



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Axxam SpA receives funding for the development of compounds for prevention treatment of disability in Multiple Sclerosis

Milan, Italy, July 14th, 2011

Axxam SpA today announced funding support from Fast Forward, LLC, a not-for-profit organization established by the U.S. National Multiple Sclerosis Society and Merck Serono, a division of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. The award of funds will help support Axxam SpA advance the development of small molecules that prevent the sodium-calcium exchanger NCX1 activation, which have the potential to preclude axonal injury and ultimately clinical disability in Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

“We are delighted to gain this substantial funding, as well as to be able to work with Fast Forward and their collaborative partner, Merck Serono,” said Stefan Lohmer co-founder and CEO of Axxam“.

The award from Fast Forward and Merck Serono provides Axxam SpA with \$430,590 over 18 months, is distributed from the Accelerating Commercial Development Fund, which is allocated to for-profit entities and is designed to accelerate the development of research discoveries into new or improved therapies for people with multiple sclerosis.

“The potential of MS research currently in progress around the globe holds great promise for improving the quality of life for people living with MS,” said Dr. Timothy Coetzee, Chief Research Officer at the National MS Society and Fast Forward. We are pleased to have the opportunity to advance that promise through the continued collaboration between Fast Forward and Merck Serono. Our commitment to furthering research that will end MS remains steadfast, and we look forward to learning more from the results of these innovative research projects.”

About NCX1

The activation of the sodium-calcium exchanger NCX1 functioning in reverse mode, is thought to cause nerve cell death in MS. Under the terms of the agreement, Axxam will screen its extensive chemical library to develop small molecules that target the sodium-calcium exchanger NCX1 on axons preventing its activation.



About Axxam SpA

Axxam is a privately owned contract research and discovery company located at the San Raffaele Biomedical Science Park in Milan, Italy. The company has developed a proven track record as a third party research and discovery services provider for the life science industry. In addition, Axxam conducts several discovery programs for selected targets which are carried out in partnership with other companies or non-profit organizations. For more information please visit www.axxam.com or contact Sabrina Corazza at sabrina.corazza.sc@axxam.com.

About Fast Forward, LLC

Fast Forward, LLC, established by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society as part of a comprehensive approach to MS research and treatment, focuses on speeding promising research discoveries towards commercial drug development. Fast Forward accelerates the development of treatments for MS by connecting university-based MS research with private-sector drug development and by funding small biotechnology/pharmaceutical companies to develop innovative new MS therapies and repurpose FDA-approved drugs as new treatments for MS. For more information, please visit www.fastforward.org.

About MS and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society

MS is a chronic, unpredictable neurological disease that affects the central nervous system. It is thought to be an autoimmune disorder, meaning the immune system incorrectly attacks healthy tissue. Symptoms may be mild, such as numbness in the limbs, or severe, such as paralysis or loss of vision. These problems may be permanent or may come and go. The National MS Society addresses the challenges of each person affected by MS by funding cutting-edge research, driving change through advocacy, facilitating professional education, collaborating with MS organizations around the world, and providing programs and services designed to help people with MS and their families move their lives forward. The Society is dedicated to achieving a world free of MS. Join the movement at www.nationalMSSociety.org.