

European ScreeningPort has been founded in Hamburg

Words by Carsten Claussen,
Managing Director at European ScreeningPort GmbH, based in Hamburg

At a glance: European ScreeningPort GmbH

Date of Foundation:

August 2007

Founding Shareholders:

Evotec AG, City of Hamburg

Location:

Schnackenburgallee 114
22525 Hamburg

Website:

www.screeningport.com

Managing Director:

Carsten Claussen

Supervisory Board:

Jörn Aldag (Chairman), Kathrin Adlkofer (Norgenta), Bernd Egert (City of Hamburg) and three more members to be nominated

Scientific Committee:

Erich Greiner (Chairman) and more members to be nominated

Staff:

See www.jobvector.de and www.screeningport.com/jobs

Company Object:

Market place for innovative drug discovery with service for academic organisations

Capital, Financing:

€4.9 million first financing round

Screening Equipment:

uHTS system with HCS detection (Opera™ and Envision) and integrated liquid handling devices (Echo, Janus)

IT Infrastructure:

Flexible bioinformatics system and scientific data management (A+, Atlas, Acapella) running on Intel hardware (White Box)

Libraries:

Access to Evotec library, Chem BioNet library, Queensland compound library for natural compounds, commercial libraries

First Programmes:

Two biochemical screens for oncology targets, two cell-based screens for infectious diseases and for metabolic diseases

Concept and status

The pharmaceutical industry has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. The blockbuster drug discovery strategy that sustained the industry in the 1980's started to erode in the 1990's. Many companies were not able to sustain their product pipelines by internal research and development. The changing marketplace dynamics for the life science industry and complex requirements of the drug discovery and development process have created the need for a new model to bring important therapies to the market. The shift of large research funding agencies including the National Institutes of Health (NIH Roadmap for Medical Research) and the European Union (EU Framework Programme 7) towards "translational research", i.e. from basic science to applied research for drug development, expands the opportunity for translating academic research into innovative medicines. Medical sciences and their findings are distributed over numerous academic research institutes.

European ScreeningPort GmbH together with a network of European research institutions produces a model case for drug discovery and development. Embedded in the professional Evotec environment, it is designed to mine this deep source of medical innovation and to translate academic research into early drug discovery projects. These projects are then attractive for biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies to partner. European ScreeningPort serves both, as a central node of this academically driven net and as a marketplace for the biomedical industry.

The European ScreeningPort is a screening centre adapted from Evotec's existing and established infrastructure. It operates as a public-private partnership and provides the academic partners with access to cutting-edge high-throughput screening (HTS) technology, professional libraries for small molecules, natural compounds and biologicals and working processes including data management accordingly. European ScreeningPort adapts academic biological assays for industrial high-content/high-throughput screening with compound libraries. It therefore serves as a fee-for-service screening platform for academic institutions and delivers hits on interesting targets that could be of interest to the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry.

The European ScreeningPort pursues interesting therapeutic targets which have been studied in detail by academic scientists. These programmes will have access to public funding (e.g. BMBF or EU).

In consequence, this initiative supports Evotec's strategy to bridge drug discovery from academics to pharmaceutical companies and to be the first choice for innovative drug discovery programmes – the Number One in Europe. So Evotec will have early access to interesting and innovative programmes in CNS and beyond. In addition, Evotec will have the opportunity to follow-up such programmes performed in the European ScreeningPort with medicinal chemistry as a service.

