

Joining forces in the search for anti-cancer drugs from marine fungi

European ScreeningPort is the screening partner within a consortium of international experts supported by the EU

Hamburg, May 26th, 2011 – As the operational arm for molecular Screening within an international consortium, European ScreeningPort GmbH supported the successful kick off meeting of the “Marine Fungi” project, which aims to identify natural products with the potential to be developed as anti-cancer agents. A total of eleven institutions from seven different countries joined forces to set up a consortium of experts which received 3 million EURO funding over a three year period from the European Commission under the “Seventh Framework Programme” (FP7). The project is coordinated by the “Kieler Wirkstoffzentrum KiWiZ”, where the first consortial meeting was held yesterday.

Marine organisms are an important resource of natural products for use in cosmetics, biological plant protection and as therapeutics to treat human diseases. The so far under-utilized group of marine fungi is the key resource within this project. Candidate strains that already proved their ability to be cultured under laboratory conditions, as well as additional fungi isolated from unique habitats, i.e. tropical coral reefs, endemic macroalgae and sponges from the Mediterranean, will be evaluated as sources of natural products that offer the potential to be developed as anti-cancer agents. One goal of the project is to enable efficient and sustainable production of marine natural products in the laboratory to relatively large scales, whilst avoiding harm to the natural environment. Also within the scope of the project will be the progression of marine natural products to the *in vivo* proof of concept stage as anti-cancer agents.

“We look forward to supporting “Marine Fungi” with our expertise to move these novel compounds from their marine habitat along the added-value chain to the early pre-clinical stage” said Dr. Philip Gribbon, CSO at the European ScreeningPort. “The cooperation within this consortium further strengthens our long-lasting collaboration with our partners Hypha Discovery Ltd. and the group of Prof. Dr. Imhoff at KiWiZ, whose marine natural products have been tested at European ScreeningPort on various target classes and are integrated in our offering.”

About European ScreeningPort GmbH

European ScreeningPort, based in Hamburg, Germany is a public-private partnership, offering contract research services to academic institutes and universities across Europe. The company performs bioassay development and validation, primary screening of small molecules, high content screening for secondary and selectivity assays, bioinformatics and virtual screening for academic partners.

Contact:

Dr. Mira Grättinger
European ScreeningPort GmbH
Schnackenburgallee 114
D-22525 Hamburg
phone: +49 40 56081 470
fax: +49 40 56081 453
email: mira.graettinger@screeningport.com
web: www.screeningport.com