



- **Astex Receives IND Approval for its Small Molecule HSP90 Inhibitor AT13387**
- **Astex Announces Extension of Drug Discovery Alliance**

Cambridge, UK, 6th February 2008. Astex Therapeutics announced today that it has received approval of its Investigational New Drug (IND) application from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for AT13387, a selective small molecule inhibitor of Heat Shock Protein 90 (Hsp90) to treat cancer. This is the third IND candidate from Astex's internal discovery and development programmes to be approved. The Company's other clinical stage products, AT9283, a multi-targeted kinase inhibitor, and AT7519, a cyclin dependent kinase inhibitor, received IND approvals in 2006 and 2005 respectively. Astex plans to begin clinical trials of AT13387 in cancer patients during 2008. Preclinical data showing efficacy for AT13387 in tumour models was presented at the American Association for Cancer Research annual meeting in April 2007.

Also today, Astex announced that Novartis has exercised an option to extend the companies' drug discovery alliance for the discovery and development of novel cell cycle control drugs for the treatment of cancer and other human diseases. Under the terms of the agreement Novartis will fund additional research at Astex. Astex and Novartis originally entered into a Research Collaboration and Licensing Agreement in December 2005. This collaboration could potentially be worth up to \$520m if all fees, equity payments, option payments and milestones are met.

"I am delighted that we have received our third IND approval in as many years", said Harren Jhoti, Chief Executive Officer of Astex. "This approval is a great achievement and a testament to the productivity of our fragment-based drug discovery platform and keeps us on target to deliver at least one IND candidate per year."

"We are also pleased that Novartis has chosen to dedicate further resources to what has been a very exciting programme of collaborative research. I hope and expect that this collaborative program will generate novel drug candidates that specifically target the cell cycle in tumours."

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About AT13387

AT13387 is a potent and selective non-natural product inhibitor of Hsp90 derived from the Company's Pyramid™ platform. In tumour cells Hsp90 acts as a "molecular chaperone" stabilising and preventing the breakdown of key cancer forming (oncogenic) proteins. These so-called client proteins and their association with different tumour types include HER2 (the target for Herceptin® in breast cancer), the androgen receptor (the target for hormone therapy in prostate cancer), mutant B-raf (melanoma), c-kit (the target for Gleevec® in gastro-intestinal tumours) and mutant EGFr (the target for Tarceva® and Iressa® in the treatment of non-small cell lung cancers). The functional role of Hsp90 means that AT13387 has the potential to control the proliferation of multiple solid tumours and haematological malignancies where uncontrolled cell growth is dependent on interaction between Hsp90 and its client proteins. These include tumour types which have become resistant to initial therapy.

About Astex

Astex Therapeutics is a biotechnology company that discovers and develops novel small molecule therapeutics. Using its pioneering fragment-based drug discovery platform Pyramid™, Astex has built a pipeline of five molecularly-targeted oncology drugs, of which two are currently being tested in clinical trials, one has IND approval, and two are in pre-clinical development.

In addition to its proprietary research programmes, Astex's unprecedented productivity in lead discovery has been endorsed through numerous partnerships with major pharmaceutical companies, including Novartis, AstraZeneca, and Boehringer Ingelheim.

For further information on Astex Therapeutics please visit the Company's website at www.astex-therapeutics.com

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