

## **French Innovative Hotbeds Give Rise to Unprecedented R&D Collaboration in Stem Cell Engineering**

*Partnership highlights unique R&D opportunities for U.S. companies in France*

Paris, France, October 29, 2009 – Three of the leading biotech clusters in France are joining forces in the search to harness the potential of stem cells for the development of revolutionary advances in healthcare, and beyond. The newly-minted consortium, SHIP-In, has received significant government funding for a three-year research and development project, which will focus on the use of iPSCs, or induced pluripotent stem cells.

By developing the technology to create custom iPSCs, which are adult cells reprogrammed to a stem cell-like state, the partners in the SHIP-In project will be able to provide pharmaceutical and cosmetics companies with an unlimited, non-controversial, supply of human cells that meet an unmatched standard of quality, and ultimately speed up the process of therapeutic innovation.

The number of actors coming together in a collaboration of this kind between companies and research institutes is unprecedented. Co-sponsored by three major French clusters - Alsace biovalley (Strasbourg), Cancer Bio Santé (Toulouse) and Medicen (Paris) – the project has a total budget of \$6.5 million, and has secured financial support from the French government totaling \$3.1 million.

France's commitment to advancing the healthcare industry—from regenerative medicine for neurodegenerative diseases to vaccines and vaccinotherapy—goes beyond project-specific funding. Since 2005, France has established eight official innovation clusters that focus solely on biotechnology and healthcare. Projects within these clusters, and 63 additional clusters which specialize in other industries, are selected for funding by the French government following a bi-annual request for project proposals.

Philippe Yvergniaux, President of the Invest in France Agency North America said, “The type of clusters that have emerged in France, where companies, academic institutions and research labs work together for optimal innovation, are largely nonexistent in the U.S. Many of the American companies we work with are discovering that involvement with clusters in France is a major advantage for their R&D operations. Add to that France's commitment to innovation and the best R&D tax incentives in Europe, and they find themselves in a highly-supportive environment. SHIP-In is an excellent example of the various resources, expertise and collaborative opportunities that U.S. companies have come to appreciate in France.”