New Approaches and Tools for Incubated Biotech SMEs

A New Way to Innovate

natibs

## NATIBS Project :

The biotechnology industry is one of the fastest growing and most exciting sectors of twenty-first century commerce. Biotechnology is a very challenging arena to be starting business in, however, with many companies falling by the wayside or being swallowed up in waves of consolidation. Young SMEs usually have more pressing demands on their attention than the opportunities offered by participating in FP6 research, but NATIBS can give a helping hand.

The NATIBS Project is helping newly created biotechnology companies to become involved in Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) research activities. These start-up companies would find the complexity of the proposal process and other administrative hurdles very challenging, and would be unlikely to join FP6 research without significant assistance. They are being encouraged to become involved in order to reap the benefits of access to the resulting innovations, and the commercial advantages of being introduced to trans-European networks – ***to be continued in page 2.***

## In This Issue



Natibs – In Brief

-Natibs is an European Project Funded.
-Natibs is an ETI project (Economic and Technological Intelligence) started in May 2004 – duration: 30 months

-9 partners in 6 countries (France, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Israel and Sweden)
-7 experienced bio-incubators and a coordination unit composed of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Essonne and Inno-Tsd

-Main Objectives
- -To integrate young DBFs in European Projects
- -To study via 180 audits (technology and strategy) the situation of the young biotech companies
- -To offer new approaches and new tools for incubated bio-firms

-Actions – ***to be continued in page 2***

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The project is encouraging and helping the SMEs to look outwards, to the wider Europe, at a time in their commercial lives when there is a danger they may become too preoccupied with the shorter term demands for survival. One factor making it easier to draw in SMEs from the biotechnology sector is that most of these companies already have a strong culture of research, although on a smaller scale than the large integrated projects and networks of excellence.

The partners are also acquiring useful information about best practices in project and proposal development. This knowledge will be used to write a best practice report for the European Commission, in collaboration with another ETI Project (TALENT SCOUT) which is focused on more mature biotechnology companies. This joint report will review the bigger picture in this area, involving a wider range of companies than NATIBS could cover on its own. The report's lessons will be available to promote good practice across Europe. The project website and a series of newsletters are also spreading the guidance available from the NATIBS partners more widely.

The great advantage for Europe as a whole in drawing in start-up biotechnology SMEs into FP6 is that it allows the ideas and expertise within very young companies to feed into wider European research immediately. It makes this happen long before it might occur if the SMEs were left to rely on their own initiative. In the large FP6 projects that result, the SMEs can expect to be working with some long-established universities, commercial companies and other organisations, creating a good blend of commercial youth and experience.

NATIBS assisted a young company of the french biocluster (GENOPOLE-Essonne) named GENEWAVE to evaluate their proposal on the NMP-IST call (14th October 2004).
As we are absolutely convinced that this European R&D proposal (STREP) will be a success we authorised the mention "NATIBS LABEL".
www.genewave.com

*More information in the NATIBS Issue n°2*

Actions

**You are a young DBF (Dedicated Biotech Firms)! what are our services?**

-Information on European Union FP6 Instruments and opportunities in Biotechnology Sector
-Audits (technology and strategy) to create a perfect fit with the FP6 instruments in favor of your R&D, your innovation financing and your intellectual property.
-Support of your company to integrate existing or future projects as coordinator or partner
-Support of your applications ( proposal, research of partners, management etc...)
Promotion of your company profile and your abilities

**You are a coordinator or a partner of an IP or a NoE or you are preparing a proposal?**

-Research of companies in Europe matching the skills you need to build a strong consortium

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## SMEs, Focus On :

**JPT GmbH (Germany – BioTop)**

**Company Overview**

Jerini AG is the first pharmaceutical company to recognize and systematically use the therapeutic potential of peptides to discover and develop novel drugs. JPT Peptide Technologies GmbH (JPT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Jerini AG.

JPT is a leading supplier of innovative peptide-based services and products. The great variety of proprietary technologies makes the company a unique partner for services ranging from ultra-fast custom peptide synthesis to the assembly of highly sophisticated peptide arrays and ready-to-use kits for biomedical research.

**EU-project**

"Interaction Proteome" is the largest EU-funded project in the field of Proteomics today. The "Integrated Project" brings together the scientific excellence of eleven leading European research institutions and companies. The project will be funded with a total of 12 Million Euros for five years. Major objectives of "Interaction Proteome" include the establishment of a broadly applicable platform of routine methods for the analysis of protein interaction networks in bio-medical research. "Interaction Proteome" will develop novel technology, including a high-end mass spectrometer with extremely large dynamic range, high-density peptide arrays, and improved visualisation technology for light and electron microscopy. The part of JPT Peptide Technologies GmbH, a subsidiary of Jerini AG, in this EU-project is development of novel technologies in the sector of high-density peptide arrays. www.jerini.de

**Chemilia AB (Sweden – Novum Research Park)**

**Company Overview**

Chemilia AB, established in 2002, provides a broad range of services in organic and medicinal chemistry.

Their chemists can assist with lead optimisation, design and synthesis of new target molecules, as well as synthesis of reference compounds, intermediates and metabolites. Their services also include structure analysis and optimisation of synthetic methods.

