



PRESS RELEASE

Hybrigenics provides protein interaction screening and analysis tools for Genethon's muscle cell program

Paris, December 21, 2005 - Hybrigenics, the pathway-based drug discovery company, today announces that Genethon, the gene and cell therapy research and application center, will use Hybrigenics' Yeast Two-Hybrid Screening platform and its Protein Interaction Mapping software in a new program of research into muscle cell proteins and their interaction. The program will allow a better understanding of the muscle and the development of new therapeutic leads.

Genethon's choice of Hybrigenics technology is the latest in a series of collaborations and the company has already provided its technology to a number of leading life science companies and academic institutions. France's Muscular Dystrophy Association (Association Française contre les Myopathies) is providing EUR 894,000 (USD 1,180,000) to finance the whole research program.

Genethon has already carried out a pilot screening study with Hybrigenics in 2004 and 2005. This has resulted Genethon's limb girdle muscular dystrophy laboratory under its director, Dr Isabelle Richard, being able to select several proteins of interest involved in muscular dystrophies. The new program will execute several successive rounds of screening to discover new interactions between the proteins involved, and to establish a more precise map of these proteins. The screenings will be carried out with the high-throughput ISO 9001:2000 certified Yeast Two-Hybrid Screening platform developed by Hybrigenics and analyzed by its proprietary software PIMRider®.

Apart from gaining a better understanding of the muscle cell and its functions, Genethon will use the information assembled through the use of Hybrigenics' screening and analysis tools to improve candidate target selection and prioritization in the drug discovery process. The program will map genome-wide interactomes which are now becoming new standards in the post-genomic era to help gain insight into the mechanism of action of proteins involved in disease processes. Under the terms of the agreement, the data obtained under the collaboration will be fully owned by Genethon.

"This project to map protein interactions within the muscle cell is right in line with Genethon's strategic objectives to develop new drugs for rare diseases, particularly muscular dystrophies, for which effective treatment is still lacking," said Dr. Anne-Marie Masquelier, Genethon's CEO. "The new project will be an important step forward."

"Genethon's choice of Hybrigenics to scale up its muscle interactome project is a strong recognition of our expertise in the field," said Dr. Remi Delansorne, Hybrigenics' CEO. "We are very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to a major effort to find innovative therapeutic solutions for patients afflicted by muscular dystrophies, and will be doing our utmost to fulfil the trust and high expectations that Genethon has expressed."

About Genethon www.genethon.fr

Genethon was created in 1990 under the strong leadership of a patients' organization, the AFM. By combining basic research and industrial development, Genethon is adopting a unique strategy for permanent innovation.

1992 – 1996: realization of the first human genome maps

1995-1997: sequencing and genotyping activities

1997: transfer of sequencing and genotyping activities to public structures. Development of technologies for gene and cell therapies

1998-2003: participation to the Gene Vector Production Network

2003: focus on clinical trials for rare diseases

2004: development of an innovative technique of gene therapy: exon skipping

2005: creation of a production department for clinical vectors (BMP)

Once a pioneer for research on the human genome, today Genethon is focusing on gene and cell therapies and clinical trials for rare diseases.

- five strategic projects for clinical trials in 2006-2007: Duchenne muscular dystrophy, gamma-sarcoglycanopathy, calpainopathy, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome

- valuation for clinical trials

- imaging laboratory (videomicroscope, confocal microscope)

- production unit for clinical vectors and cells (GMP)

- regulatory affairs department and medical affairs department

About AFM www.afm-france.org

Created in 1958, the French Muscular Dystrophy Association (AFM) is a non-profit association registered under French law which includes patients and families affected by neuromuscular diseases. Its mission is to find a cure for these seriously disabling - and currently incurable- diseases, most of which have a genetic origin, and also help people affected by them. Funding comes from a Telethon, the Association's annual fund-raising event held on the first week-end in December. Thanks to the generosity of millions of donors, AFM has become a major player in genetic research in France. In 1990, it created the Genethon laboratory which produced the first maps of the human genome, thus paving the way for the sequencing of the human genome. It was also a partner in the first successful gene therapy for bubble-boys announced by Pr Alain Fischer in 2000. AFM supports each year more than 400 research programs.

About Hybrigenics www.hybrigenics.com

Hybrigenics is a biotechnology company dedicated to the discovery of molecules active against targets validated using the company's proprietary proteomics and bioinformatics technologies. Hybrigenics focuses on protein pathways involved in normal or pathological cell proliferation.

Hybrigenics also offers research services through access to its Yeast Two-Hybrid (Y2H) Screening platform and bioinformatics-based analysis of protein-protein interactions. Its fee-for-service activities have received ISO 9001:2000 certification. Its customers are public and private laboratories involved in the identification and validation of targets in all biological or therapeutic areas.

The company is carrying out its own research programs by screening chemical libraries of small organic molecules against validated targets in oncology, and designing a number of new proprietary molecules optimized for therapeutic use against cancer.

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