**CANDIDATE Center – GUIDELINES**

*General*

The CANDIDATE Center operates as a translational drug development unit within Amsterdam Neuroscience, accessible to all principal investigators within Amsterdam Neuroscience. The center provides expertise and facilities for target discovery and drug development for CNS indications. Investigators can approach the CANDIDATE Center with ideas about disease mechanisms or model systems that can be a starting point for a screening and drug development effort. Depending on the project, a target discovery/validation effort is initiated or a drug screen will be developed. This will entail genetic CRISPR screens to identify novel targets for a phenotype of interest, or the design, optimization and execution of drug screens using enzymatic assays. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to jointly generate novel composition of matter intellectual property, i.e. drugs. Additionally, with every project an effort for the development of a companion diagnostic is started.

*Selection of projects*

The CANDIDATE Center will continuously scout, and can always be contacted for, new projects. Once every six months, two new projects are selected to be started as a collaboration between the involved principal investigator(s) and the CANDIDATE Center. Selection is done at a joined meeting between the CANDIDATE Center Management Team and the Advisory Board consisting of the directors of Amsterdam Neuroscience.

Projects to be initiated at the CANDIDATE Center are selected on the following eligibility criteria:

* There should be substantial scientific rationale on a specific target or disease pathway in relation to disease etiology or pathology.
* Preferably there is a genetic link between a target/pathway and the disease.
* The higher the technology readiness level, the better.
* A rationale for the development of a companion diagnostic/biomarker related to a target is preferred.
* The project should, in the end, lead to composition of matter IP that is patentable.
* The project IP should be commercially viable and suitable for out-licensing or spin-off.
* An analysis of the competitive landscape will be made; there should be an unmet medical need and potential for marketing of the new drug.

*Funding of projects*

The CANDIDATE Center has limited funds in place and is continuously working to expand these funds. With these funds there is capacity to design new screens and drug development projects and to initiate a selected set of projects in the lab, as described above. Projects found to be eligible but outside the scope of the current funding can be jointly financed through the following routes:

* Joint grants can be applied for between the respective investigator and the CANDIDATE Center. Under this grant the CANDIDATE Center can write and take responsibility for the drug development and valorization work packages.
* The CANDIDATE Center has an extensive industry network and there is substantial interest from industry to sponsor projects. Depending to stage of the project these can be sponsored in a precompetitive proof of concept manner, or sponsored under research agreements. Within the CANDIDATE center there is ample expertise negotiating these agreements.

*Intellectual property*

Projects to be initiated will always be a collaboration between the CANDIDATE Center and a principal investigator within Amsterdam Neuroscience; these investigators can be employed at VU, UvA, or Amsterdam UMC. Beforehand, for every project a plan will be drafted on the screening efforts and other experiments to be performed. IP will be shared depending on the responsibilities on this work and the background IP and technology readiness level; this will always be agreed on beforehand and discussed in good fate. Please note the following guidelines regarding IP:

* On a project basis, IP will vest at the respective knowledge centers involved: VU, VUMC, AMC and/or UvA.
* IP shares (%) will be discussed in advance between the involved research groups and the CANDIDATE Center (vested at VUMC) and will depend on the respective contributions to the project.
* A framework agreement will be put in place between legal entities within Amsterdam Neuroscience: VUMC, AMC, VU, UvA.
* Publication strategy is discussed in advance with investigators and agreed upon.
* Programs are to be out-licensed or spun-out; here revenue is shared according to the ‘kennisregeling valorisatie’.