



## **Sixth Element Capital and Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute Announce Major Collaboration to Develop Novel RAS Inhibitors**

### ***Innovative approach for hard-to-treat cancers being developed at the Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute***

**Cambridge UK, 24 October 2019** – Sixth Element Capital LLP (6EC), a UK based fund manager established to manage investments for the £70 million CRT Pioneer Fund (CPF), and the Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute announce a multi-year agreement with Novartis to progress development of novel RAS inhibitors, discovered by the Institute’s Drug Discovery Unit for hard to treat cancers. Under the terms of the agreement, Novartis will collaborate with the Beatson team to further develop the RAS inhibitors and has the option to exclusively license compounds identified through the collaboration. Novartis is making an upfront payment to CPF and funding for research at the Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute. In addition, CPF is eligible to receive milestone payments and single digit royalties for successfully marketed projects from the collaboration.

More than 30% of all human cancers, including 95% of pancreatic cancers and 45% of colorectal cancers, are driven by mutations of the RAS family of genes. However, over the past 30 years, it has not proved possible to find a direct pharmacological approach to target RAS that has yielded a drug. Scientists at the Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute, supported by Cancer Research UK, have been pursuing a highly structure-based design approach to discover small molecules that will directly disrupt RAS activity.

**Dr Robert James, Managing Partner of Sixth Element Capital, said:** *“This agreement with Novartis is validation of the Beatson team’s excellent science and innovative approach to hard to treat cancers, such as pancreatic and lung cancer. This very exciting and differentiated approach sits well with our strategy of funding innovative science in order to bring new therapeutic products and technologies to market, improving the care and lives of cancer patients.”*

**Professor Justin Bower and Dr Heather McKinnon, Joint Heads of Drug Discovery at the Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute, said:** *“By working at the Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute, the Drug Discovery Unit has been able to tackle one of the most challenging but profoundly important targets in cancer biology today. We are extremely excited to be collaborating with Novartis to take forward this highly successful RAS inhibitor project and translate our research and knowledge to the benefit of patients worldwide.”*

**Tony Hickson, Cancer Research UK’s chief business officer, added:** *“This international collaboration and investment is timely given the renewed recent interest in targeting RAS. We hope to develop these small molecules to pave the way for new treatment options for patients with hard-to-treat cancers. Access to the substantial resources and technical expertise of Novartis will help accelerate this vital research into the clinic.”*

**ENDS**

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### **About Sixth Element Capital LLP and the CRT Pioneer Fund**

Sixth Element Capital LLP (6EC) is a UK based fund manager, which manages the CRT Pioneer Fund. 6EC's experienced partners focus on creative and collaborative novel financing solutions designed to fund and manage innovative science in order to bring new therapeutic products and technologies to market, creating long term value and benefit to stakeholders. The CRT Pioneer Fund is a specialist oncology investment fund established by 6EC in 2012. The £70 million fund is dedicated to investments in oncology development programmes in Europe. The fund was established to bridge the investment gap between cancer drug discovery and early clinical development. For more information, please see [www.sixthelementcapital.com](http://www.sixthelementcapital.com).

### **About Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute**

The Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute in Glasgow, directed by Professor Owen Sansom, is one of Europe's leading cancer research centres, supporting cutting-edge work into the molecular mechanisms of cancer development. As well as core support from Cancer Research UK, the Institute also receives an additional third of its total income (£28m in 2018/19) from external grants and industry collaborations. The Beatson has an excellent reputation for fundamental cancer research, including world-class metabolism studies and renowned in vivo modelling of tumour growth and metastasis. Its Drug Discovery Unit, headed by Justin Bower and Heather McKinnon, is central to its mission to apply cancer discovery for patient benefit. [www.beatson.gla.ac.uk](http://www.beatson.gla.ac.uk).

### **About Cancer Research UK's Commercial Partnerships Team**

Our specialist Commercial Partnerships Team works with leading international cancer scientists and their institutes to protect intellectual property arising from their research and to establish links with commercial partners. The team develop promising ideas into successful cancer therapeutics, software, devices, diagnostics and enabling technologies. This helps to accelerate progress in exciting new discoveries in cancer research and bring new treatments to patients sooner. Visit <http://commercial.cancerresearchuk.org/>