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PRESS RELEASE

France is set to become a global leader in using AI to diagnose and treat diseases through €33 million Owkin-led AI project



Paris, 31st March 2023 – France is set to become a global leader in artificial intelligence-powered precision medicine through a new €33 million Bpifrance-funded consortium project led by French AI biotech company Owkin.

Born from a collaboration between Owkin and Gustave Roussy, Europe's leading cancer hospital, PortrAlt will see research hospitals and pathology labs across France working with French technology leaders to develop and deploy new digital pathology AI tools to improve cancer treatment. The project aims to build at least 15 AI-based tools to improve the diagnosis of cancer, the discovery of new treatment biomarkers and the prediction of patient outcomes in hospitals across France.

Gustave Roussy, Centre Léon Bérard, Unicancer and other French comprehensive cancer centres will work closely with Owkin, French digital imaging company Tribun Health, and French pathology diagnostics group CYPATH to usher in a new era of precision medicine.

The project will train machine learning models to spot minutely-different patterns in patients' diseases through digital pathology slides – digitised images of patient's tissue samples. By producing more efficient, effective and accessible diagnostic tools, clinicians will be equipped to better tailor treatment plans to patients' individual needs at an earlier stage in their disease. The detection of biomarkers and the better prediction of patient outcomes will further help oncologists to personalise treatment.

PortrAlt will produce a platform that will provide a research setting for consortium partners to collaborate on the development of the AI diagnostic tools. They will then be tested and deployed in cancer centres and pathology labs across France. The five-year project aims to establish its platform within one year and deploy new AI-based patient diagnostics in hospitals within four years.

Meriem Sefta, Chief Diagnostics Officer at Owkin, said:

“Digital pathology-based precision medicine promises to transform the way we diagnose and treat diseases. It is enabling doctors to tailor treatment to the specific needs of their patients at an earlier stage, while democratizing access to high-quality, personalised treatment.

“PortrAlt will empower French hospitals to play a leading role in the development of the next generation of AI-powered diagnostic tools. Our aim is to make France the global leader in digital pathology-based precision medicine.”

Professor Fabrice André, Director of Research and Professor of Medical Oncology at Institut Gustave Roussy, Paris, said:

“Artificial intelligence has become a true reality and is a major asset for accelerating discoveries in oncology, particularly in cancer modeling, for predicting responses to treatment and the risk of relapse. It is by bringing together all forms of intelligence that we will meet the challenge of curing cancer.”

Roland Lescure, Deputy Minister for Industry, said:

"This project will make it possible to better fight cancer by equipping healthcare professionals with innovative artificial intelligence tools. The aim is to help doctors make the best use of the information contained in histological slides to personalise treatments. This ambitious project brings together major players in the field, both public and private, to form a community of internationally recognised and complementary experts. Nearly 15 million euros from France 2030 have been allocated to this project. It is one of the most important funding projects in our so-called "digital health" strategy."

Professor Jean-Yves Blay, General Director of the Centre Léon Bérard and President of Unicancer, said:

“Health data combined with artificial intelligence are essential as they tackle major health challenges in oncology. They refine disease diagnosis, personalise treatments, predict the course of the disease and accelerate access to innovation.

We want to create a culture of collaboration between data scientists, pathologists, oncologists and getting access to data in hospital network, for the benefit of patients, of every patient. Unicancer and the CLCC experts will actively participate in all stages of the project, from the design of the technical platforms to the development of the models. The pathologists of the CLCCs, key in these innovations, will be on the front line to deploy and coordinate the testing of these solutions in routine care. This will ultimately shape the pathology of tomorrow, with the ambition of forming the first 100% digital hospital network for optimized diagnosis.”

Philippe Chalabreysse, pathologist and CEO of Cypath Group, said:

“The pathologists of the Cypath group are convinced that AI is an opportunity for their specialty. They are ready to take up the challenge of integrating these new tools into their diagnostic routine and thus providing access to innovation for their patients.

“As a private group located on 13 sites, they will strive to develop solutions allowing good patient care while ensuring financial balance.”

Jean-François Pomerol, CEO of Tribun Health, said:

“The key challenges related to AI in medicine is the integration of AI tools into the care pathway to support diagnostic decision for better patient outcomes. PortrAlt's approach is to structure and organize innovative AI solutions within a scalable and interoperable digital platform, designed to integrate seamlessly into the pathologist's workflow and unlock the value of histopathology data. Tribun Health is very excited to be part of this ambitious consortium project which will revolutionize the digital pathology sector and support the development of precision medicine.”

