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Trill Impact Ventures leads Zafrens' USD 6 million Series A extension round to advance next-generation drug discovery

Accelerating the path from biological insight to new medicines

Trill Impact Ventures has led a USD 6 million Series A extension round in Zafrens, alongside existing investor imec.xpand. Zafrens is a San Diego-based TechBio company developing an ultra-high-throughput experimental platform that generates rich biological data to test and validate drug discovery hypotheses at scale.

The investment marks Trill Impact Ventures' first investment in TechBio, an emerging area at the intersection of biology, technology and data. Advances in computational biology and AI are rapidly increasing the ability to generate hypotheses and predict potential drug candidates, while creating a growing need for experimental approaches capable of validating these predictions in complex biological systems.

Zafrens' proprietary Z-Screen platform addresses this need by combining microfluidics, longitudinal cell imaging and sequencing to connect molecular information with cellular function at ultra-high throughput. This enables biological hypotheses to be tested and validated with a scale and depth of experimental data that have historically been difficult to achieve. The financing aims to support the advancement of Zafrens' internal drug pipeline and continued expansion of the Z-Screen platform.

In conjunction with the financing, Bita Sehat, Ph.D., Partner at Trill Impact Advisory, will join Zafrens' Board of Directors. Paul Laikind, Ph.D., a seasoned biotechnology entrepreneur with extensive experience building and scaling life sciences companies, has been appointed Chairman of the Board. Kevin Eastwood, who brings more than two decades of experience in biotechnology business development and strategic transactions, joins the company as Chief Business Officer. Joey Azofeifa, Ph.D., who brings a decade of experience in computational biology, AI-driven drug discovery and biotechnology entrepreneurship, has recently joined Zafrens as Chief Technology Officer.

"*What attracted us to Zafrens is its ability to generate the experimental evidence needed to interrogate complex biology at scale,"* said Bita Sehat. "*As AI accelerates drug discovery, the ability to test and validate biological hypotheses becomes increasingly important. Zafrens is uniquely positioned to address this need, with a powerful technology platform and a proprietary pipeline that demonstrates its potential to translate scientific insights into differentiated medicines."*

"*Zafrens has reached an important inflection point as we translate the extraordinary scale and resolution of our platform into drug discovery programs with the potential to generate meaningful new medicines,"* said Swamy Vijayan, Founder and CEO of Zafrens. "*We are delighted to welcome Trill Impact and Bita to Zafrens as we enter this next phase of the company's development*."

SDG and Impact Contribution:
Zafrens' work is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the global framework adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 to improve health and education, reduce inequality, spur economic growth and tackle climate change.

Drug discovery remains a lengthy, costly and highly uncertain process, with many potential medicines failing during development. By enabling earlier and more efficient validation of drug candidates, Zafrens has the potential to reduce the time and resources required in drug discovery and support better-informed decisions about which candidates progress into development. Ultimately, this could contribute to the development of more effective medicines and better outcomes for patients. Zafrens' activities thereby contribute primarily to:

SDG 3 **Good Health and Well-being,** including target 3.4 on reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

SDG 9 **Industry, innovation and infrastructure**, including target 9.5 on enhancing scientific research and technological capabilities

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About Trill Impact

Trill Impact is a European private markets firm with EUR 1.4 billion in assets under management, investing in companies that provide solutions for a Sustainable Planet, a Resilient Society and for Healthy People. Trill Impact aims to deliver attractive financial returns to its investors, by exclusively making investments that matter for current and future generations. For more information, please visit www.trillimpact.com.

About Zafrens

Zafrens is redefining drug discovery through its next-generation Z-Screen platform, combining phenotypic and molecular screening at ultra-high throughput and single-cell resolution. By generating deep insight into disease-relevant cells, the platform supports the development of differentiated therapeutic candidates and R&D collaborations across oncology, immunology, neuroscience and metabolic disease.

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