

Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009

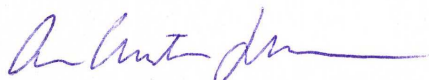
**Letter of intent**

**National multicenter research consortium on Epithelial-Stroma Interactions in Human Carcinoma**

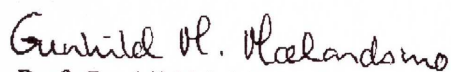
Cellular heterogeneity within the tumor mass has been shown to contribute significantly to therapy failure, recurrence and metastatic progression. Tumor heterogeneity arise through different processes, and recent research suggest that epithelial to mesenchymal transition (EMT) induced by stromal factors present in the microenvironment may contribute to the development of cellular subpopulations with stem cell characteristics, as well as populations with enhanced migratory and invasive phenotype. By gaining new knowledge on the molecular mechanisms involved in the interplay between the tumor cells, the extracellular matrix and the surrounding stroma, novel targets for therapeutic intervention may be identified.

To reach our ambitious goal the hereby signed research groups have established a "National Multicenter Consortium on Epithelial-Stroma Interactions". Together we have extensive experience and international reputation in different complementary areas, all of great value for investigations of different aspects involved in tumor-microenvironment interactions. The ongoing collaboration has resulted in joint publications (Mathisen *et al.*, *Exp. Clin. Mets.*, 2004; Berge *et al.*, *Int. J. Cancer*, revised version submitted).


All the groups will actively participate in the proposed project by performing research and financial support, and will sign a consortia agreement if the project is approved by the Norwegian Research Council.



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