HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT
GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY - HELLAS
INSTITUTE OF MOLECULAR BIOLOGY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY

Heraklion 16/12/2024

PRESS RELEASE

Searching for new solutions to control malaria mosquitoes: IMBB-FORTH in Greece receives funding for the discovery of novel solutions for control of the malaria mosquitoes

The **Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology** of the Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas in Greece (IMBB-FORTH) announced the initiation of a three-year research project to be carried out at IMBB-FORTH, funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The project aims to develop innovative insecticides for the control of malaria mosquitoes and will be carried out by **John Vontas**, Director of IMBB-FORTH and Professor at the Agricultural University of Athens, and his team.

Malaria is a parasitic disease transmitted by mosquitoes, with a huge burden on human health and well-being in some of the poorest parts of the world, with several hundred thousand lethal cases annually, mostly of children below the age of five. Today, prevention of the disease is based mainly on the use of insecticides. However, insecticide resistance is at a critical tipping point in public health, with some mosquito populations showing resistance to all classes of insecticides. Therefore, the discovery of new innovative insecticides is of highest priority for controlling this devastating disease. The project to be initiated at IMBB-FORTH seeks to enlarge the range of potential gene targets for future insecticide-based control strategies. Prof. John Vontas and his team will apply a holistic biotechnology approach, using their extensive experience in the field and state-of-the-art technologies to enable the identification and characterization of new and unique molecular targets for the development of novel mosquito control solutions. If successful, the project's outcome will widen the range of strategies and practices available to control malaria in a sustainable manner and thus have a direct impact on health and quality of life in areas where malaria is rampant.

www.imbb.forth.gr

Nikolaou Plastira 100
Vassilika Vouton
GR 700 13 Heraklion
Crete, Greece
Tel. +30 2810391700
Fax +30 2810391101
Email: imbb@imbb.forth.gr

"This major research grant will allow us to harness our technological know-how and enable further development of novel means and knowledge in the fight against insect pests", John Vontas said.

"We are deeply honored to receive funding support from one of the major charitable organizations for a project of such global significance" added Prof. Nektarios Tavernarakis, Chairman of the Board of Directors at FORTH and Professor at the University of Crete.

IMBB-FORTH

The Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (IMBB) of the Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas (FORTH) based in Crete, is one of the most prominent life science research institutions in Greece and Europe, with an outstanding record of scientific achievements, state-of-the -art infrastructures and a broad range of research, innovation and educational activities. IMBB was established by Prof. Fotis Kafatos in 1983, a pioneer molecular biologist, having had a pivotal role in triggering the interest of the Institute also in malaria vector research.

More info:
John Vontas
Director, IMBB
Agricultural University of Athens,
Head of Molecular Entomology at IMBB
eMail: vontas@imbb.forth.gr | Tel.: +30 2810391136