

Piqur Therapeutics: Moving on up, but staying close to the Technologiepark Basel



Richard Laube, Executive Chairman of Piqur Therapeutics (Img: Technologiepark Basel)

„Coincidentally, we have just moved out,“ says Richard Laube, Executive Chairman of Piqur Therapeutics. But what sounds like bad news for Technologiepark Basel is only the latest chapter in the success story of the pharmaceutical company.

That story started with Piqur’s spin-off from the University of Basel in 2011. Only three years later, 5 offices were no longer enough for 12 employees, and the company started the search for a new home for the first time. „We explored different facilities in the city centre, but none seemed to offer the right environment and terms for a small life science company,“ explains Laube. „Fortunately, and by chance, we found out that Technologiepark Basel – which was still very small at that time – was expanding. So we took a closer look.“ Soon after, Piqur had become the first tenant of the extended Technologiepark Basel in 2014.

Moving out, maintaining close ties

Fast-forward to 2018, and Piqur was renting the entire ground floor of the Technologiepark Basel plus an additional office, with a total headcount of more than 20 employees. Once again, the space could no longer satisfy the needs of the fast-growing start-up, explains Richard Laube: „We felt our team was a little too spread out, and we wanted to further



facilitate the shared and collaborative culture among our employees.”

So Piqur started its site selection process again, only this time, they didn’t have to go far: Piqur found its brand-new office space in the building right next door to Technologiepark Basel.

*The new Piqur offices
(Img: foto-werk gmbh)*

A new coffee kitchen is not the only amenity Piquir enjoys in their new offices. More importantly, the company is able to continue to use services provided by Technologiepark Basel next door, among them incoming mail, reception, server rooms and meeting rooms. „This is an ideal situation for us: We're in our own offices while still benefiting from the services offered by the Technologiepark Basel,” says a visibly pleased Laube. The continuing exchange with the startup community next door is another asset: “We will maintain our close ties with the Technologiepark – we definitely want to remain a part of this inspiring environment.”

Gel treatment in addition to capsules for patients

Piquir is developing drugs targeting the PI3K/mTOR signaling pathway, which plays an important role in cancer development. The inhibition of this pathway can induce cancer cell death. This mechanism of action is not limited to cancer, but is also linked to several diseases in dermatology and neurology. „Our main goal at the moment is to achieve proof of concept in clinical trials after which we intend to introduce a first drug to the market”, says the Executive Chairman.

While Piquir has its first active substance already in the clinic as an oral capsule, it is currently also developing a gel formulation for the topical treatment of skin cancers and other skin disorders. Advantages of the gel for the patients are easy application and fewer side effects. Laube explains the next steps: „We plan to start the clinical study in the second half of 2019. As there is currently no other approved drug in the U.S. or Europe for the indications investigated, we will hopefully receive a fast track approval in about five years.”

If given the chance to do it all over, Richard Laube would start out at Technologiepark Basel again: „The Technologiepark has given Piquir the ideal space and infrastructure to develop and expand our business. In addition, we have found a community here that is happy to help with any question – even about the science. It's an inspiring and thriving environment where we share the same ideals and spirit, and there is space for all of us. As a life sciences or biotech startup you couldn't be in a better place.”

Piquir Therapeutics

Piquir Therapeutics is a Swiss clinical-stage pharmaceutical company, incorporated in August 2011 as a spin-off of the University of Basel. The privately held company focuses on the discovery and development of innovative drugs based on PI3K/mTOR-inhibition for cancer and genetic disorders. Piquir's lead compound, bimiralisib (PQR309), is a brain-penetrant, dual inhibitor of the PI3K/mTOR pathway, which is currently in development for solid tumors as a capsule formulation for oral administration, and as a topical gel formulation for non-melanoma skin cancers. The company holds a worldwide exclusive license on the intellectual property rights for development and commercialization of bimiralisib and related series of analogues.

www.piquir.com

Technologiepark Basel

The Technologiepark Basel is the premier address for early-stage tech start-ups in Basel that transform knowledge into marketable products and services. It offers a collaboration-friendly, yet business-driven environment and is part of the rapidly growing Stücker Park in the dynamic northern part of Basel. Tenants are selected carefully to ensure a high level of innovation.

www.technologiepark.ch