

press release

Milan - Singapore: An International Bridge To Foster Biomedical Research

Milan, March 23rd 2009 - An international cooperation agreement highly relevant from both the scientific and the institutional perspective was signed today at the IFOM-IEO Campus between **IFOM** - the FIRC Institute for Molecular Oncology Foundation, **IEO** - the European Institute of Oncology - and **SEMM** - the European School for Molecular Medicine - from Milan on the one hand, and **A*STAR**, the Agency for Science, Technology and Research of Singapore which is now considered the fourth major international hub for research, on the other.

The cooperation agreement intends to establish synergies among the four institutions on key areas of mutual scientific and technological interest.

Some initiatives foreseen include joint research and development projects in key technology areas that are of mutual interest; the exchange of scientific and technological information and research materials; staff and student exchanges and visits; holding scientific workshops, conferences and symposia; providing for PhD training through a split-site PhD arrangement; and cooperation in commercialization of intellectual property and technology transfer.

The agreement was signed today by Mr **Lim Chuan Poh**, Chairman of **A*STAR**, Prof. **Umberto Veronesi**, Scientific Director of **IEO** and Chairman of **SEMM**, Prof **Giuseppe Della Porta**, President of **IFOM** and Dr. **Carlo Ciani**, Chief Executive Officer of **IEO**.

“There is much that the four institutions can learn from each other - Said Mr Lim Chuan Poh, Chairman of A*STAR - to strengthen our biomedical research facilities and capabilities. The agreement signed today is a reflection of our commitment to engaging in meaningful scientific partnerships for the production of world class research. Moving forward, I am confident that there will be many opportunities for collaboration and cultivating outstanding young scientists who will make a difference to the world and create the future.”

Prof. Marco Foiani, Scientific Director of IFOM, declared that “the cooperation with our colleagues in Singapore strengthens the international dimension of our institutions working on synergies in research and helping in the creation of new highly qualified training opportunities. Among the first initiatives following this agreement, I’d like to mention the exchange program for PhD students within joint research projects on a 2 year period”.

“The European Institute of Oncology – explained Professor Umberto Veronesi, Scientific Director of IEO - was conceived with a global vision and with the aim of becoming a reference point in Europe for cancer research and treatment, and specialist training in oncology. The creation of IFOM and SEMM provides concrete evidence of the success of this mission. It is not surprising therefore, that the fourth most important research centre in the world has chosen us to be the bridge between Europe and Singapore.”

Institutional profiles of the signatories

A*STAR is Singapore's lead agency for fostering world-class scientific research and talent for a vibrant knowledge-based Singapore. A*STAR actively nurtures public sector research and development in Biomedical Sciences, Physical Sciences and Engineering, with a particular focus on fields essential to Singapore's manufacturing industry and new growth industries.

IFOM (the FIRC Institute of Molecular Oncology Foundation), is a research institute dedicated to the study of the molecular mechanisms underlying cancer formation and development. IFOM holds a number of agreements with scientific institutions in the area, such as the San Raffaele Biomedical Science Park of Milan, the Istituto Nazionale per lo Studio e la Cura dei Tumori of Milan, the Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche Mario Negri, which allow scientists from these institutes to perform innovative research at IFOM.

IEO (the European Institute of Oncology) is an independent, nonprofit biomedical research institution and one of the 8 Ministry of Health-designated comprehensive cancer centres in Italy. In addition to providing patients with the best care available, IEO is committed to cutting-edge research in oncology, ranging from basic to translational research and clinical trials.

SEMM (the European School for Molecular Medicine) is a private foundation, whose mission is to foster innovative education in the post-genomic field through: international Ph.D. programs in Molecular Medicine, Medical Nanotechnology and and the Foundations and Ethics of Life Sciences; International Post-doc program; International Conferences; scientific seminars.