BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

KSQ Therapeutics and Takeda to develop and market novel Immuno-Oncology therapies

January 14, 2021 | News

The collaboration includes two T-cell programs and an expansive discovery program to identify natural killer (NK) cell targets



KSQ Therapeutics, a biotechnology company using its proprietary CRISPRomics® discovery platform to systematically screen the whole genome to identify optimal gene targets for oncology and autoimmune disease, on Jan 13, 2021, announced that it has entered into a broad strategic collaboration with Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited to research, develop and commercialize novel immune-based therapies for cancer.

Under the agreement, KSQ has granted Takeda an exclusive, worldwide, royalty-bearing license to develop, manufacture and commercialize cell and non-cell therapy products that modulate targets identified using KSQ's CRISPRomics technology. The deal includes two T-cell targets previously identified and validated by KSQ, with the potential to introduce two additional T-cell targets to the collaboration. The companies will also collaborate to discover and develop therapeutics that modulate natural killer (NK) cell targets to be identified through the collaboration.

"KSQ's CRISPRomics discovery platform is a powerful technology to help us identify novel targets in line with our immuno-oncology strategy," said Loïc Vincent, Head, Oncology Drug Discovery Unit and Immunology Unit at Takeda. "The T-cell and NK-cell target discovery approach complements our portfolio aimed at turning cold tumors hot and redirecting the innate immune system to elicit a sustained and durable immune response against tumors. Working alongside KSQ will facilitate smart drug discovery and development of what we hope will be transformative new therapies for patients with intractable forms of cancer."

Under the terms of the agreement, upfront and potential preclinical milestones have the potential to exceed $100 million. In addition, KSQ will be eligible for additional option payments along with development and commercialization milestone payments. Depending on the target, these option and milestone payments can reach up to more than $400 million per program. KSQ is also eligible to receive tiered royalties on net sales of each approved product. KSQ and Takeda can collaborate on IND-enabling activities, with clinical development led by Takeda to explore multiple modalities. Takeda will assume responsibility for funding all development and commercialization activities. KSQ will have the option to participate in

cost/profit sharing on one of the two products based on the T-cell targets previously identified and validated by KSQ, in the U.S. and retain royalties on all ex-U.S. sales for that product.