

NEWS RELEASE

CQDM and Epitopea Fund the Development and Validation of CryptoMap™, a Platform Enabling the Development of RNA-based Immunotherapies

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MONTREAL, Sept. 26, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Epitopea, a transatlantic cancer immunotherapy company, and CQDM are proud to announce the launch of a collaborative research project between Epitopea and Université de Montréal (UdeM), a leading Canadian research institution renowned for scientific innovation and technology transfer. Together, they will examine the feasibility of developing new immunotherapies to effectively treat patients with lung and ovarian cancers. This collaborative program was made possible by a grant of Canadian \$1,499,457 from the government of Quebec.

CryptoMap™ is a platform resulting from the work of Professors Claude Perreault and Pierre Thibault at the Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer (IRIC) of UdeM. This platform has already allowed identification of non-mutated tumor antigens, uniquely expressed by cancer cells present in patients with the same type of cancer, called Cryptigens™. During this project, novel Cryptigen™ sets will be identified from patients with diverse origins enabling the creation of universal RNA-coding cancer vaccines targeting this new class of antigens. Epitopea will validate this unique approach to stimulate the immune system to precisely recognize and destroy cancer cells more rapidly and effectively.

This project has the potential to 'unveil' an unprecedented collection of Cryptigens™, an approach that distinguishes Epitopea from other cancer vaccine companies. Based on these data, Epitopea will be positioned to develop new RNA-based immunotherapies from this vast collection of patients samples and advance these innovative products into clinical trials. Epitopea's mission aligns perfectly with Quebec's initiatives to develop expertise in the field of RNA vaccines, as was highlighted in the recent AReNA announcement, Quebec's new RNA

cluster, which aims to position Quebec as a leader in RNA-based therapies(1).

"Our government is pleased to support CQDM's initiative to facilitate research into new RNA-targeting therapies for the treatment of various forms of cancer. Québec is a global centre for innovation in the life sciences, and we remain committed to pushing forward on behalf of all Quebecers who are affected by cancer in one way or another," said Christine Fréchette, Minister of the Economy, Innovation and Energy, Minister responsible for Regional Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Greater Montreal Area.

"We are very pleased to partner with CQDM, UdeM, and our scientific co-founders, Drs. Perreault and Thibault to further extend the patient population that could potentially benefit from Epitopea's transformative approach to treating cancer," commented Epitopea's CEO, Alan C. Rigby. "Epitopea will initially deploy these CryptigensTM in an off-the-shelf cancer vaccine approach, which we believe offers significant competitive advantages over personalized cancer vaccines being developed by many other organizations in the RNA immunotherapy ecosystem. Thanks to its refined versatility, we believe that the CryptoMapTM platform developed at UdeM could be applied to a wide range of tumor types, positively impacting patient responses in Quebec and across the globe."

"CQDM is proud to support a project that could transform the lives of cancer patients by providing accessible and effective RNA therapeutic solutions for difficult-to-treat diseases. This innovative collaboration between the Université de Montréal and Epitopea illustrates Quebec's dynamism as a world leader in immunotherapy research. Not only will this project strengthen our understanding of cancer treatments, it will also position Quebec as a key player in the global vaccine and RNA therapy industry," said Diane Gosselin, President and CEO of CQDM.

Reference:

(1) <https://cqdm.org/en/2024/06/05/quebec-launches-area-to-become-a-global-leader-in-rna-therapies/>

About CQDM

Biopharma innovation facilitator

CQDM is a not-for-profit biopharmaceutical research consortium whose mission is to support and facilitate multi-stakeholder collaborative research and development aimed at accelerating the translation or transformation of innovative technologies into solutions for unmet medical needs, while generating significant spin-offs for the Quebec and Canadian economies. For more information, visit cqdm.org/ and join us on Twitter/X [@CQDM_Canada](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About Epitopea

Epitopea is a transatlantic cancer immunotherapeutics company developing accessible off-the-shelf RNA-based immunotherapies for use in hard-to-treat cancers by targeting a new class of untapped tumor-specific antigens, which are known as CryptigenTM TSAs, that are broadly shared across multiple patients with the same tumor type.

The company has created an extensive library of novel CryptigenTM TSAs, discovered by its proprietary CryptoMapTM platform that leverages immunopeptidomics, genomics, and a bioinformatics pipeline, allowing the identification of aberrantly-expressed, tumour-specific antigens (aeTSA's) that are hidden within cancer's 'junk' DNA. These hidden CryptigenTM TSAs were first discovered through research led by Drs. Claude Perreault and Pierre Thibault at the Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer at the Université de Montréal.

Epitopea is backed by leading transatlantic life science investors including Advent Life Sciences, CTI Life Sciences, Cambridge Innovation Capital, Le Fonds de Solidarité FTQ, the Harrington Discovery Institute, Novateur Ventures, and Investissement Québec. The company has raised financing of more than \$13 Million USD. Epitopea was founded in 2021 and consists of sister companies based in Cambridge, UK and in Montreal, Canada. For additional information, please visit www.epitopea.com/ and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

About Université de Montréal

Deeply rooted in Montreal and dedicated to its international mission, Université de Montréal is a leading research university worldwide and among the five best French-language universities. With its affiliated schools, Polytechnique Montréal and HEC Montréal, UdeM attracts over \$650 million in research funding every year, making it one of Canada's top university research hubs. UdeM has over 67,000 students, 2,300 professors and researchers, and an active global network of 450,000 alumni. For additional information, please visit: umontreal.ca/

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