Services provided:

- Contract research
- Design and synthesis of new target molecules
- Synthesis of reference compounds, intermediates, metabolites
- Optimization of synthetic methods
- Structure analysis
- Problem solving and consultation

Chemilias expertise:

- Heterocyclic chemistry
- Nucleoside and nucleotide chemistry
- Carbohydrate chemistry
- Small peptides, peptidomimetics
- Organometallic chemistry
- Structure analysis
- Molecular design

**EU-Project**

Chemilia were not aware of the instruments of the 6th FP and have never participated in any EC funded project. They are mainly interested in participating in IPs and NoEs and could also consider leading such a project. They are also willing in dedicating up to five years in such projects. For the moment Chemilia doesn't have the in-house resources to write a proposal but can consider training staff in doing so. They mainly see those instruments as a way to get finance, to improve their knowledge in technologies and in enlarging their network. www.chemilia.com

**Genoptics (France-Genopole)** is a three years old startup company based in Orsay, in the Essonne Département (near Paris). The company develops and sells instruments allowing academic laboratories and pharmaceutical companies to monitor on a biochip multiple (> 100) biological interactions in real-time and label free, for biological research purposes or for drug development.

**Genoptics was born within the nearby Evry Genopole BioCluster.** Genoptics is a participant in a EU Integrated Project (Cancerdegradome) to discover cancer biomarkers and responsible for a WP of a STREP (MutQuest), to develop a fast and large scope DNA mutation detection system for cystic fibrosis. www.genoptics-spr.com

**Combinature awarded two major EU Research Grants to advance fight against antibiotic drug resistance (Germany – BBB Management)**

In autumn 2004 Combinature Biopharm AG became a member of both the CombiGyrase and the COMBIG-TOP expert consortia formed under the 6th Framework Programme of the European Commission. Under the European Commission programme for developing novel antibiotics through combinatorial biosynthesis both consortia will receive a total of about 3.5 million Euros funding over three years to conduct their programmes. Combinature is located at the BiotechPark of the Campus Berlin-Buch, one of the largest biomedical hubs and health centres in Germany. The BBB Management GmbH Campus Berlin-Buch is representing the location within the NATIBS project.

The CombiGyrase consortium is aiming to develop improved inhibitors of a bacterial enzyme called "gyrase", which is a highly validated antibiotic drug target. The COMBIG-TOP consortium, which has received substantial funding already under the 5th Framework program, will continue to generate more effective glycopeptide antibiotics which inhibit bacterial cell wall biosynthesis by combinatorial biosynthesis.

Dr. Rolf Zettl, Chief Executive Officer of Combinature explains: "*We are delighted to use our unique combinatorial biosynthesis platform to contribute to the scientific and economic success of both consortia. Combinature will apply its genomic tools, genome mining strategies, proprietary gene transfer capabilities and a large selection of enzymes to generate improved gyrase inhibitors and glycopeptides. These consortia will further strengthen Combinature's research collaborations with leading European commercial and academic centres*."

Professor Dr. Lutz Heide, the co-ordinator of the CombiGyrase-Consortium added: "This consortium is an ideal platform to expand the diversity of potent gyrase inhibitors found in nature by applying methods of combinatorial biosynthesis. Close collaborations between industry and academic experts will provide optimal conditions for creating new drugs using innovative research approaches".

Professor Dr. Wolfgang Wohlleben, the co-ordinator of the COMBIG-TOP-Consortium added: "*On behalf of the consortium I wish to thank the EU for their willingness to continue the generous funding of our consortium. I am particularly excited that Combinature, in my view Europe's leading combinatorial biosynthesis company, is now joining us - this will add further scientific and economic value to the consortium*."

**About the Consortia,**

In addition to Combinature Biopharm AG, the other members of the CombiGyrase consortium are the academic research groups of: Lutz Heide, University of Tübingen (Germany); Anthony Maxwell, John Innes Centre (United Kingdom); Manlio Palumbo, University of Padua (Italy); Andreas Bechthold, University of Freiburg (Germany); Jose Salas, University of Oviedo (Spain) as well as Basilea Pharmaceutica AG, an independent biopharmaceutical company in Basel (Switzerland). The other members of the COMBIG-TOP consortium are the academic research groups of: Wolfgang Wohlleben, Roderich Süßmuth, University of Tübingen (Germany), Lubbert Dijkhuizen, University of Groningen (The Netherlands), Mohamed Marahiel, University of Marburg (Germany), Jens Nielsen, DTU Technical University of Denmark (Denmark), Anna Maria Puglia, University of Palermo (Italy), John Robinson, University of Zürich (Switzerland).

**About Combinature:**

Combinature Biopharm AG, founded in August 2002, optimizes natural product based pharmaceuticals for pre-clinical and clinical development. The current focus of its internal product development pipeline is on anti-infectives. The Company uses a unique "combinatorial biosynthesis" technology platform which combines biosynthesis pathway engineering technologies with bio catalytic efforts to achieve specific natural product structure modifications. Combinature applies a dual business model and has ongoing co operations with leading pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. For further information, please visit **www.combinature.com**

## News

***OPEN CALLS :***

**Priority 1 : Life Sciences, genomics and biotechnology for health**

No open calls

**Priority 2: Nanotechnologies and nanosciences, knowledge-based multifunctional materials and new production processes and devices**

**Dedicated call for IPs for SMEs**: FP6-2004-NMP-SME-4
http://fp6.cordis.lu/nmp/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=183
Closing date : 17 March and 17 September 2005

FP6-2004-NMP-TI-4
http://fp6.cordis.lu/nmp/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=182
Closing date : 15 September 2005

FP6-2004-NMP-NI-4
http://fp6.cordis.lu/nmp/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=181
Closing date : 17 March and 17 September 2005

***2nd NATIBS Meeting***

The 2nd Natibs Meeting will be organised by PCB (Parc Cientific de Barcelona) in Barcelona.
Besides the internal discussion about the first year of activity, the Natibs members are going to meet the Spanish young biotech SMEs.

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