUS bioreactor to provide a method for cost-efficient cell therapy production.

NextCell participates in this grant with a total allocable value of €940,398. Of which 50% will be covered by NextCell and the other 50% will be covered by Eurostars/Vinnova. Which means that NextCell is to receive approximately SEK 5M over the project period.

Partner contributions

NextCell (Sweden) uses a proprietary cell-selection algorithm based on functional and potency assays to achieve high-quality production of their MSC-based cell therapy, ProTrans, which is initially focused on type-1 diabetes. In this project, NextCell will integrate assays into the SCINUS workflow to optimise production of ProTrans and compare it to 2D culture.

Smart algorithms will be developed by MyCellHub (Belgium) to reduce operator involvement and enable regulatory-compliant scalable cell production and in-depth bio-analytics.

A new disposable culture container to grow non-adherent cells in suspension (a major cell therapy culture method) will be developed by Scinus Cell Expansion (Netherlands), together with novel integrated sensor technology. Scinus Cell Expansion will validate SCINUS suspension culture capability by producing non-adherent iPSCs (induced pluripotent stem cells).

Membrane filter technology allowing suspension culture will be developed by SEFAR (Switzerland) and incorporated into the suspension culture container.

This information is the information that NextCell Pharma AB is required to disclose under the EU Market Abuse Regulation. The information was provided by the below contact person for publication on 3rd of August 2020.

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About NextCell Pharma AB

NextCell is a Phase II cell therapy company with the lead candidate ProTrans™, for the treatment of type-1 diabetes. Focus is to take ProTrans™ to market approval via a phase III study. Furthermore, NextCell operates Cellaviva, Scandinavia's largest stem cell bank for family-saving of stem cells from umbilical cord blood and umbilical cord tissue with permission from IVO. FNCA Sweden AB is assigned as Certified Adviser, 08-528 00 399, info@fnca.se.