Press Release June 15, 2012

CRTD approved as Cluster of Excellence and DFG Research Center
Dresden’s research center again receives research funds from the excellence initiative

Dresden. The Center for Regenerative Therapies Dresden (CRTD) has successfully passed the third phase of the excellence initiative. The Cluster of Excellence of the TU Dresden (TUD) and the Research Center of the German Research Foundation (DFG) – the CRTD has qualified to keep these two titles and will be continuously funded for the coming five years. This was confirmed today by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research as well as the German Research Foundation together with the German Council of Science and Humanities.

With today’s confirmation, the CRTD can celebrate twice: not only was the research institute able to achieve the title of an Cluster of Excellence of the TUD for the second time, it is also financed for a third funding period as DFG Research Center by the DFG for the next 5 years. “This large-scale project, funded with more than 40 million Euros, will accomplish significant scientific progress in the areas of biomedicine/biotechnology in the coming years and will further strengthen the TU Dresden’s excellent international reputation,” says the Rector of the TUD, Prof. Hans Müller-Steinhagen.

“We are very proud that the CRTD again has asserted itself in the excellence initiative,” says Professor Michael Brand, Director of the CRTD. „Both awards confirm our aim to consistently build and extent the CRTD to become a worldwide renowned biomedical research institute with excellent international scientists“. Not only the 260 employees in the core-institute have added to this success story but also the 90+ employees in the seven separate institutes in Dresden that belong to the CRTD’s interdisciplinary network. Professor Brand continues: „It is our aim to study the capacity for regeneration of the human body and to develop entirely new regenerative therapies for so far incurable diseases. With the recent move into the new modern building, we now have the necessary premises to host more than 400 employees from about 32 nations to do research, to work and teach“.

The center’s research focus is on hematology/immunology, diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases as well as bone and cartilage replacement. Currently, six professors and nine research group leaders work at the CRTD. Due to the CRTD
structure, their results can quickly be transferred from basic research into to clinical applications. Additionally, the CRTD professors teach the new generation of scientists in the “International Master’s Program in Regenerative Biology and Medicine” and in the international PhD programs of the TU Dresden.

In the coming five years, the CRTD wants to advance the patient-specific stem cell research and standardize projects and processes in research and teaching. Among others, the research focus on neurodegenerative diseases of the retina such as macular degeneration and Retinitis Pigmentosa will be extended. Into the new funding period falls the equally DFG-funded expansion of the cross-institutional technology platforms in microscopy and in clinic-compliant cell manufacturing, which provides professional development, production and therapeutic applications of novel cell and tissue therapies, tissue engineering products as well as support in pharmaceutical legislation to internal and external users. Translationally working preclinical and clinical research groups will thereby be closely linked and synergistically combine the expertise of several partners at the highest level and with state-of-the-art equipment at the Dresden Campus.

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The 2006 founded DFG-Center for Regenerative Therapies Dresden (CRTD) at the Technische Universität Dresden is so far the only DFG Center and Cluster of Excellence in Eastern Germany. The director of this institute is Michael Brand, professor for Developmental and Neurobiology. Aim of the CRTD is to explore the capacity for regeneration of the human body and to develop novel regenerative therapies for so far incurable diseases like diabetes, Parkinson, or Cardiovascular diseases. The center’s major fields of research are focused on hematology/immunology, diabetes, neurodegeneration and bone and cartilage regeneration. Currently, six professors and nine group leaders are working at the CRTD, they are integrated into a network of over 90 member labs at several institutions in Dresden. In addition, 18 partners from industry are supporting the network. The synergies in the network allow for a fast translation of results from basic research to clinical applications.