

The Drug Cell Established: A New French Alliance To Redefine Cell Therapies

Paris, 26 February 2025

The Drug Cell, a French NewCo, has been officially established marking a decisive step in the European cell therapy sector. This high-potential industrial ecosystem is designed to develop scalable and more accessible cell therapies. The Drug Cell, or TDC, brings together nine leading French biotech and innovation players: Etablissement Français du Sang (EFS), Centre d'Étude des Cellules Souches/I-Stem, Gpi France, Carroucell, EVerZom, MGA Technologies, University of Montpellier, CHU of Montpellier, and CHU of Rennes.

This milestone is reinforced by the confirmation of substantial funding from the French General Secretariat for Investment, under the "France 2030" initiative¹. These resources will allow The Drug Cell to launch and manage the first two phases of the project: research and development processes and the First Industrial Deployment (FID). This strategic support will enable the company to initiate the first clinical trials by 2030, with an estimated time to market in 2034.

The company aims to establish itself a French and European leading player in regenerative medicine with advanced cell therapies. Its priority is to ensure access to innovative biotherapies at sustainable costs, laying the foundation for a globally competitive product. This will be achieved through the integration of cutting-edge technologies, where automation, artificial intelligence, and digital manufacturing will minimize errors, ensure real-time quality control, and enhance scalability. Meanwhile, the use of its own breakthrough technologies will strengthen the competitiveness and production autonomy of the developed solutions. Among the many innovations, the use of Digital Twin technology - virtual models that replicate cell behavior - will be implemented from the early stages. This will enable real-time monitoring and adaptation of each therapy, optimizing treatments even before patient testing.

Recently, Sergio Manzana (GPI France) was appointed President of The Drug Cell. He stated: "The establishment of The Drug Cell marks a decisive step towards Europe's industrial autonomy in cell therapy production, with France at the heart of this revolution. We will provide new solutions for severe diseases that currently lack effective treatments, such as rare or genetic diseases. We are creating an unprecedented ecosystem that unites public and private actors, with the goal of demonstrating through real-world solutions the transformative impact of healthcare technologies on people's lives."

THE DRUG CELL – THE PARTNERS



¹ A government entity responsible for managing strategic investments for innovation and industrial development in France. France 2030 is a € 54 billion plan launched by the French government to boost industrial growth, invest in cutting-edge technologies, and support the ecological transition.

Etablissement Français du Sang – EFS

EFS is the public blood service in France, supervised by the French Department of Health and Prevention. We have been carrying out a vital mission for 25 years, using our expert knowledge of blood to serve patients throughout the entire healthcare chain. Our missions:

- Diagnosing diseases thanks to our expertise in medical biology and transplantation
- Caring for more than 1 million patients every year: making essential blood products, tissues and cells available to those in need of a transfusion or transplant
- Innovating by making the most of our expert knowledge of cells to develop cutting edge medical processes and treatments
- Training healthcare professionals in France and around the globe.

For more information: <https://dondesang.efs.sante.fr>

Centre d'Étude des Cellules Souches (CECS/I-Stem)

ISTEM is a research and development center of excellence, created in 2005 under the leadership of AFM-Téléthon and Inserm, and dedicated to pluripotent stem cells (ES and IPS) and their therapeutic applications for monogenic diseases (neuromuscular diseases, retinopathies, genodermatoses, diseases of the central nervous system, etc.)

Structured around 5 R&D teams and 1 Research & Technological Innovation team, ISTEM's activity extends from fundamental research into pathological mechanisms to the transfer of new therapies to clinical research. ISTEM technology platforms explore major cell production tools, high-throughput screening and sequencing, automated cell imaging, and technological innovations in cell biology.

ISTEM is now already participating in the creation of innovative therapeutic approaches transferable on an industrial scale to support the deployment of regenerative medicine to all patients.

For more information: <https://istem.eu/>

Gpi France

French company, part of the Gpi Group, it develops advanced technological solutions for healthcare. It provides software, medical devices, and automation systems to enhance hospital efficiency and quality of care, with a strong focus on digital innovation.

For more information: <https://www.gpigroup.com>

Carroucell

CARROUCELL bring bioproduction to a cost-effective level and optimize productivity. Always provide products of consistent quality regardless of quantities. CARROUCELL Optimize the specific complex cell amplification process.

For more information: <https://www.carroucell.com>

EVERZOM

EVERZOM, a biopharmaceutical company developing exosomes based biodrugs. Exosomes are a new biological tool in regenerative medicine which are now seen as a promising alternative to cell-based therapies.

A spin-off from the CNRS and the Université de Paris Cité, EVERZOM initially developed an exclusive proprietary industrial process to produce exosomes on an industrial scale at high yield. EVERZOM's ambition today is to build on this technological innovation platform to develop its therapeutic pipeline in three key therapeutic areas: digestive tissue healing, dermatology and liver regeneration. EVERZOM has won numerous awards and programmes, including i-Lab and the prestigious EIC Accelerator, for its technological innovation platform.

For more information: <http://everzom.com>

MGA Technologies

Maison MGA is a French industrial company specializing in advanced engineering for healthcare, bioproduction, and high-tech industries. With expertise in robotics, techbio, automation, and precision manufacturing, we design and build cutting-edge solutions to meet the most demanding challenges.

Our mission:

- Innovating in medical devices, techbio, bioproduction, and high-tech automation
- Supporting industry leaders with tailor-made, high-performance solutions, tools and instruments
- Industrializing breakthrough technologies from R&D to full-scale production.

Rooted in excellence and innovation, Maison MGA shapes the future of industry with sustainable and high-impact solutions.

For more information: <https://www.mga-technologies.fr>

Université de Montpellier

The University of Montpellier (UM) includes 17 faculties and educates over 52,000 students with the support of 5,000 staff members. Renowned for its focus on education, research, and innovation, UM excels in areas like food safety, environmental protection, and human health. It's globally recognized for its rankings in ecology and innovation, ranking among the top three French institutions according to Times Higher Education. Committed to gender equality, sustainability, and scientific integrity, UM stands out in sustainable development. UM collaborates with national research organizations, health institutions, and local authorities through initiatives like the I-Site Excellence Program and the "Pôle Universitaire d'Innovation", fostering research partnerships, technology transfer, and startups.

For more information: <https://www.umontpellier.fr>

CHU de Montpellier

The Montpellier University Hospital (CHU Montpellier) is a public healthcare institution whose main missions are to treat patients, provide education and training (medical and paramedical teaching), and contribute to the advancement of health research. This includes fostering innovation, medical and therapeutic progress, promoting research activities and their outcomes, managing patents and licenses, and delivering specialized services. CHU Montpellier is the sixth-largest university hospital in France.

For more information: <https://www.chu-montpellier.fr/>

CHU de Rennes

The CHU de Rennes is a French public health establishment, involved in care, research and teaching. Every year, nearly half a million patients are cared for by the establishment, which has been awarded the "High Quality Care" label. Within the CHU de Rennes, the SITI "Suivi Immunologique des Thérapeutiques Innovantes" is a reference laboratory, thanks to its ability to monitor large national multicenter trials and programs in a standardized way, using multiple approaches including phenotypic, transcriptomic and functional analyses of the various immune compartments, which can be specifically designated and validated according to the clinical research protocol.

For more information: <https://www.chu-rennes.fr/index.html>