F-star expedites its transition to a wholly-owned portfolio strategy

- **Reconfigured collaboration represents major advancement in F-star's pivot to a wholly-owned portfolio strategy**
- **F-star retains lead clinical asset, first-in-class bispecific antibody, FS118**
- **FS118 Phase 1 trial study continues according to F-star protocol**
- **Merck exercises option for one discovery stage programme and retains option for second discovery programme from original collaboration**

Cambridge, UK, 14 May 2019 – F-star, a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company delivering tetravalent bispecific antibodies for a paradigm-shift in cancer therapy, today announced the reconfiguration of its immuno-oncology collaboration, established in 2017, with Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany as it executes on its transition to a wholly-owned portfolio and builds scale and value as a world-class biopharmaceutical company.

Under the terms of the new agreement, F-star retains exclusive rights to develop and commercialise FS118, a clinical-stage tetravalent bispecific antibody. At the same time, Merck has exercised its option for one discovery stage programme and retains the right to option a second discovery programme from the 2017 original agreement. No financial terms of the agreement are being disclosed.

Eliot Forster, CEO of F-star, said: *"This new agreement reflects our pivot to building a wholly-owned pipeline, that allows for rapid progress into the clinic and secures greater long-term value from our products. With full rights to FS118, we have an opportunity to accelerate the development of this first-in-class medicine for a group of targeted cancer patients. We are also pleased to continue our long-term collaboration with Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany by advancing assets from F-star's Modular Antibody Technology™ into their pipeline."*

FS118 is a potential first-in-class tetravalent bispecific antibody for the treatment of cancer, developed to overcome tumour evasion mechanisms promoted by two molecules (LAG-3: Lymphocyte-Activation Gene 3 and PD-L1: Programmed Death-Ligand 1) with the potential to restore the natural ability of the immune system to fight cancer[(1)]. Initiated in April 2018 under F-star's sponsorship, the Phase I trial (NCT03440437) continues as originally planned and is expected to read out during 2020.

(1) *LAG-3/PD-L1 mAb² can overcome PD-L1-mediated compensatory upregulation of LAG-3 induced by single-agent checkpoint blockade. Faroudi et al. (March 2019) - Poster at the annual AACR meeting*

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About F-star

F-star is a leading clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company delivering tetravalent bispecific antibodies for a paradigm-shift in cancer therapy. By developing medicines that seek to block tumour immune evasion, the Company's goal is to offer patients greater and more durable benefits than current immuno-oncology treatments. Through its proprietary tetravalent, bispecific antibody (mAb²™) format, F-star is generating first- and best-in-class drug candidates with monoclonal antibody-like manufacturability. Building on the combined expertise of its world-class management team and scientific leadership, F-star is poised to deliver the next breakthrough immunotherapies for cancer patients.

Find out more at www.f-star.com. Connect with us via LinkedIn and Twitter

About FS118

Currently in a Phase I trial at four clinical sites in the United States, FS118 is a potentially first-in-class medicine for the treatment of resistant and refractory cancer. This tetravalent, bispecific antibody is developed to overcome tumour evasion mechanisms promoted by two highly immuno-suppressive molecules: LAG-3 (Lymphocyte-Activation Gene 3) and PD-L1 (Programmed Death-Ligand 1). By simultaneously blocking both inhibitory pathways, FS118 has preclinically demonstrated a potent anti-tumour growth activity[(1)] as well as a highly differentiated mechanism of action[(2)] when compared to checkpoint monotherapies alone or in combinations.

In April 2018, a Phase 1 clinical study started in patients who have progressed on or after a prior PD-1/PD-L1 containing therapy. Information about the trial is available on clinicaltrials.gov NCT03440437. FS118 is manufactured at 2000L scale using standard mAb manufacturing processes.

(1) *Dual blockade of PD-L1 and LAG-3 with FS118, a unique bispecific antibody, induces CD8+ T cell activation and modulates the tumour microenvironment to promote anti-tumour immune responses. Kraman et al. (April 2018) - Poster at the annual AACR meeting*

(2) *LAG-3/PD-L1 mAb² can overcome PD-L1-mediated compensatory upregulation of LAG-3 induced by single-agent checkpoint blockade. Faroudi et al. (March 2019) - Poster at the annual AACR meeting*