
AstraZeneca and MRC Technology Form Strategic Alliance in Discovery Research, Utilising Shared Compound Libraries

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AstraZeneca and MRC Technology, the commercialisation company for the UK's Medical Research Council, today announced a new strategic collaboration to share access to their collections of compounds to aid the search for potential new treatments for serious diseases.

The companies will combine up to 100,000 compounds from AstraZeneca's collection with the MRC Technology compound library of approximately 50,000 compounds. MRC Technology will screen this larger combined library searching for compounds that show activity against novel biological targets. A joint steering committee will review these hits, and decide how to advance promising compounds that could become innovative medicines.

AstraZeneca and MRC Technology will retain ownership of their respective compounds. Individual projects chosen to go forward would trigger option fees and the parties would negotiate further research and license agreements.

In the initial phase of the collaboration the combined libraries will be screened for five biological targets selected by AstraZeneca in the areas of cancer, cardiovascular, neuroscience, and infection. MRC Technology will choose five additional targets to explore.

"As part of our increasing drive to access innovation from external sources, there's real value in collaborating with organisations such as MRC Technology with a track record of success in biomedical research including new areas of disease biology. This collaboration gives us early access to new disease understanding and related novel drug targets, allowing us to broaden the scope and choice of programmes we take forward," says Jin Li, Director Global Compound Sciences at AstraZeneca.

Alan Lamont, Director Science & Technology Alliances at AstraZeneca, said “This deal represents a novel and creative way in which we can generate more value from one of our most significant assets – our compound collection, which may ultimately lead to the development of better medicines for patients. We continue to look for ways to maximise the value of our chemical assets externally through a range of collaborations”.

Dave Tapolczay, CEO of MRC Technology added, “This agreement signals a new era in pharma/academic co-operation. We’re marrying up a high quality compound collection from AstraZeneca with MRC Technology’s drug discovery capabilities in assay development, screening and medicinal chemistry, and applying it to exciting novel targets from some of the world’s foremost academic laboratories. We are confident this synergistic approach will accelerate the discovery of new therapies for serious human diseases.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Medical Research Council Technology (MRC Technology)

MRC Technology is the exclusive commercialisation agent for the UK Medical Research Council, working to translate cutting edge scientific discoveries into commercial products. It is now the most successful academic healthcare technology transfer organization in the world (AUTM Licensing survey 2007).

MRC Technology bridges the gap between innovative basic science and making medicine. MRC Technology works to provide drug-like candidate molecules to innovative new drug targets, and to translate innovative antibody-based drug targets into potent and selective therapeutic antibody candidates giving pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies new starting points for drug discovery and development, based on MRC advances in science.

For more information please visit www.mrc technology.org

About AstraZeneca

AstraZeneca is a global, innovation-driven biopharmaceutical business with a primary focus on the discovery, development and commercialisation of prescription medicines. As a leader in gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, neuroscience, respiratory and inflammation, oncology and infectious disease medicines, AstraZeneca generated global revenues of US \$32.8 billion in 2009. For more information please visit: www.astrazeneca.com

CONTACTS:

Media Enquiries:

Kristian Sjöholm +46 733351426

Investor Enquiries UK:

Karl Hård +44 207 304 5322 mob: +44 7789 654364