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Biocartis and A*STAR's ETPL initiate development of breast cancer assay to guide therapy selection

Singapore / Mechelen (Belgium), **10 July 2017 -** Biocartis Group NV ('Biocartis' or the 'Company'), an innovative molecular diagnostics company (Euronext Brussels: BCART), today announced that it has extended its partnership with ETPL (the commercialization arm of A*STAR, Singapore's Agency for Science, Technology and Research[1]) with a new five-year strategic partnership, focused on the development of molecular diagnostic assays for Biocartis' Idylla™ platform, a fully automated sample-to-result, real-time PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) system that offers accurate, highly reliable molecular information from virtually any biological sample. The first assay selected for development under the partnership is a fully automated solid biopsy assay, aimed at supporting optimal therapy selection decisions for breast cancer patients.

Under the terms of the agreement, parties will co-invest in the development of jointly selected tests. For each selected test, Biocartis will be responsible for the commercialization of the tests under its own label, while ETPL will act as a development partner through Singapore's Diagnostics Development (DxD) Hub. Financial details of the partnership are not disclosed.

The first assay selected for development under the new partnership is a fully automated solid biopsy assay, operating directly from FFPE[2] tumor tissue and aimed at supporting optimal therapy selection for Her2-targeted therapies[3], hormone receptor therapies, as well as some novel targets for breast cancer patients.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide[4] and the largest segment of the cancer diagnostics market[5], expected to account for USD 13.1bn by 2020[6]. Current breast cancer diagnostic testing methods comprise complex and lengthy workflows, involving numerous manual steps and visual interpretation of results. Consequently, specificity and reproducibility of these test methods are challenging with both false positive and false negative test results occurring commonly[7]. Also, as today's methods require specific laboratory expertise and samples need to be shipped for such analyses, it often takes a long time before results are available.

Furthermore, an increasing number of targeted and hormone therapies for breast cancer drives the demand for assays that guide therapy selection. Among other biomarkers, the assay will include Her2, which is a major prognostic biomarker shown to occur in 18-20% of breast cancers[8] and which is currently recommended for the

Geert Maertens, Chief Scientific Officer of Biocartis, commented: "*By combining the expertise and network of ETPL and Biocartis, this partnership agreement has laid the foundation to bring more high performing Idylla™ assays to the market in a shorter timeframe. We are thrilled to work with ETPL for the development of our second*[5] *breast cancer assay, this time aimed at supporting decisions for a rapidly growing number of targeted and hormone receptor therapies for breast cancer patients.*"

Sidney Yee, CEO of the DxD Hub, and Executive Vice-President of ETPL said: *"We are pleased to*