

Medicen supports four healthcare winners in Innovation Challenge

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These four SMEs will receive a total of over €2 million to finance their projects spanning artificial intelligence in radiology, early diagnosis of cancer, telemedicine for heart failure patients and prediction of acute episodes in cystic fibrosis



Medicen Paris Region, Europe's leading health competitiveness cluster has supported four of the eight winners in the healthcare category of the second wave of the French government's Innovation Challenge program. The four SMEs will receive in total more than €2 million (\$2.3M) from Bpifrance, the French government's investment bank, to finance their research and development projects. This result emphasizes the importance of the high added value that Medicen's support brings to companies in its competitiveness cluster, especially in national grant opportunities.

The publicly-funded Innovation Challenge, which forms part of the French government's investment plan, operated by ADEME (the French Environment and Energy Management Agency), Bpifrance and FranceAgriMer, aims to support innovative projects led by startups and SMEs around several themes, including healthcare. The second edition is aimed at supporting start-ups and SMEs from the diagnostics and prevention sectors. The Challenge fosters these innovative projects by helping to accelerate the growth of those businesses which aspire to become European and even global leaders in their sector. The Challenge selects innovation projects that show a high potential to be particularly beneficial to the French economy. It offers the co-financing of selected projects in research, development and innovation with total costs of between €600K and €5M (\$681K - \$5.7M).

"We are always happy to help our members in becoming successful. Our ambitious strategy is to be a key driver in the innovative healthcare technologies ecosystem," said Stéphane Roques, general manager of the Medicen Paris Region competitiveness cluster. "We will reinforce and strengthen our support and assistance to healthcare start-ups in order to further accelerate the transformation of our scientific and medical resources into economic value for the French healthcare sector."

Medicen assessed and certified four SMEs in order to stimulate their development and facilitate their financing:

Incepto Medical: Augmented Radiology project Incepto's mission is two-fold: to help physicians identify, access and use the best-in-class imaging AI (artificial intelligence) solutions; and to use these to create new applications, tailored to their specific needs. The €350,000 (\$396K) Augmented Reality R&D project will fund the development of the platform for the co-creation of medical applications to assist with radiological diagnostics. It has a simple ambition: to help doctors make full use of the technology's applications in order to save time, improve diagnosis quality and ultimately save lives.

Metafora Biosystems: CellMETA-analyzer project The CellMETA-analyzer R&D project will receive €1 million (\$1.13M) in funding. The plan is to develop a completely automated platform that can detect any type of cancer cell. It has great potential for large-scale manufacturing. Combining the best of biological science with mathematical modelling, the platform could help in the fight against cancer. Metafora Biosystems' platform is unique; it will individually detect and characterize the cellular energetics of each cell, as well as diagnose diseases early and efficiently.

CardioRenal: IMPACT project The IMPACT project, with a funding of €355,000 (\$402K), aims to develop a more advanced version of CardioRenal's telemedicine solution, HomeHeart™. This solution enables the daily measurement of three cardiac biomarkers via a drop of capillary blood taken by the patient at home. The collected measurements are input online to a healthcare data web host, which makes them accessible to the physician. The physician can then optimize the patient's treatment, even with an unstable condition.

HomeHeart's new version aims to simplify the measurement and make it painless for the patient, thus facilitating daily, repeatable and minimally invasive measurements. In addition, software tools (apps) will be developed to facilitate patient access to personalized information. The overall goal is to better adapt the treatment for unstable heart failure patients, to promote exchanges between patient communities and thus better treat severe heart failure.

Rheonova: MucoCF project Rheonova designs rheometers to be used for the measurement of biological fluids, particularly in chronic respiratory diseases. The MucoCF project, funded to the amount of €352,000 (\$398K), intends to establish a predictive tool for acute episodes for use by cystic fibrosis patients. These acute episodes represent a significant deterioration in the patient's condition, leading to an irreversible loss of respiratory capacity and emergency hospitalization. Predicting acute episodes can improve anticipation treatments and limit clinical consequences.

In addition to these four SMEs, MagIA Diagnostics, a member of the Lyonbiopole competitiveness cluster which joined Medicen Paris Region in January 2019, is also a winner of the Innovation Contest for its MagIA Dia IST project. MagIA Diagnostics has received a €296,000 (\$335K) grant to develop a portable biological analysis device based on an innovative immunomagnetic technology. This device will be developed to simultaneously and quickly detect infectious diseases in only 15 minutes, by taking a single finger-prick drop of blood.

Winners will receive the awards at a ceremony this summer.