

## **Azeria Therapeutics, the world's first pioneer factor drug discovery company, announces Series A investment from Sixth Element Capital**

**4 September 2018, Cambridge, UK** – Azeria Therapeutics Limited, a newly formed drug discovery company, today announced that it has successfully raised £4 million in Series A fundraising from the £70 million CRT Pioneer Fund, managed by Sixth Element Capital LLP (6EC), a UK based fund manager.

Azeria, a spin out created by Sixth Element Capital and Cancer Research UK's commercial partnerships team, is the world's first pioneer factor drug discovery company developing breakthrough treatments for hormone resistant breast and prostate cancer patients, where there are significant areas of unmet clinical need. The investment will be used to build on the discoveries made by founder Dr Jason Carroll, a world leading expert in pioneer factors in cancer at his lab at the Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute at the University of Cambridge.

Using its proprietary drug screening platform, Azeria is developing a pipeline of small molecules designed to selectively inhibit pioneer factors. Azeria is initially targeting the essential pioneer factor FOXA1, which has shown to be pivotal in the tumor development and maintenance of estrogen-receptor (ER) positive luminal breast cancer and is also thought to be critical in the development of prostate cancer.

**Stephen Myatt, Chief Executive Officer of Azeria Therapeutics and Partner of Sixth Element Capital said:** "Azeria is the product of more than 10 years of research by Dr Jason Carroll. Using the insights from this foundational research we aim to deliver therapies against pioneer factors, a completely new target class in oncology, which have a fundamental role in disease biology. We are now seeking to advance this innovative research rapidly towards clinical trials."

**Dr Jason Carroll, Founder and Chief Scientific Officer of Azeria Therapeutics added:** "Estrogen receptors are the driving and defining transcription factor in 75% of breast cancers. Our research has shown for the first time that DNA interactions and transcriptional potential of ER depend on the pioneer factor FOXA1, which plays an essential role in determining tumor growth and progression even when resistance to existing drugs has developed. Through the application of our unique insights into pioneer factors, we aim to identify inhibitors against this novel class of drug targets in cancer, which until now have been considered undruggable."

**Dr Rob James, Chairman of Azeria Therapeutics, and Managing Partner of Sixth Element Capital said:** "We are delighted to support the launch of Azeria and the work of Jason and his research group. This is one of the most exciting and differentiated approaches we have seen to treating breast and prostate cancer and 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. Azeria was created to accelerate research and development into pioneer factor FOXA1 and translate this to clinical application. Sixth Element looks forward to supporting its continued growth."



**Dr Iain Foulkes, Cancer Research UK's executive director of research and innovation, said:** "We're delighted to be involved in the formation of this exciting new company. We're committed to helping translate the ground breaking discoveries arising from Cancer Research UK's research base into urgently needed new treatments for patients with cancer and we're happy to provide support to Dr Carroll to help get this project off the ground.

"Researchers are only just beginning to understand the mechanisms that underpin drug resistance in cancer and it's exciting to see pioneering research by Cancer Research UK scientists being used to develop treatments to help tackle this widespread problem."

**- ENDS -**

**For further information:**

**Optimum Strategic Communications**

Mary Clark, Hollie Vile, Eva Haas

Tel: +44 203 714 1787

healthcare@optimumcomms.com

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Azeria Therapeutics**

Azeria Therapeutics is the world's first pioneer factor drug discovery company developing breakthrough treatments for hormone resistant breast and prostate cancer patients where there are significant areas of unmet clinical need.

Founded in 2017 by the leading expert in pioneer factors in cancer, Dr Jason Carroll, Azeria is using its proprietary drug screening platform to develop a pipeline of small molecules designed to selectively inhibit pioneer factors.

Azeria is initially targeting the essential pioneer factor FOXA1, which has shown to be pivotal in the tumour development and maintenance of Estrogen receptor (ER) positive luminal breast cancer and is also thought to be critical in the development of prostate cancer.

Based in Cambridge, Azeria successfully raised £4 million in a Series A financing in 2018, provided by specialist oncology investment fund, the CRT Pioneer Fund, managed by Sixth Element Capital.

<https://www.azeriatherapeutics.com>

**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. To date the Fund has made twelve oncology drug investments.

For more information, please see <http://www.sixthelementcapital.com>.

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

Cancer Research UK is the world's leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research. Our specialist Commercial Partnerships Team work closely 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. <http://commercial.cancerresearchuk.org/>

Cancer Research UK's commercial activity operates through Cancer Research Technology Ltd. (CRT), a wholly owned subsidiary of Cancer Research UK. It is the legal entity which pursues drug discovery research in themed alliance partnerships and delivers varied commercial partnering arrangements.

### **About Cancer Research UK**

- Cancer Research UK is the world's leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research.
- Cancer Research UK's pioneering work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has helped save millions of lives.
- Cancer Research UK receives no funding from the UK government for its life-saving research. Every step it makes towards beating cancer relies on vital donations from the public.
- Cancer Research UK has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival in the UK double in the last 40 years.
- Today, 2 in 4 people survive their cancer for at least 10 years. Cancer Research UK's ambition is to accelerate progress so that by 2034, 3 in 4 people will survive their cancer for at least 10 years.
- Cancer Research UK supports research into all aspects of cancer through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses.
- Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research UK's vision is to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured.

*For further information about Cancer Research UK's work or to find out how to support the charity, please call 0300 123 1022 or visit [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*