

GeneCode's *KevadBio* project receives €1.5 million grant to complete preclinical studies and begin human trials

GeneCode has secured a grant of approximately €1.5 million from the Estonian Business and Innovation Agency to advance its Parkinson's drug development project. The funding, along with GeneCode's own contribution, will help complete preclinical studies and pave the way for first-in-human study.

According to **GeneCode's CEO Paavo Pily**, the project's ultimate goal is to develop a breakthrough drug against neurodegeneration. "The drug we are developing is a novel small-molecule mimetic designed for the treatment of Parkinson's disease (PD). Our goal is to offer the first-known PD drug on the market that not only provides symptomatic relief but also has the potential to halt the progression of the disease," he stated.

Currently, the project is focused on completing preclinical studies, including IND (Investigational New Drug) studies and efficacy testing, which are essential steps for advancing the drug into Phase I first-in-human study. "The outcome of this phase will be small-molecule drug candidate that mimics the biological effects of GDNF, protecting and restoring dopamine neurons in the early stages of Parkinson's disease," added **GeneCode's CSO Prof Mart Saarma**.

The uniqueness of the drug lies in its ability to protect and restore dopamine neurons, addressing both motor and non-motor symptoms. Prof Saarma also highlighted that the drug is orally administered, thus avoiding invasive surgical procedures, which remain a drawback of many current treatment options.

The project's, carried out in collaboration with Argobio, budget exceeds €2 million, allocated across drug product production, animal, and tox studies. Development will be carried out by internationally renowned contract research organizations (CROs) to ensure high-quality scientific and clinical outcomes. The project also involves collaboration with several universities, including the University of Helsinki and University of Tartu.

GeneCode, established in 1998 in Estonia, is a privately held drug development company that focuses on creating disease-modifying drugs to combat neurodegeneration. The company's innovative approach involves GDNF mimetics, transferring the disease-modifying properties of GDNF to small molecules with drug-like properties.