



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Axxam and the NEOMED Institute to Collaborate on the Discovery and Development of a Novel Drug to Treat Metabolic Diseases

Montreal (Canada) and Milan (Italy) – February 18, 2016 – Axxam SpA, a leading discovery company with expertise in target biology and a broad range of early phase discovery solutions and NEOMED Institute, a public-private organization dedicated to drug discovery and the development of therapeutics up to human proof of concept, announced today that they have entered into a strategic drug discovery partnership. The aim of the collaboration is to identify and develop novel small molecule agonists of FFA4 (also known as GPR120) linked to a range of metabolic and inflammatory diseases. Several preclinical studies and human genetics data support the development of a GPR120 agonist as a highly differentiated treatment of diabetes with potential to impact a number of parameters, including protection of the pancreatic β -cells.

The collaboration will be based around the optimization of classes of molecules discovered using Axxam's High Throughput Screening platform and the AXX^{DIV2.0} compound library. Under the terms of the collaboration, Axxam and NEOMED will integrate their efforts to generate clinical candidates to be developed further to demonstrate clinical proof of concept.

Russell Thomas, Director of Discovery Research at Axxam, commented: "We are very happy to initiate a strategically important collaboration with NEOMED Institute. We are confident that the combination of platforms and expertise of the two organizations will be key in progressing this innovative project in an area of high unmet medical need. This alliance is the latest example of Axxam's strategic goal of building long-standing Discovery alliances with world-class research organizations."

Philippe Walker, Chief Scientific Officer at the NEOMED Institute, added, "We are thrilled to have solidified a new partnership with a top-quality international research company like Axxam. We look forward to accelerating the delivery of credible drug candidates for this important target to bring innovative therapeutic solutions to metabolic and inflammatory diseases. We believe that this project will benefit from the strengths of Montreal academic laboratories and research centres in the field of metabolic disorders and diabetes."

About the NEOMED Institute (<http://neomed.ca/>)

The NEOMED Institute is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to create a bridge between basic research and the commercialization of new drugs by providing industrial expertise in drug discovery and development, combined with funding and a favourable ecosystem, to transform innovations into solid therapeutic solutions. NEOMED drives drug discovery activities up to the stage of human proof of concept.



The NEOMED Institute has two fully integrated research and development facilities: one in Technoparc Montréal's Saint-Laurent Campus, specializing in small molecule therapeutics, and the other facility, specializing in the development of biologics and vaccines, in Laval. Both facilities function as open-access drug discovery hubs housing independent commercial businesses and providing a dynamic environment that stimulates collaboration, innovation, and creativity.

The NEOMED Institute is jointly funded by the pharmaceutical industry, the *Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et des Exportations du Québec*, and the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) of Canada.

About Axxam SpA (www.axxam.com)

Axxam SpA is a privately owned research partnership company located at the Science Park Openzone in Bresso (Milan, Italy). Axxam is a leading provider of integrated discovery services for the entire Life Sciences industries including: Pharmaceutical, Crop Protection, Animal Health, Cosmetics and Nutrition. Axxam has a consolidated expertise spanning a broad range of discovery disciplines and innovative technologies, including: assay development, compound management, HTS, hit identification and hit validation.

Axxam is also engaged in developing, through partnerships with worldwide centers of excellence, novel innovative therapies for diseases with a high unmet medical need.

For more information about Axxam, or to speak with Dr. Thomas, please contact Sabrina Corazza at +39 02 2105634 or sabrina.corazza.sc@axxam.com.

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