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Genedata Joins EC and Industry Consortium Tasked with Improving Medicines

Genedata announces its partnership with Innovative Medicines for Europe (InnoMed), a joint Industry and European Commission collaboration to promote discovery and improve drug safety. The Swiss-based bioinformatics company will work with the safety arm of the project with 14 pharmaceutical companies and 3 academic institutions to understand toxic reactions to medicines.

"Drug development efforts are hampered by knowledge gaps in the molecular causes of drug side effects", says Professor Friedlieb Pfannkuch, Senior Expert, Global Non-clinical Drug Safety at Roche, and a member of the consortium's executive group. Closing these knowledge gaps is part of the European Union's strategy to ensure its global competitiveness in drug development.

One arm of the consortium will characterize 16 proprietary compounds that have been dropped from development after they failed conventional toxicology tests. The consortium will share the costs of a comprehensive study of these compounds at the molecular level. Genedata will combine data from GeneChip microarrays, 2D-gels and mass spectrometry experiments with conventional toxicology findings using an approach called toxicogenomics.

Complex challenges confront the consortium if it is to exploit the full potential of this ambitious molecular study. Advanced statistics and specialized database technologies are needed to analyze high throughput molecular data. Genedata has integrated database and analysis tools so that scientists can test precise toxicological hypotheses against an entire molecular data set. This will help scientists exploit molecular data more completely.

"Research informatics will be important for the consortium's success", explained Dr. Michael Kammüller, Global Head of Molecular Toxicology at Novartis, also of the consortium's executive group. Scientists aim to reduce the time it takes to identify, on toxicity grounds, that a compound is unsuitable for further development. Dr. Kammüller added, "Genedata will help us gain the greatest benefit from the toxicogenomic approach".

"We are proud to deliver our research informatics resources to InnoMed", says Dr. Othmar Pfannes, CEO of Genedata AG. In recent years, Genedata has engaged in similar collaborations with individual members of the InnoMed consortium, including Schering, Altana and Novartis. Dr. Pfannes added, "InnoMed has the right mix of partners to deliver the benefits of toxicogenomics to European drug development".

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Genedata specializes in discovery informatics for biotech, pharmaceuticals and the life sciences. The Company offers expertise in research informatics combined with open and scalable computational solutions. Our solutions include Genedata Phylosopher® for integrating, structuring, and analyzing research data. Genedata Screener® for high throughput screening analysis. And Genedata Expressionist® for omics data integration, processing and analysis. Founded in 1997 as a privately held spin off from Novartis, Genedata is headquartered in Basel, Switzerland and has branches in Munich (Germany), Boston (USA) and San Francisco (USA). The Company is also represented in Japan, Taiwan and Singapore. For more information about Genedata, please visit: www.genedata.com.

InnoMed is coordinated by the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA), a body representing the research-based pharmaceutical industries and biotech SMEs operating in Europe. It has secured €12 million of funding over 42 months from the European Commission Life Sciences, Genomics and Biotechnology for Health Priority. It comprises two scientific projects. One to identify new biomarkers for Alzheimer's dementia and the other to search for markers to predict the toxicity of drug candidates. Both projects are aimed at reducing key bottlenecks in the R&D process. The pharmaceutical members in the consortium include: Altana, Bayer, Boehringer Ingelheim, CIPHERGEN, Johnson & Johnson, Lilly S.A., Merck KG, Novartis, Novo Nordisk, Organon, Roche, Schering AG, Sanofi-Aventis, Serono, Servier, and the Universities of Dublin, Hacettepe and Würzburg.

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