



Office of Information
and Communication

Rue de la Barre 2
1014 Lausanne

Press Release

Life Sciences and Cancer Research

Lausanne universities at world's cutting-edge of research

The Canton of Vaud is determined to strengthen its international position in the field of life sciences, and cancer research in particular, with an important building programme for the University of Lausanne (UNIL) and Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV). The State Council recently submitted to the Grand Council four draft decrees (EMDDs) totalling Sfr88.75 million for the Dorigny site and Biopôle in Epalinges, including an oncology building dedicated to Ludwig Cancer Research (Ludwig). Ludwig has chosen Lausanne as one of its main international sites and intends to invest more than Sfr100 million to develop immunotherapy in Lausanne over the next ten years, under a framework agreement with the canton covering a 30-year timescale.

The appeal of the Canton of Vaud owes much to the quality of its universities. The close partnership between UNIL/CHUV has consolidated a level of excellence that is renowned internationally. Cancer research has also been the focus of some remarkable developments in Lausanne over the past two years, thanks in particular to new methods based on immunotherapy, which relies on the body's natural defences to destroy cancer cells.

These successes have led Ludwig, based in New York, to establish one of its main global centres in Lausanne, with the promise of large-scale financing over a thirty-year period. "We are very enthusiastic about opening a Ludwig Branch in Lausanne," said Edward Mc Dermott, CEO of Ludwig. "We were greatly impressed by the scope and depth of scientific and IT expertise to be found there, not only in its academic institutions, but also in its biotech firms. I'm convinced that our partnership will be of immense benefit to cancer patients everywhere."

UNIL and CHUV have organised research in the life sciences since 2007, with fundamental research concentrated on the Dorigny campus, research into immunology and vaccinology based at Epalinges, and the development of clinical research undertaken within the hospital complex. Plans to construct the new "Agora" building intended to bring together researchers and clinical practitioners on the Le Bugnon site, in partnership with the ISREC Foundation and EPFL, testify to the success of this strategy. Lastly the arrival of Professor George Coukos, a specialist in immuno-oncology, as head of the UNIL-CHUV Oncology Department, made it possible to establish links with Ludwig.

On the Dorigny site, following the abandonment by EPFL of the Neuropolis project, the plan is to remedy the shortage of buildings available to fundamental neurosciences, bioinformatics and computational biology, so that UNIL's advanced expertise in these strategic and innovative disciplines can be placed on a long-term footing; the aim also is to support growth in the number of researchers in biology, an area in which Lausanne has excelled for many years.

On the Epalinges site (Biopôle and Epalinges Laboratories Centre) new infrastructures will be made available to three disciplines expected to experience rapid growth over the next few years: immune system engineering to help in the fight against cancer and infectious diseases, and personalised medicine.

Exposition of motives and draft decrees (EMDD)

On the Dorigny site:

- Application has been submitted for a study credit of Sfr6.60 million to finance studies necessary for renovation and reassignment of an initial part of the Amphipôle building.
- Application has been submitted for a study credit of Sfr12.80 million to finance studies necessary for the construction of a building dedicated to life sciences.

On the Biopôle site in Epalinges:

- Application has been submitted for a study credit of Sfr6.15 million to finance studies necessary for the construction of a building for the Centre for Personalised Medicine and Immune System Engineering to fight infectious diseases and immunodeficiency problems.
- Application for an investment credit of Sfr63.20 million, of which the share payable by the State is estimated at Sfr50.2 million, has been submitted for the construction of a building dedicated to immune system engineering in oncology to be occupied by Ludwig Lausanne Branch. The State Council has requested an investment credit for this building in order to honour its commitment to LICR as soon as possible.

Information and Communication Office of the State of Vaud

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Further information:

Pierre-Yves Maillard, State Councillor, Head of the DSAS, +41 21 316 50 04
Anne-Catherine Lyon, State Councillor, Head of the DFJC, +41 21 316 30 01
UNIL: Géraldine Falbriard, geraldine.falbriard@unil.ch, +41 79 897 30 14
CHUV: Darcy Christen, medias@chuv.ch, +41 79 556 60 00