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Ono and Galapagos subsidiary BioFocus sign target discovery agreement in the field of autoimmune disease

Ono Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. (Osaka Japan) and BioFocus (Saffron Walden UK) announced today that they have signed a collaboration agreement, focused on discovering novel targets in the field of autoimmune disease. Under the agreement, BioFocus will receive research funding and success payments based on the progress of the collaboration. BioFocus will utilize its unique SilenceSelect® target discovery platform to deliver validated targets for Ono's immunology programs. Ono aims to find modulators for these targets and generate novel and innovative drug candidates.

"We are delighted to enter into this target discovery collaboration with Ono," said Dr Chris Newton, SVP Galapagos Services and Managing Director BioFocus. "This agreement again demonstrates our unique position in the target discovery arena to produce valuable additions to our clients' early discovery pipeline".

Kazuhito Kawabata, Ph.D., Managing Director, Research Headquarters at Ono commented: "We highly appreciate BioFocus' target discovery platform. We believe this collaboration will lead to the identification of novel drug targets, that will form the basis to generate unique and innovative drugs in the field of autoimmune disease, an area with significant unmet medical needs."

About BioFocus

BioFocus aims to expand its partners' drug pipelines by accelerating the gene-to-drug candidate discovery process. This is achieved through a comprehensive discovery platform, which includes target discovery in human primary cells, focused as well as diverse compound libraries, in vitro and cell-based screening, structural biology, medicinal chemistry, ADME/PK services, supported by unique chemogenomic and informatics tools. As a service division of Galapagos, BioFocus has over 250 employees based in the UK, the US and Switzerland. More info at: www.biofocus.com

SilenceSelect®

SilenceSelect® is platform technology which utilizes human primary cell assays with ribonucleic acid (RNA) interference (RNAi) through proprietary adenoviral technology to find novel targets. RNAi is a technology that controls the activity of specific genes by introducing small double-stranded RNA fragments into cells. Protein expression from a specific gene is suppressed by the introduction of these artificial RNAs which allows complex functional studies on the protein's role in a specific disease pathway to be performed. BioFocus employs the unique properties of adenoviruses to apply RNAi in human primary cells.

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