

NEWS RELEASE



## **Metrion Biosciences and LifeArc extend ion channel drug discovery collaboration to accelerate neuroscience-focused research**

*Initial twelve month collaboration successfully identifies hit compounds and progresses into hit-to-lead optimisation phase*

**Cambridge and London, UK, 03 December 2019:** Metrion Biosciences Limited (Metrion), the specialist ion channel CRO and drug discovery company, and LifeArc, a leading UK independent medical research charity, today announced an extension of their neuroscience-focused ion channel drug discovery collaboration, following the success of the initial twelve-month agreement.

The collaboration is focused on novel selective small molecular modulators of a specific two-pore domain potassium ion channel target, identified as likely to be involved in neurological pathogenesis. Having commenced in January 2019, both companies have exercised the option to extend the programme for a further 12 months following the achievement of mutually agreed criteria. As a result of successes during the initial phase, where potent and efficacious hit compounds have been identified through a robust screening cascade (using a fluorescence assay, automated electrophysiology and manual patch clamp technique), the collaboration has now progressed into the hit-to-lead optimisation phase.

Under the terms of the agreement LifeArc is responsible for all new chemical syntheses, with Metrion providing ion channel screening expertise. Metrion will continue to support target optimisation using the company's extensive experience of developing validated screening assays for use against specific neuronal ion channels, or in a range of translational phenotypic disease-relevant assays, to thoroughly explore mechanism of action.

**Dr Edward Stevens, Head of Drug Discovery, Metrion Biosciences, said:** *"The extension of this collaboration is testament to the achievements of the combined team to date, and to our long-standing successful relationship with LifeArc. We are excited to be moving forward for an additional twelve months and progress the project to further advance research in this important field of neuroscience."*

**Dr Justin Bryans, Executive Director, Drug Discovery, LifeArc, commented:** *"We are dedicated to supporting promising research that could have transformative benefits for patients. The success to date of this novel small molecule programme with Metrion is very motivating, especially as this lies in one of our three priority therapy areas. We have a strong track record with Metrion, and we look forward to the next twelve months' collaboration."*

## ENDS

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#### About Metrion Biosciences

Metrion Biosciences is a specialist ion-channel contract research organisation and drug discovery business. The Company provides customers with access to a range of high quality ion channel assays on a fee-for-service or collaboration basis. Metrion Biosciences' ion channel expertise includes an industry leading panel of *in vitro* cardiac ion channel safety assays, translational native cell and phenotypic assays for neurological and cardiotoxicity testing, and a range of other ion channel screening services such as cell line development and optimisation. Metrion Biosciences is able to provide tailored assay formats, data analysis and reporting solutions, effective project management and quality assured data packages.

[www.metrionbiosciences.com](http://www.metrionbiosciences.com)

Twitter: @Metrion\_Biosci

#### About LifeArc

LifeArc is a self-funded medical research charity. Our mission is to advance translation of early science into health care treatments or diagnostics that can be taken through to full development and made available to patients. We have been doing this for more than 25 years and our work has resulted in a diagnostic for antibiotic resistance and four licensed medicines.

Our success allows us to explore new approaches to stimulate and fund translation. We have our own drug discovery and diagnostics development facilities, supported by experts in technology transfer and intellectual property who also provide services to other organisations. Our model is built on collaboration, and we partner with a broad range of groups including medical research charities, research organisations, industry and academic scientists. We are motivated by patient need and scientific opportunity.

Two funds help us to invest in external projects for the benefit of patients: our Philanthropic Fund provides grants to support medical research projects focused on the translation of rare

diseases research and our Seed Fund is aimed at start-up companies focussed on developing new therapeutics and biological modalities. [www.lifearc.org](http://www.lifearc.org)  
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