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Press Release

AMC BIO BETS ON A NEW GENERATION OF ANTIVIRAL MOLECULES AGAINST EMERGING VIRUSES

Press Release – October, 12th 2026



From left to right: Kenza BELHAJ, Prisca LAGARDÈRE, Chaker EL KALAMOUNI, Clément GRISEL, Sandy DESRAT, Susan FINSTON, Pascal NEUVILLE, Sébastien MAGNAVAL, Mathieu GUTMANN, Anna KOSTRZAK, Christian POLICARD.

On September 17, the teams of the CYCLOPE project, AMC Bio and SATT Paris-Saclay celebrated the signing of the technology transfer agreement for the CYCLOPE project to the Strasbourg-based company, following four years of maturation support. This represents a major investment for AMC Bio, at the heart of its next-generation host-targeted antiviral therapy strategy, and a key milestone for the development of this project. The industrial transfer will make it possible to complete the preclinical studies of a drug candidate intended to fight viruses that pose a growing threat to global health, such as dengue, Zika, chikungunya and West Nile virus.

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PROTECTING POPULATIONS AGAINST NEW EPIDEMIC RISKS

Today, the fight against positive-sense RNA (RNA+) arboviruses such as dengue, chikungunya, Zika and West Nile virus is a major public health challenge. Their rapid spread, driven by global warming, increasing urbanization and globalized transportation, all of which contribute to the expansion of mosquito vectors, together with their capacity for mutation, expose the world's population to an increasing number of infectious disease outbreaks that can lead to severe forms of disease. An estimated 3 billion people[1] are currently exposed to these emerging viruses. Yet no specific treatment for these diseases exists to date. The CYCLOPE project, focused on developing a single antiviral capable of acting against this broad range of viruses, offers the prospect of a major breakthrough.

RESEARCH AT THE INTERFACE OF CHEMISTRY AND VIROLOGY

The project originated from a meeting between two researchers with complementary expertise: **Sandy DESRAT**, a researcher in natural product chemistry at ICSN / CNRS[2] and **Chaker EL KALAMOUNI**, a faculty member in virology at the University of La Réunion and Deputy Director of the PIMIT unit[3]. In 2020, with the support of SATT AXLR, they launched a collaboration involving the screening of 800 plant extracts against Zika virus and identified a chemical space with promising antiviral properties. Drawing on the combined expertise of their teams, they designed a medicinal chemistry program as part of the CYCLOPE project. The project is built around an innovative approach: developing a single, versatile and accessible antiviral molecule capable of targeting several RNA+ viruses responsible for mosquito-borne viral diseases. Their strategy: targeting not the viral proteins, but a host cell mechanism essential to their replication, shared by several RNA viruses, thereby paving the way for the development of a new generation of broad-spectrum antivirals.

THE DECISIVE SUPPORT OF SATT PARIS-SACLAY

In 2022, the project entered a new phase of development when it was selected by SATT Paris-Saclay for maturation support under its Tech Transfer Program. The objective was to develop an orally administrable compound with characteristics compatible with future clinical development. The support of SATT Paris-Saclay made it possible to structure the maturation program, define the intellectual property strategy with the filing of several patent families, and fund the biological, pharmacokinetic and preclinical studies, while supporting the researchers in their commercialization strategy and their discussions with industrial partners.

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HEADING TOWARD INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH AMC BIO

In early 2025, the project team met the biopharmaceutical company AMC Bio, which specializes in the development of innovative therapies against viral diseases. The company took an interest in the CYCLOPE project for its pan-viral defense approach and its therapeutic prospects. For more than a year, researchers and industry partners collaborated, under the coordination of SATT Paris-Saclay, on the development of this molecule, which in the meantime had become the company's flagship program under the name AMC326. This co-maturation of the technology now continues with its transfer, granting AMC Bio exclusive worldwide rights to exploit the technology, a first step toward its future entry into clinical trials and subsequent commercialization.

"With CYCLOPE, AMC Bio has the opportunity to turn a promising academic discovery into an effective treatment. Our goal now is to carry out the full development of the molecule to meet the needs of the hundreds of millions of patients awaiting therapies", **says Susan FINSTON, President of AMC Bio**, *"We will focus our efforts on advancing preclinical development and building the dossier required for its entry into the clinic. At the heart of the next steps: in-depth characterization of the candidate's pharmacokinetic and safety profile, generation of proof-of-concept data in several infectious diseases models, and implementation of the chemical manufacturing strategy"*.

"We are particularly proud of the trust placed in SATT Paris-Saclay by all the academic partners behind this ambitious project: CNRS, Inserm, IRD, University of La Réunion and Université Paris-Saclay", **says Kenza BELHAJ**, **Director of Investments for Life Sciences Division**, **SATT Paris-Saclay**, *"the CYCLOPE project perfectly illustrates the strength of collaboration between academic teams with complementary expertise. It also reflects the SATT's growing commitment to developing innovations with strong societal impact."*

"Today, its industrial transfer to AMC Bio marks the beginning of a new story", **adds Mathieu GUTMANN**, **Project Manager of the CYCLOPE program at the SATT Paris-Saclay**, *"We wish the company every success in this exciting adventure ahead."*

[1] Source: WHO
[2] Institut de Chimie des Substances Naturelles (ICSN – Institute of Natural Products Chemistry), UPR 2301, CNRS / Université Paris-Saclay
[3] Processus Infectieux en Milieu Insulaire Tropical (PIMIT – Infectious Processes in Tropical Island Environments) / INSERM, CNRS, IRD

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ABOUT AMC BIO

Founded in late 2024 in Strasbourg, France, AMC Bio is a biopharmaceutical company developing innovative broad-spectrum therapies for viral diseases. The company's approach is based on host-directed antiviral mechanisms, targeting cellular processes that viruses rely on for their replication rather than directly targeting viral proteins. This strategy is designed to enable broad-spectrum activity across multiple RNA viruses and may reduce the risk of resistance associated with mutations in viral targets. AMC Bio's lead program, AMC326, is a synthetic cyclopeptide currently advancing through preclinical development. AMC326 has demonstrated antiviral activity against multiple RNA viruses, including dengue, Zika, chikungunya, West Nile virus, respiratory syncytial virus and Ross River virus. AMC Bio collaborates with leading partners such as the PIMIT research unit in la Réunion, the ICSN in Gif-sur-Yvette, Professor Edouard TUAILLON's laboratory and the CEMIPAI platform in Montpellier. Through this network of academic partners, AMC Bio combines expertise in virology, chemistry, , infectious diseases, and translational research to advance its innovative antiviral candidates toward the clinic. AMC Bio is supported by Bpifrance, Quest for Health, and Alsace BioValley.
https://amc-bio.com

ABOUT SATT PARIS-SACLAY

SATT Paris-Saclay, backed by its shareholders (Université Paris-Saclay, CNRS, Institut Polytechnique de Paris and Bpifrance), enhances the competitiveness of companies through innovation by commercializing the technologies, skills and expertise of the 16,000 researchers in the 300 laboratories of the Paris-Saclay Cluster. Its core business is the maturation of innovations from a technological, legal and economic standpoint. SATT Paris-Saclay works closely with companies to carry out co-developed maturation projects and to develop innovation services. It offers industry licenses to exploit the matured technologies. SATT Paris-Saclay is a member of the SATT Network.
Learn more: www.satt-paris-saclay.fr
Since 2014: €66M invested in technology transfer - more than 187 innovative projects funded - 44 start-ups created

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