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PlantForm launches HIV antibody project

GUELPH, Ont.— The National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP) has awarded PlantForm Corporation \$292,777 to develop antibodies for the treatment of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

The company will focus on producing antibodies that fight infection by disrupting the virus's method of entry into human CD4⁺ lymphocytes (T-cells).

“PlantForm is pleased to join international efforts to develop effective, affordable, accessible treatments for HIV,” said Dr. Don Stewart, President and CEO. “This award validates the viability of our platform technology for low-cost therapeutic drug production, and we look forward to advancing antibody production against this target.”

The funding for the 16-month project comes from [NRC-IRAP's Canadian HIV Technology Development \(CHTD\) Program](#), which aims to encourage and support the participation of small- and medium-sized enterprises in the development of an HIV vaccine and other technologies related to the prevention, treatment and diagnosis of HIV. The program is part of the [Canadian HIV Vaccine Initiative \(CHVI\)](#), a collaborative effort between the Government of Canada and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The funding has allowed PlantForm to hire three additional technical staff members to support the project, which concludes on March 31, 2013.

PlantForm Corporation's mission is to provide low-cost antibody drugs to help people fight cancer and other critical illnesses. The company's first product, a plant-produced version of the \$6-billion breast cancer drug Herceptin[®], is now in pre-clinical trials. Projected revenue is more than \$50 million by 2016.

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