



Alnylam Grants RNAX License to Key Patent in RNA Interference

CAMBRIDGE, MA and BERLIN, Germany, January 27, 2004 -- Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, Inc., the leading RNAi therapeutics company, today announced that its German affiliate, Ribopharma AG, has granted RNAX GmbH a non-exclusive license to provide research services under a fundamental patent in RNA interference (RNAi). The licensed patent is the first and only issued patent covering the use of short double-stranded RNAs to elicit RNAi. Under the terms of the agreement, RNAX will pay initial and annual license fees, as well as royalties on sales of licensed services.

"This new license, the fourth we have granted so far this year, reinforces the importance of our fundamental patent in RNAi", said Vincent Miles, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, Business Development of Alnylam. "The continued strong interest in research applications of RNAi should lead to greater understanding of diseases and new insights into how they may be treated with RNAi therapeutics."

"We are committed to supporting our customers with high-quality services to complement and enhance their internal research programs", said Joerg Poetzsch, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of RNAX. "This new license is not only important for our ability to offer these services. It also fits in our strategy to deliver to our customers a full package of services, including the security to be able to legally use the generated data."

About RNAi

RNA interference, or RNAi, is a naturally occurring mechanism within cells for selectively silencing specific genes, an ability that could become the basis for a whole new class of therapeutic products. The discovery of RNAi has been heralded by many as a major breakthrough, and the journal *Science* named RNAi the top scientific achievement of 2002 as well as one of the top ten scientific advances of 2003. Because many diseases are caused by the inappropriate activity of specific genes, the ability to silence such genes selectively through RNAi could provide a means to treat a wide range of human diseases. The RNAi mechanism was recently discovered, in part, by the scientific founders of Alnylam, who showed that RNAi is mediated by a molecule known as a small interfering RNA, or siRNA, and that chemically-synthesized siRNAs made in the laboratory can be introduced into cells and silence the activity of specific genes. Alnylam is developing chemically-synthesized siRNAs as potential drugs for a variety of diseases.

About Alnylam

Alnylam, the leading RNAi therapeutics company, is harnessing the natural mechanism of RNAi to build a deep pipeline of products with the potential to treat a wide range of human diseases. Growing from its foundation as the world's first company focused on RNAi therapeutics, the company is built around the leading capabilities of its two operating units, Alnylam Pharmaceuticals of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Ribopharma AG of Kulmbach, Germany. The company's leadership in the field of RNAi is supported by its preeminent founders and advisors and its strengths in fundamental patents, technology, and know-how that underlie the commercialization of RNAi therapeutics. The company's focus is to develop a pipeline of RNAi products using both Direct RNAi™ and Systemic RNAi™ approaches to treat a broad range of diseases, including central nervous system, metabolic, ocular, viral, oncologic, and autoimmune diseases. The company's global headquarters are in Cambridge, MA.

About RNAX

RNAX is a functional genomics service company. RNAX' know-how is based on many years in research and development of target validation technologies using RNA interference. RNAX' founders, in a cooperation effort with Qiagen, have developed automated systems and standards for the validation of siRNAs, genetic targets, and functional assays. RNAX is offering to its customers customized, automated and non-automated target validation services at excellent quality and high-throughput capability, using cell lines and functional assays according to the customers' choice at competitive prices. RNAX was founded in December 2002 by scientists of the Max-Planck-Institute for Infection Biology (MPIIB) in Berlin.