

Vésale Bioscience receives €1.8M grant from European Innovation Council for PhageDiag project

Grant will allow Vésale Bioscience to develop phage therapy diagnostic platform in global fight against multidrug-resistant infections

Namur, Belgium, January 17, 2023 – Vésale Bioscience, a leading company in the research and development of solutions and treatments using phage therapy for multi-resistant infections, announces today it has received €1.8M (\$1.9M) in grants from the European Innovation Council (EIC) Accelerator Fund for its PhageDiag project, a phagogram using artificial intelligence that enables decentralized diagnostics and personalized treatment. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is [one of the top ten global public health threats facing humanity](#).

The EIC Accelerator jury highlighted in its decision that: “Vésale Bioscience is tackling the AMR global issue by developing a clear diagnosis that allows a personalized phage treatment which potentially gives a higher rate of success.”

Vésale Bioscience’s selected project, PhageDiag, is a fast and user-friendly diagnostic technology, or phagogram, for personalized phage therapy. It is the first automated *in vitro* diagnostic tool that enables a quick determination of suitable bacteriophages for treating a particular bacterial infection. PhageDiag consists of a basic test kit (a disposable well plate with reagents), a high-performance luminometer and a dedicated software that offers the best matching phage combination to treat the patient, using artificial intelligence.

“Personalized phage therapy using magistral preparations of phages is among the most promising solutions to fight antimicrobial resistant infections. This approach requires a rapid diagnostic test to identify the pathogens involved in the infection and choose the phages that would be active on them,” said Dr Johan Quintens, chief scientific officer at Vésale Bioscience. “Unlike current diagnostic methods, which take up to four to seven days, the PhageDiag phagogram compares the activity of up to 96 phages on a bacterial culture within two to three hours, making phage susceptibility testing accessible for hospital microbiology labs and enabling personalized therapy on a routine basis.”

“We work in close collaboration with the Belgian regulators. This was an additional factor in the EIC Accelerator jury’s decision to award us this grant for our PhageDiag project. It allows us to act as a ‘test’ case for Europe,” said Gunther Vanwezer, CEO of Vésale Bioscience.

The EIC is Europe’s flagship innovation program to identify, develop and scale-up breakthrough technologies and game changing innovations. Over a thousand start-ups and SMEs submitted a full application to obtain funding from the EIC this year. Vésale Bioscience is among the 78 innovative companies that the EIC Accelerator selected at the end of 2022 to receive a grant.

About antimicrobial resistance

According to the WHO, antibiotic resistance is [one of the greatest threats to global health](#) today. Resistance occurs when bacteria evolve in response to the use of antibiotics, thereby substantially impairing the effectiveness of the treatment. As a result, the bacteria become resistant and cause infections, in both animals and humans, that are harder to treat than

those caused by non-resistant bacteria. The economic cost of treating patients affected by multidrug-resistant bacteria [could reach \\$100 billion \(€88.5bn\) by 2025.](#)

About the EIC Accelerator

The EIC Accelerator supports individual Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), in particular startups and spinout companies, to develop and scaleup game-changing innovations. In some cases, small mid-caps (up to 500 employees) are supported. In addition, EIC selected companies receive coaching, mentoring, access to investors and corporations, and many other opportunities as part of the EIC community. The EIC Accelerator provides substantial financial support with grant funding (non-dilutive) of up to €2.5 million (\$2.65M) for innovation development costs and investments (direct equity investments) of up to €15 million (\$16M), managed by the EIC Fund, for scale up and other relevant costs. Companies working on technologies of strategic European interest can apply for EIC investments of more than €15 million (\$16M).

www.eic.ec.europa.eu

About Vésale Bioscience

Vésale Bioscience is an R&D company specializing in phage therapy, particularly in alternative solutions to antibiotics and the development of treatments for multi-resistant infections.

Phage therapy represents an innovative and promising solution in the fight against multi-drug resistant infections. Vésale Bioscience's technology consists of a phagogram with artificial intelligence, which allows decentralized diagnosis and personalized therapy. It guarantees a reactivity in a very short time (three hours instead of three days). The company also has a phage library of 96 references.

Since 2020, Vésale Bioscience has been collaborating with the Belgian army in the framework of a 'Triple Helix' agreement between industry, the federal government and academia, a first for an R&D project on phage therapy. The research projects developed are supported by the Walloon Region's life sciences competitiveness cluster (BioWin) and the Walloon public research service, allowing the company to raise €10 million (\$8.56M) in grants in 2019.

Founded in 2018, Vésale Bioscience is based in Namur, Belgium and employs about 20 staff. Its team includes world-renowned experts, who have helped achieve major advances in the development of research and production process design. In December 2021, Vésale Bioscience was elected Europe's most innovative start-up in life sciences during the tenth edition of the European Biofit Congress.

www.phage.health

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