

Interreg Codex4SMEs project – European meeting for personalised health care provision

## **Companion diagnostics – big help for small companies**

**(Stuttgart) – The advisory committee of the Codex4SMEs project met in September 2021. Due to the pandemic, the participants from Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland and Germany held the meeting remotely. As the German consortium leader, BioRegio STERN Management GmbH had invited to the session to present the results and opportunities delivered by the project, which has been promoting the building of a transnational network since 2017. The aim is to accelerate the development of companion diagnostics along the entire value chain of small and medium-sized enterprises.**

In personalised medicine, a patient's profile is compiled using certain biomarkers. The development of specific therapies is accompanied by diagnostic tests, known as companion diagnostics. As a result, patients receive targeted treatment that is tailored precisely to their bodies. However, developing these companion diagnostics has so far been a very expensive and time-consuming process. As part of the Codex4SMEs (companion diagnostics expedited for small and medium-sized enterprises) project, a network of partners from several European countries was established to support small and medium-sized companies in developing solutions for personalised medicine. They receive exclusive access to cost-intensive services and expertise that they would not be able to finance on their own. "Identifying and evaluating biomarkers plays a vital part in personalised medicine," explains project manager Dr. Margot Jehle from BioRegio STERN Management GmbH. "Thanks to Codex4SMEs, these companies can now have their respective biomarkers validated by a biobank – in other words, have their reliability with regard to their relevant indication tested."

Since the start of the project in 2017, some 275 companies from 13 European countries have already taken part in the programme. Pitch events were organised to help

them find new investors and cooperation partners from the pharmaceutical sector. Furthermore, companies were able to utilise tailored market analysis services with a particular focus on diagnostics and pharmaceuticals. Eleven companies used the opportunity to receive human sample materials via the biobank involved in the project. As a result, they gained valuable insights for their research. Beneficiaries included Dr. Michael Burnet, Managing Director of Synovo GmbH, a pharmaceutical research company based in Tübingen, Germany. Dr. Eriola-Sophia Shanko, founder and CEO of Shanx Medtech BV from Eindhoven, Netherlands, which develops equipment for testing the effectiveness of antibiotics, took up the offer to join a pitch training event and met valuable cooperation partners as a result. Mimetas B.V., a biotech company from Oegstgeest, Netherlands, that is developing an “Organ-on-a-Chip platform”, got the opportunity to receive training from independent experts in the field of biobanking. Diagnostics manufacturer Mediagnost GmbH, from Reutlingen, Germany, gained a huge advantage from participating in Codex4SMEs by using independent, objective data with the help of the biobank validation, which enabled the company to advance its own in-house project development. Shannon Beattie, COO of GenoME Diagnostics from Belfast, United Kingdom, is developing a blood test with DNA technology that could diagnose ovarian cancer at an early stage, for example. She received the opportunity to conduct comprehensive, in-depth market analyses for her company. Enrico Di Oto, CEO of OaCP LTD from Cork, Republic of Ireland, is aiming to cut the cost of laboratory diagnostics. Thanks to a pitch event, the company was able to find investors.

“These success stories from the CEOs of small and medium-sized enterprises from all over Europe confirm that Codex4SMEs provides a huge amount of help in achieving our common goal of providing patients with companion diagnostics faster and more cost-effectively,” said Dr. Jehle. After the meeting, the partners involved were therefore in agreement that the successful project should find an appropriate way of continuing.

The project has been given a total budget of EUR 3.18 million as part of the Interreg North-West Europe Programme (INTERREG NWE), and will run until the end of 2021. “Interreg” is part of the European Union’s structural and investment policy, which supports cross-border cooperation between regions and cities.

**Link to the Codex4SMEs website:**

<https://t1p.de/Codex4SMEs>



**About BioRegio STERN Management GmbH:**

BioRegio STERN Management GmbH promotes economic development in the life sciences industry, helping to strengthen the region as a business location by supporting innovations and start-up companies in the public interest. It is the main point of contact for company founders and entrepreneurs in the Stuttgart and Neckar-Alb regions, including the cities of Tübingen and Reutlingen.

The STERN BioRegion is one of the largest and most successful bioregions in Germany. Its unique selling points include a mix of biotech and medtech companies that is outstanding in Germany and regional clusters in the fields of automation technology and mechanical engineering.

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