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For immediate release

INCATE selects first innovators to support in the fight against drug-resistant bacterial infections

More than a million people die because of antimicrobial resistance each year and new approaches to combat resistant bacteria are therefore urgently needed. INCATE (INCubator for Antibacterial Therapies in Europe) is a new initiative that supports early-stage innovators in this fight against drug-resistant bacterial infections. It has selected four ventures to receive cash and advice to support their development of novel antibiotic therapies.

The ventures selected by a committee of industry, scientific and entrepreneurial experts will receive up to 10k Euros and importantly will get continuing advice and other support to develop their businesses.

The ventures are;

- [VIRI](#) – a company developing an anti-virulence molecule with a dual mode of action for Gram-negative bacteria
- [INVITRIS](#) – a company with a Phage “Phactory” to bring scalability to the promising field of Phages
- [Smartbax](#) – a seed funded company developing small molecule antibiotics with a multi-target mode of action
- [Myxobiotics](#) – a spin-off from the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI) with a natural product inspired molecule targeting Carbapenem-resistant *A. baumannii* (CRAB) infections

INCATE launched in August 2021 and began to work supporting founder teams and start-ups, this is the first non-dilutive investment made to help build the pipeline of therapies and diagnostics.

Improving the pipeline

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is the ability of pathogens to prevent antibiotics from working against them and it was recently estimated by the Lancet to be attributable for 1.27million deaths in 2019 alone¹. This acute threat needs new antibiotics but the pipeline of antibiotic therapies is weak. The pipeline is weak is because the market for these lifesaving products, has not encouraged enough investment from traditional big pharma and venture investors over recent years.

These market conditions are likely to improve as new payment mechanisms and investment from governments have an impact. It is INCATE's mission to support the building of a pipeline of innovative and investable companies to be ready for this moment. INCATE is a partnership between academic partners and industry to support innovators in the fight against AMR. Without support new ventures will likely not be bold enough to start and survive long enough to reach the market. It supports early-stage innovators to develop a business case, support R&D, and gather the evidence and connections needed to convince further funders.

INCATE will select therapies and diagnostics on a quarterly basis for support. In selected cases INCATE will provide further non-dilutive funding of up to 250k euros.

"We joined forces at INCATE to help convert early stage innovation into investment-ready ventures and it is great to see how things are coming together with selection of the first innovators to be supported" - Philipp Mueller, Executive Director at Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund a member of the selection committee. The selection committee includes representatives from industry partners and also independent members from the support ecosystem working on the problem of AMR.

Patrick Grossmann co-founder at INVITRIS, one of the winners already sees value, "INCATE already provided us invaluable support through world-class advice and networking. The award, together with further advice, will help us to advance our phage technology platform as well as the drug pipeline resulting from it. We are very much looking forward to fostering our collaboration!"

Ventures looking for support should read more and make contact via www.incate.net or info@incate.net.

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)02724-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)02724-0/fulltext)



The INCATE partnership

INCATE is a not-for-profit partnership which brings together translational and basic research, industry, experienced entrepreneurs and investors from across Europe and beyond. The German Center for Infection Research (DZIF), the German InfectControl consortium, the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research AntiResist and the Innovation Office of the University of Basel are the academic founding members of INCATE. Together with the four industry partners Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund, Roche, Shionogi and MSD Germany as well as other organizations, funders and investors, INCATE want to ensure that the pipeline of new antibiotics and diagnostics is filled and strengthened.

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