

Press release - Biogazelle receives €1.1M IWT funding to develop lncRNA targeting cancer therapies

Belgium — August 12, 2015 — Biogazelle today announced that it has received €1.1M in funding from the agency for Innovation by Science and Technology (IWT) in Flanders to leverage its cancer therapy development program, focused on silencing long non-coding RNAs (lncRNAs). Last year, Biogazelle initiated the development of lncRNA-targeting therapies in colon, liver and lung cancer.

CEO and co-founder Jan Hellemans explains the synergy of Biogazelle's therapeutic program with its expertise in RNA expression profiling: "Biogazelle has been at the forefront of understanding the human transcriptome. Exploiting these insights in order to manipulate the transcriptome to treat diseases is a logical step for the company. We believe we have a promising and unexplored perspective to tackle some of the big unmet clinical needs in cancer treatment."

CSO and co-founder Jo Vandesompele emphasizes the large potential of targeting RNA molecules for cancer treatment: "RNA targeted therapy is one of the most promising therapeutic modalities emerging. We have successfully tested various RNA silencing technologies to inhibit lncRNAs. While still early days, targeting lncRNAs as anti-cancer therapy has shown promise in the scientific literature."

Vandesompele also comments on the company's focus on lncRNAs: "Biogazelle always had a special interest in the non-coding part of our transcriptome. Many non-coding RNA genes now appear to play an important role in various diseases. To better understand this, we have developed LNCarta, a proprietary database with predicted lncRNA functions. The time is right to deploy that knowhow. Further, unlike protein-coding mRNAs, lncRNAs have many features that make them excellent therapeutic targets. Their remarkable cell type specific expression is just one example, which helps in developing safe treatments with minimal side effects."

Biogazelle's cancer therapeutic program started last year with a €2M investment (see <http://bgzlle.com/1sVQfEJ>) and the establishment of a new research infrastructure and multidisciplinary research team. The facility includes a state-of-the-art cell culture and functional genomics platform.

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