

**Strict Embargo: 00:01hrs UK**

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## **CRT PIONEER FUND COLLABORATES WITH CHROMA THERAPEUTICS TO DEVELOP CANCER DRUGS TARGETING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM**

THE CANCER RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY PIONEER FUND (CPF) has announced a collaboration with Chroma Therapeutics Ltd to develop cancer drugs targeting macrophages – white blood cells – associated with tumours (today, Thursday).

This investment by the CPF will accelerate the development of a promising ‘lead’ molecule – taking it from the laboratory into clinical trials for patients.

Chroma has licensed to CPF the rights to further develop and commercialise molecules to target a key mitogen activated protein kinase (p38). Inhibiting p38 activity alters the behaviour of tumour-associated macrophages (TAMs) so that instead of driving tumour growth, the TAMs switch to destroying tumours.

Richard Bungay, chief executive of Chroma, said: “Immuno-modulation is an exciting new field of cancer research and we are delighted to be working with CPF in order to accelerate the evaluation of the unique ability of our ESM technology to target key immune system cells as a new therapeutic approach.”

The molecules have been modified to accumulate inside myeloid cells (blood cells) using Chroma’s own Esterase Sensitive Motif (ESM) technology. This technology attaches specific chemical motifs onto drugs, which are freely transported into cells. Once inside the cell, enzymes called esterases remove the motifs to create a compound that cannot easily exit the cell. Over time, the drug accumulates in TAMs, and reprogrammes them to attack tumours.

This is the third investment made by the CPF. It builds on initial research funded by Cancer Research UK and CRT led by Dr Thorsten Hagemann, at Queen Mary University of London, Barts Cancer Institute. This early research proved that the lead molecule, which was designed and synthesised by Chroma, can effectively switch macrophage behaviour to attack a range of cancer types, including lymphoma and pancreatic tumours in laboratory and animal studies.

Cancer Research Technology (CRT), Cancer Research UK's commercial arm, and the European Investment Fund (EIF) launched the £50m CPF to bridge the UK funding gap between cancer drug discovery and early treatment development and appointed Sixth Element Capital to manage the fund.

Dr Robert James, managing partner of Sixth Element Capital, said: "We're delighted to announce this collaboration between the CPF and Chroma to progress an innovative new approach to develop cancer drugs. CPF was set up to invest in the most exciting science behind new potential techniques to treat cancer, such as this."

Dr Keith Blundy, chief executive of Cancer Research Technology, said: "We're extremely pleased to announce this innovative partnership, which will take forward the work done by Cancer Research UK-funded scientists and Chroma from the laboratory into clinical trials. Ultimately we hope this collaboration will produce potential new cancer drugs to improve survival for cancer patients."

**ENDS**

For media enquiries contact Emma Rigby in the Cancer Research UK press office on 020 3469 8352 or, out of hours, on 07050 264 059. Contact Dr Richard Bungay, Chroma Therapeutics on 01235 829 137.

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

Sixth Element Capital is a fund management business, which has been established to identify investment gaps initially in healthcare markets and to implement novel solutions to bring

finance and innovation together. Sixth Element Capital LLP is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

The first fund managed by Sixth Element Capital is the CRT Pioneer Fund. This £50m fund has been established with Cancer Research Technology (CRT) and the European Investment Fund (EIF) to bridge the investment gap between cancer drug discovery and early development. It will take potential cancer drugs, primarily discovered by Cancer Research UK, from discovery through to entry to Phase II clinical trials before partnering with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. CRT and the EIF are making equal contributions to the CRT Pioneer Fund. For more information please visit [www.sixthelementcapital.com](http://www.sixthelementcapital.com).

### **About EIF**

EIF's central mission is to support Europe's micro, small and medium sized enterprises by helping them to access finance. EIF designs and develops venture and growth capital and guarantees instruments which specifically target this market segment. EIF has a crucial role to play throughout the value chain of enterprise creation, from the earliest stages of intellectual property development to mid and later stage SMEs. EIF fosters EU objectives in support of innovation, research and regional development, entrepreneurship, growth, and employment. At the end of 2012, EIF has committed EUR 6.9bn in over 430 venture and growth capital funds.

### **About Chroma Therapeutics Ltd.**

Chroma Therapeutics, based in Oxford (UK), is a drug development company focused in the fields of oncology and inflammatory disorders. Chroma is building a broad pipeline of first - or best-in-class treatments utilising its expertise in chromatin biology and its novel intracellular accumulation technologies, which include the ability to selectively target drugs to macrophages. Chroma is backed by a number of leading specialist investors, including Abingworth, Essex Woodlands, Gilde, Phase4 and The Wellcome Trust. More information about Chroma can be found at [www.chromatherapeutics.com](http://www.chromatherapeutics.com)

### **About Cancer Research Technology**

Cancer Research Technology (CRT) is a specialist commercialisation and development company, which aims to develop new discoveries in cancer research for the benefit of cancer patients. CRT works closely with leading international cancer scientists and their institutes to protect intellectual property arising from their research and to establish links with commercial partners. CRT facilitates the discovery, development and marketing of new cancer therapeutics, vaccines, diagnostics and enabling technologies. CRT is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cancer Research UK, the world's leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research. Further information about CRT can be found at [www.cancertechnology.com](http://www.cancertechnology.com)

### **About Cancer Research UK**

- Cancer Research UK is the world's leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research
- The charity's groundbreaking work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has helped save millions of lives. This work is funded entirely by the public.
- Cancer Research UK has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival rates in the UK double in the last forty 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 beat cancer.

For further information about Cancer Research UK's work or to find out how to support the charity, please call 0300 123 1861 or visit [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)