SandboxAQ and MapLight Therapeutics Announce Strategic Collaboration to Discover and Develop Novel CNS Therapies

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SAN FRANCISCO and BOSTON, Dec. 16, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SandboxAQ and MapLight Therapeutics, Inc. (Nasdaq: MPLT) announced today that the companies have entered into a strategic collaboration to discover and develop potential first-in-class therapies targeting a novel G protein-coupled receptor (GPCR) for the treatment of central nervous system (CNS) disorders.

Under the terms of the agreement, SandboxAQ received an upfront payment and will be eligible to receive additional preclinical, development, regulatory, and commercial milestone payments of up to $200 million in aggregate. The companies will jointly conduct preclinical research activities and MapLight will have exclusive rights for potential clinical development and commercialization of collaboration compounds.

“We are excited to advance research efforts for this novel target that was identified and validated using our discovery platform,” said James Lillie, Chief Scientific Officer at MapLight. “We look forward to collaborating with SandboxAQ to leverage their AI platform to discover and advance novel therapies that have the potential to address significant unmet patient needs across a spectrum of CNS conditions.”

As part of the collaboration, SandboxAQ will deploy large-scale AI models and high-fidelity molecular simulation designed to rapidly explore receptor structure-functional activity, predict ligand-receptor interactions, and optimize drug properties. These models and simulations enable exploration of compounds at a larger scale, rapid DMTA (Design-Make-Test-Analyze) cycles and faster convergence to potential drug candidates.

“Our AQBioSim platform allows us to simulate and predict molecular interactions with GPCRs with a level of precision that simply wasn’t possible before,” said Andrea Bortolato, VP of Drug Discovery at SandboxAQ. “Our platform enables a systematic, data-driven exploration of chemical space that has eluded traditional approaches, thereby accelerating the generation and optimization of potential drug candidates. By combining our platform with MapLight’s CNS expertise, we aim to deliver potential first-in-class therapies for a promising GPCR target.”

About SandboxAQ

SandboxAQ is a B2B company delivering solutions at the intersection of AI and quantum techniques. The company's Large Quantitative Models (LQMs) deliver critical advances in life sciences, financial services, navigation, and other sectors. The company emerged from Alphabet Inc. as an independent, growth-backed company funded by leading investors and strategic partners. For more information, visit http://www.sandboxaq.com.

Media contact: press@sandboxaq.com

About MapLight Therapeutics

MapLight Therapeutics is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on improving the lives of patients suffering from debilitating central nervous system disorders. The company was founded by globally recognized leaders in psychiatry and neuroscience research to address the lack of circuit-specific pharmacotherapies available for patients. The company’s discovery platform holds the potential to fill this void by identifying neural circuits causally linked to disease and targeting those circuits for therapeutic modulation.

Investor contact: investors@maplightrx.com
Media contact: media@maplightrx.com

Forward Looking Statements

Certain statements in this press release may constitute “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the federal securities laws, including, but not limited to, the Company’s expectations regarding its plans for and potential benefits of its current and future product candidates and programs, the outcome and benefits of its collaboration with SandboxAQ, and the ability of SandboxAQ’s AI platform to simulate and predict molecular interactions with GPCRs and accelerate the discovery of potential first-in-class novel therapies for CNS conditions. Words such as “may,” “might,” “will,” “objective,” “intend,” “should,” “could,” “can,” “would,” “expect,” “believe,” “design,” “estimate,” “predict,” “potential,” “develop,” “plan” or the negative of these terms, and similar expressions, are intended to identify forward-looking statements. While the Company believes these forward-looking statements are reasonable, undue reliance should not be placed on any such forward-looking statements, which are based on information available to the Company on the date of this release. These forward-looking statements are based upon current estimates and assumptions and are subject to various risks and uncertainties (including, without limitation, those set forth in the Company’s filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)), many of which are beyond the Company’s control and subject to change. Actual results could be materially different. Risks and uncertainties include: global macroeconomic conditions and related volatility; expectations regarding the initiation, progress, and expected results of the Company’s preclinical studies, clinical trials and research and development programs; the unpredictable relationship between preclinical study results and clinical study results; the risk that results obtained in any clinical trials to date may not be indicative of results obtained in ongoing or future trials; the timing or likelihood of regulatory filings and approvals; expectations regarding the Company’s ability to fund its current operations and to secure sufficient additional capital, when required, to fund product development or future commercialization efforts; and other risks and uncertainties identified in the Company’s Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q filed with the SEC on December 4, 2025, and subsequent disclosure documents the Company may file with the SEC. The Company claims the protection of the safe harbor contained in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 for forward-looking statements. The Company expressly disclaims any obligation to update or alter any statements whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law.