



◆ Skuldtech, a genomic biomarker company specialized in developing diagnostic tests, has announced that it has secured € 1 million in funding from Bpifrance (French public financing structure) as part of the [ROMANE](#) project on Alzheimer's disease that has received funding of € 8.6 million in total. The program is planned to last for four years, with the first results expected in 2018. As part of the program, Skuldtech will develop a companion diagnostic for AB Science's masitinib molecule and a diagnostic for the validity of cognitive tests and tests to predict the progression of Alzheimer's disease. Using blood samples taken as part of the Phase III trial of masitinib in Alzheimer's disease, Skuldtech will identify the blood biomarkers that will help make simple, reliable diagnostic tests available as a matter of routine. This will result in treatments that can be tailored to the patient and the ability to monitor sufferers as their disease progresses. The [clinical trial of masitinib](#) was launched in Europe and other countries in May 2013. It expects to recruit a total of 400 patients. Using further blood samples, Skuldtech will also develop a diagnostic for the validity of cognitive tests and tests predicting the progression (slow or rapid) of Alzheimer's disease. This project builds on Skuldtech's recent success in identifying blood biomarkers associated with a cognitive score. The company identified two sets of new blood markers, each associated with two trisomy 21 patient populations with low and high IQs respectively. The results of this study were published in the *European Journal of Human Genetics* in February 2013 (Megarbane et al: "The intellectual disability of trisomy 21: differences in gene expression in a case series of patients with lower and higher IQ). By describing the blood transcriptional profile of each group, Skuldtech identified specific biomarkers corresponding to a level of response in cognitive tests. The company hopes to emulate this result in the Alzheimer's disease program. (http://biopharmanalyses.fr/detail-levee-fond/?id_1f=532)