



Press Release

CYTOO, Cenix BioScience and academic collaborators Bioquant, EPFL and FTMC receive a 4 M€EU FP7 grant to launch MEHTRICS consortium

New public-private consortium to further develop the power of high throughput, high content RNAi screening through convergence with micropatterning-based cell assays

December 12, 2011 - [CYTOO](#), a company that specializes in micropattern-enhanced cell-based assays, has teamed up with [Cenix BioScience](#), a pioneer in developing industrial high-content screening applications of RNAi, and three European academic partners to challenge the current limits of high throughput (HT) RNAi screening in cultured cells. The SME-driven project, coordinated by CYTOO, aims to combine HT applications of RNAi with an emerging new technology for normalizing cultured cells' behaviour by growing them on adhesive micropatterns. The MEHTRICS consortium has been awarded a 4 million Euro research grant over 3 years under the European Commission's Seventh Framework Program.

The industrial expertise at CYTOO and Cenix will be ideally complemented by academic partners from the Heidelberg, Germany-based Bioquant/Heidelberg University teams of Drs. Ulrich Schwarz and Holger Erfle, the Lausanne, Switzerland-based EPFL team of Dr. Pierre Gönczy and the Vilnius, Lithuania-based Institute FTMC team of Dr. Ramūnas Valiokas. The highly cross-disciplinary consortium, covering areas from chemistry and nanotechnology to HT cell biology, pharmacology, automated image analysis and mathematical modelling, will develop new know-how for micropattern-enhanced cell-based assays with a very broad range of applicability. Ultimately, the proof of principle for the optimized methodologies will include several test-scale RNAi screens focused on basic and disease-relevant processes.

"Initial studies of our technology's genuinely transformational potential have already begun to reveal its promise for enhancing the quality of existing high content analyses and its potential for establishing novel strategies driving such analyses," said Alexandra Fuchs, COO of CYTOO.

"Since experimental designs required for RNAi screens are among the most demanding of all HT/HC studies in cultured cells, encompassing virtually all technical challenges also encountered in compound screens, we expect the proposed scope of activities to deliver the maximal potential for impactful innovation, widespread adoption and clear relevance for all major applications of HT/HC cell screening, from RNAi to miRNA modulation to analyses of drug action," stated Dr. Christophe Echeverri, CEO/CSO of Cenix.

The consortium's administrative and financial activities will be coordinated by VITAMIB, a well-established French SME specialised in design and management of collaborative research projects.

About CYTOO

CYTOO is a distinctive Life Sciences Systems/ Tools enabling company that currently offers a breakthrough solution that brings robustness, sensitivity and powerful quantification to cell-based assays and High Content Screening (HCS). The technology offers exquisite control over the cells' microenvironment, leading to normalized cell morphology and behaviour. CYTOO is engaged in developing, manufacturing and commercializing innovative products to the Life Sciences research community (industry and academia). The company has tailored a portfolio of innovative products using its proprietary cell adhesive micropattern technologies to target first its fast growing High Content Screening and Analysis segment within the large cell biology market.

www.cytoo.com

About Cenix

Cenix BioScience GmbH conducts contract research and technology development focused on cell-based and *in vivo* applications of RNA interference (RNAi), miRNA modulation and high-content phenotyping to accelerate target discovery, target validation, and the non-clinical development of new drug candidates. Now in its 13th year, Cenix has built up leading scientific and commercial track records, successfully progressing therapeutic programs for numerous industry and academic partners in a wide range of disease fields. This success is anchored in the consistent application of scientific and technical best practices in fully customized, multi-staged projects designed to offer maximal strategic value with full data transparency and carefully minimized risk.

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