

## InnoMed – Innovative Medicines for Europe

**Thematic area:** Life Sciences, Genomics and Biotechnology for Health.

**Instrument:** Integrated Project

**Co-ordinated by:** European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations

**Total budget:** 14m€

**Duration of project:** 3 years from 2005.

**Number of partners:** 44

**Subject of case study:** Lilly

**Project website:** <http://www.imi-europe.org/Initiatives.aspx?view=1>

### The Challenge

Pharmaceutical companies in Europe invest large amounts in R&D. There is still considerable need for innovative therapeutic approaches in many areas of health care, for example in Alzheimer's disease, the commonest neurodegenerative disorder, that is a major health problem and economic burden in many EU Member states.

The pace of advance in genomics and the other "omics" technologies is proceeding rapidly. In consequence of these and other advances in science and technology, and as part of the continuing EU support for biomedical innovation and improved health care, there is now an opportunity to resolve some of the current rate-limiting steps in the processes for the discovery and development of novel safe and effective drugs.

### The Project

InnoMed (Innovative Medicines for Europe) takes a comprehensive approach to clarifying the issues associated with attempts to facilitate and accelerate pharmaceutical R&D. A Strategic Research Agenda has been agreed as a Specific Support Action with all the relevant stakeholder groups to encompass the bottlenecks relating to assessment of safety, demonstration of efficacy, the processes of knowledge management and the training and education requirements. This Strategic Research Agenda will then support a European Technology Platform in Innovative Medicines that may, in turn, form a Joint Technology Initiative.

At the same time, to exemplify the overall strategy in key areas within InnoMed, Integrated Projects will bring together research from *in vitro* studies, animal models and the clinic to explore the challenges for developing and validating novel biomarkers for (i) understanding mechanisms of drug toxicity (PredTox) and (ii) diagnosing Alzheimer's Disease and measuring disease progression and response to therapy (AddNeuroMed).

## **The Consortium**

This project (under the “Life sciences, genomics and health” priority of Framework Programme 6) is very unusual in being led by large pharmaceutical companies. It is coordinated by the trade body, the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industry Associations, and the consortium includes 44 partners drawn from the major R&D-intensive pharmaceutical companies in Europe, SMEs and academics with a Commission contribution to the project budget of about 14 million Euros (over three years).

The UK R&D site of Eli Lilly is one of the principal partners, providing an industry contact point on the Innomed and an advisory function for the whole of the AdNeuroMed component as well as contributing specific work package expertise, particularly on biomarkers in clinical research.

## **The View from Lilly**

### **1. Capitalising on UK strengths in neurosciences**

The origin of the AdNeuroMed project within Innomed can be traced back to the UK Brain Medicine initiative that was started with support from DTI Biosciences. The choice of Alzheimer’s Disease as a key area with which to validate the Innomed consortium is a measure of the successful ability of UK based companies to come together to stimulate and nucleate the broader efforts across the EU, to capitalise on scientific advances in academia and the capabilities of a range of SMEs in order to address a most important unmet medical need.

### **2. European added value**

Although many of the activities to be undertaken across the consortium could be attempted, in some degree, by individual companies, Lilly recognised that the collective expertise potentially offers a quicker, less duplicative, more cost-effective route to better R&D. Companies had initially aroused some external scepticism on whether they would be able to work together on mutual interests but the success in building and leading the consortium has demonstrated that collective commitment to do pre-competitive research can be maintained. Furthermore, the large companies are showing that they can engage productively as partners with smaller companies and other stakeholders, in particular patient groups and regulatory bodies.

### **3. Measuring achievements**

At the scientific level, Lilly will judge the project successful if it yields new validated markers for Alzheimer’s Disease. Lilly also anticipates broader returns

by virtue of access to the best research groups in the EU – as a basis for future collaboration.

Lilly also gains from participation in the consortium, as a means to articulate its R&D vision and practices to the other stakeholders and, in turn, to learn more about those other stakeholders. Finally and also of great importance, the members of the consortium will all benefit from its success if it helps to inform EU R&D policy development in support of innovation in the pharmaceutical sector.

### **Tips for success**

The project work packages commenced at the end of 2005 so it is too early to consider evaluating scientific outputs. But the value of the project can already be seen in terms of the success in building the consortium. Some of the lessons learned during the early stage of consortium formation include:

- Concentrating initially on the opportunity rather than potential barriers – once the collective will has been established, it becomes much easier to work together to address obstacles. Contrary to some expectations, arrangements for sharing of confidential information and Intellectual Property did not prove to be a problem because the consortium collectively resolved these issues early on.
- Ensuring that leadership is not prescriptive – creating an open partnership where all the stakeholders appreciate how they can each benefit. Involving all parties in the process as early as possible and specifying what needs to be done, rather than how creates transparency and empowerment. In this environment, individual partners take their responsibility to contribute according to their strengths and the best collective fit.

### **Future developments**

The Innomed consortium can be regarded as a good example of what must be done collectively to take forward innovation in the pharmaceutical sector if the Commission's broader strategic vision of the sector (covering innovation, pricing and patient benefit) to support growing sector investment in the EU is to be accomplished.

Lilly has been encouraged by its experience with the consortium and is enthusiastic to continue pursuing the strategic goals embedded in the Technology Platform as well as research in the neurosciences at the European level. There are, of course, still challenges to face in streamlining management of large projects but industry leadership of consortia has shown that reduction in bureaucracy is attainable. The considerable support provided by the

Commission for the bid to progress from Technology Platform to Joint Technology Initiative has been welcomed by the consortium and partners are now actively seeking to win support from their Member States.