

## **FACIT and Triphase Accelerator Announce New Partnership with Celgene for First-in-class WDR5 Leukemia Therapy**

*Largest transaction to date for Canadian-discovered preclinical asset arises from Ontario collaborators*

TORONTO, ON (January 29, 2019) – Triphase Accelerator, together with its majority shareholder FACIT, today announced a new strategic collaboration with Celgene for a first-in-class preclinical therapeutic targeting the WDR5 protein for the treatment of blood cancers including leukemia. Triphase is a drug development company advancing novel compounds through Phase 2 proof-of-concept, including the WDR5 program.

Under the terms of the agreement, Celgene has the option to acquire TRPH-395 from Triphase Accelerator. Celgene will pay an upfront of US\$40M and upon exercise of the option, Celgene will pay up to US\$940M in contingent development, regulatory and sales milestones. Additional payments for sales-based royalties are also possible.

“As with our previously announced spin outs, the Drug Discovery team at Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR), led by Dr. Rima Al Awar, has yet again produced a world-class asset for patients with cancer,” remarked Dr. David O’Neill, President of FACIT. FACIT seed financed Propellon Therapeutics to commercialize the preclinical asset and ran a competitive global business development process to identify strategic partners. Multiple formal offers were received from the US, Europe and Japan, reflecting the high quality of science in the program.

Dr. O’Neill continued “The quality of the team and commitment by Triphase Accelerator to engage Ontario researchers and clinical sites in its high content studies, combined with its long-standing relationship with Celgene made this partnership the most compelling path to impact patients and the local economy.” While additional payments to the program are largely contingent on clinical success, the significant financial commitment will enable re-investable returns by FACIT in the Ontario innovation economy.

The WDR5 protein is critical for the formation and activities of certain protein complexes that are associated with DNA and indirectly modify genes. These processes represent an exciting new therapeutic field, referred to as epigenetics. Blood cancers like leukemia can result when WDR5-associated protein complexes are not appropriately regulated in the body. Drug compounds that can disrupt these cancer-causing cellular activities represent a novel therapeutic approach, which may also improve clinical outcomes in patients with solid tumours.

“This transaction represents a significant milestone for Triphase Accelerator as it brings together our long-standing collaboration with Celgene and a first-in-class asset from Ontario” said Dr. Ilse Treurnicht, Executive Chairperson at Triphase Accelerator. “We are excited that this transaction is another step forward to realizing the vision of the founding partners – OICR, MaRS Innovation and MaRS – and will allow Triphase to apply its unique science based, rapid, and cost-effective approach to advancing this Ontario based program toward clinical proof of concept.”

“Our investment in Propellon’s technology reflects our commitment to developing first-in-class epigenetic therapies for patients with hematological cancers,” remarked Dr. Jorge DiMartino, Vice President of Translational Development at Celgene. “The teams at OICR Drug Discovery, FACIT and Triphase Accelerator have together created an optimal pathway for oncology innovation and help make Ontario a strong collaborator and destination for our investment.”

“This is a great day for cancer research in Ontario. Congratulations to FACIT, OICR and Triphase Accelerator,” said Todd Smith, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. “This discovery and investment will benefit Ontario cancer patients and support industry jobs in the province. Ontario is open for business, and we welcome more innovative cancer research and trials.”

“This is an exciting development for cancer research and innovation in Ontario, and I congratulate FACIT, OICR and Triphase Accelerator on their important collaboration,” said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. “It’s partnerships like these that keep Ontario open for business and are invaluable as we work toward developing a long-term transformational health care strategy guided by innovation, integration and the better use of technology.”

### **About Triphase Accelerator**

Triphase Accelerator is a private drug development company with a primary focus on oncology and with operations in Toronto and San Diego. Triphase Accelerator is dedicated to advancing novel compounds through Phase 2 proof-of-concept clinical studies using a unique, science-based model that is faster and more cost-effective than traditional pharmaceutical and biotech industry drug development approaches. Triphase Accelerator was founded by the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR), in partnership with MaRS Innovation and MaRS. It has a strategic relationship with Celgene for oncology-focused drug development opportunities. In 2016, Celgene acquired the company's assets related to its proteasome inhibitor, marizomib (MRZ), which is currently in Phase 3 development for glioblastoma. For more information, visit [www.triphaseco.com](http://www.triphaseco.com) or LinkedIn.

### **About Celgene**

Celgene Corporation, headquartered in Summit, New Jersey, is an integrated global biopharmaceutical company engaged primarily in the discovery, development and commercialization of innovative therapies for the treatment of cancer and inflammatory diseases through next-generation solutions in protein homeostasis, immuno-oncology, epigenetics, immunology and neuro-inflammation. For more information, please visit [www.celgene.com](http://www.celgene.com).

### **About FACIT**

FACIT builds companies with entrepreneurs to accelerate oncology innovation and its portfolio has attracted over a half billion dollars in investment to Ontario. Blending industry experience, capital and the unsurpassed clinician-scientist network of its strategic partner the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR), FACIT capitalizes on the province's investment in research and healthcare to the benefit of the local economy and patients worldwide. FACIT's commercialization portfolio includes Turnstone Biologics, Fusion Pharmaceuticals, Triphase Accelerator and other biotechnology organizations. *Cancer Breakthroughs. Realized.* [facit.ca](http://facit.ca).

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