About Owkin

[Owkin](#) is an AI biotechnology company that uses AI to find the right treatment for every patient. We combine the best of human and artificial intelligence to answer the research questions shared by biopharma and academic researchers. By closing the translational gap between complex biology and new treatments, we bring new diagnostics and drugs to patients sooner. We use AI to identify new treatments, de-risk and accelerate clinical trials and build diagnostic tools. Using federated learning, a pioneering collaborative AI framework, Owkin enables partners to unlock valuable insights from siloed datasets while protecting patient privacy and securing proprietary data. Owkin was co-founded by Thomas Clozel MD, a former assistant professor in clinical onco-hematology, and Gilles Wainrib, a pioneer in the field of machine learning in biology, in 2016. Owkin has raised over \$300 million and [became a unicorn](#) through investments from leading biopharma companies (Sanofi and BMS) and venture funds (Fidelity, GV and BPI, among others).

About Bpifrance

Bpifrance Investissement operates BpiFrance's equity investments. Bpifrance finances companies - at every stage of development - with credit, guarantees and equity. Bpifrance supports them in their innovation and international projects. Bpifrance now also provides their export activity through a wide range of products. Consulting, university, networking and acceleration programs for startups, SMEs and ETIs are also part of the offer proposed to entrepreneurs. Thanks to Bpifrance and its 50 regional offices, entrepreneurs benefit from a close, unique and efficient contact to help them face their challenges.

For more information visit: www.Bpifrance.fr. Follow Bpifrance on Twitter : @Bpifrance - @BpifrancePresse

About Gustave Roussy

Ranked as the leading European Cancer Centre and third in the world, [Gustave Roussy](#) is a centre with comprehensive expertise and is devoted entirely to patients suffering with cancer. The Institute is a founding member of the Paris Saclay Cancer Cluster. It is a source of

diagnostic and therapeutic advances. It caters for almost 50,000 patients per year and its approach is one that integrates research, patient care and teaching. It is specialized in the treatment of rare cancers and complex tumors and it treats all cancers in patients of any age. Its care is personalized and combines the most advanced medical methods with an appreciation of the patient's human requirements.

About Centre Léon Bérard

The [Centre Léon Bérard](#) (CLB) is one of the French Comprehensive Cancer Centres of the Unicancer Federation in France, providing a global management of cancer patients on a unique site, from prevention, diagnosis, to treatment, supportive care and research. The CLB national and international recognized reference cancer Centre has three missions: Care, Research and Education, striving to continuously improve the quality and accessibility of care of excellence and innovation for cancer patients. More than 44,000 patients are treated yearly, with over 10,000 newly diagnosed patients.

About Unicancer

[Unicancer](#) is the only French hospital network 100% dedicated to the fight against cancer and the only national hospital federation dedicated to cancer. It brings together the 18 French Cancer Comprehensive Centres (FCCCs), private not-profit health establishments, spread over 20 hospital sites in France, as well as 2 affiliated establishments. The FCCCs take care of nearly 540,000 patients per year (in short-stay, HAD and outpatient procedures). Unicancer is also the leading academic promoter of clinical trials in oncology, on a European scale, with 109 active clinical trials promoted, 20,000 patients included, 83,000 patients registered in the ESME database. Recognised as a leader in research in France, the Unicancer network enjoys a worldwide reputation with the production of one third of French publications of international importance in oncology.

About Tribun Health

[Tribun Health](#) is a leading provider of AI-powered digital pathology solutions, transforming the way pathologists diagnose and treat diseases. Our advanced technology, combined with our clinical and informatics expertise, delivers unparalleled accuracy, speed, and efficiency in pathology diagnosis. We have been recognized as a two-time Best in KLAS award winner (2022 & 2023) for our excellence in customer satisfaction and continue to be recognized for our innovative approach to digital pathology and commitment to customer success. Tribun Health is a pioneer in digital pathology workflow solutions with image acquisition, image storage, web-based image management system, image analysis using AI-powered deep and machine learning algorithms, remote case sharing with peer review and reporting. Visit our website at www.tribun.health to learn more about our end-to-end digital pathology platform.

About CYPATH

[CYPATH](#) is a private diagnostics group with more than 60 pathologists specialized in Anatomy and Pathological Cytology, associated in SELAS (liberal practice company by simplified

action). The group is the result of successive associations of various medical practices located in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté and Grand-Est. They collaborate with nearly 80 healthcare systems and a wide range of private offices, both generalists and specialists (Surgery, Dermatology, Radiology, Gynecology, Midwifery, etc.). Thanks to the integration of advanced digital pathology workflows, the Cypath's pathologists will collaborate around a shared database over the next few years.