lisa vr. news

Life Science Austria
Vienna Region

LIFE SCIENCE AUSTRIA → vienna region's newsletter 02/2004

: editorial

Dear reader,

In recent years the Vienna region has developed into an economic hub at the heart of Europe: together with its neighbours, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, all since 1st of May, 2004 members of the European Union, it constitutes a market of over 34 million people within a radius of 300 km.

In the life sciences too, the number of collaborative agreements with institutions in neighbouring countries is growing. Historically, the Vienna School for Clinical Research, an international centre for post graduate medical studies, has close ties to the universities of Budapest, Dantzig, Prague and Zagreb. Axon Neuroscience, a company working on Alzheimer's disease, has centres in Vienna and Bratislava. In the summer of 2004, Vienna's Intercell AG entered into a collaborative agreement with Hungary's Solvo Biotechnology Inc to work on diagnostic applications of progesterone induced blocking factor (PIBF) technology. We want our recently launched business plan competition, Best of Biotech, to provide additional incentives in the life sciences field.

Let us together take advantage of the opportunities offered by a united Europe!

Sonja Hammerschmid, CEO
Edeltraud Stiftinger, CEO

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BEST OF BIOTECH (BOB) – A CROSS-BORDER BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION FOR THE LIFE SCIENCES

BOB-Kick off Vienna, 14th of October, 2004, Sonja Hammerschmid, LISA Vienna Region, Martin Spatz, LISA-AWS, Lucie Opravilova, South Moravian Innovation Centre, Michel Canavaggio, Baxter AG, Katerina Tydlackova, South Moravian Innovation Centre, Jakub Nosek, South Moravian Innovation Centre

> ***"Best of Biotech (BOB) – Get your business started!", the only cross-border business plan competition open to scientists and students from Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, officially opened for entries on 14th of October, 2004.***

The competition is a joint initiative of Life Science Austria Vienna Region (LISA VR) and Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH (AWS), and is being held for the third time. The first two rounds of BOB saw 121 projects submitted, prizes of EUR 77,000 awarded and 15 new businesses founded. One of the BOB prize winners was Biovertis, which in September 2004 completed its first financing round for a total of EUR 12 million.

Sponsorship of the business plan competition by industry has been very generous: the first prize of EUR 18,000 has been provided by Baxter AG, which is supporting BOB for the third time now, the second prize of EUR 9,000 comes from VWR International GmbH.

To ensure that the competitors enjoy the best possible support locally, BOB cultivates close contacts with partners both in Austria and elsewhere in Central Europe: the Regional Development Agency of Southern Moravia, the Southern Moravia Innovation Centre, ITD Hungary and the Hungarian Biotechnology Association, the Slovenian Ministry for Education, Science and Sport and the Slovenian Small Business Development Centre, and BioScience Slovakia and the Slovak Biotechnological Society all have key roles to play.

Further information:
▸ *www.bestofbiotech.at*

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Biopharmaceutical Production
at Boehringer Ingelheim Austria
(photo: Marion Carniel)

Boehringer Ingelheim Austria –
Boehringer Ingelheim's Centre of Excellence in Cancer Research
(photo: Marion Carniel)

SQUARING THE CIRCLE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

Boehringer Ingelheim Austria, located in Vienna, is one of the companies' two centres for the developement and production of biopharmaceuticals.

DDr. Andreas Barner,
Member of the Board of Directors,
Boehringer Ingelheim GmbH,
Germany

The ancient Greeks failed famously to construct a square whose area equals that of a given circle, with just the help of a straightedge and a compass. Today, students and engineers convert circles to squares with the tip of their fingers – on a pocket calculator.

In the 1980s and '90s, breath-taking discoveries in cell and molecular biology, genetic engineering, genomics, and proteomics have mesmerized the public and Nobel prize committees alike. Paired with this gain of knowledge, carefully designed protein molecules have been developed into better medicines for serious diseases, marking the birth of the biotech industry.

Cutting-edge genetic engineering, genome acrobatics, protein wizardry, and in silico simulation of human disease have matured into routine tools in academia, biotech and pharma research. The challenge is to bring these efforts into close contact. For Boehringer Ingelheim, this aspiration has become reality in Vienna. With our basic research institute, the Institute of Molecular Pathology (IMP), we provided the nucleus of the Vienna Biocenter in 1988, now the hub of a biotech cluster and partner to the new Institute of Molecular Biotechnology (IMBA) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Our dedicated drug discovery center at Boehringer Ingelheim Austria has assumed responsibility for searching for innovative cancer drugs, and our biotechnology production and development facility in Vienna has a remarkably good reputation. With strong support from the city of Vienna and the Austrian government, beneficial and dependable partnerships have been formed and growth opportunities abound.

Thus, with brand-new tools available to all, biotech and pharma research are merely facets of the same quest for medical innovation, and switching between them – for people and projects – has become as easy as squaring a circle in Vienna. *

Success stories of the Vienna Region (to be continued)

::: Austrianova Biotechnology GmbH

Austrianova was founded in 2001 as a privately owned biotech company in Vienna, Austria. The company is located within the Research Institute of Virology and Biomedicine at the University of Veterinary Medicine and together with the Institute employs a staff of 66.

Austrianova's lead product, NovaCaps®, is a cell based therapy for the treatment of pancreatic cancer. This product was designated an Orphan Medicinal Product by the EMEA in 2003 as well as being the first in the new category of Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products. A phase III, pivotal trial is anticipated to start 4q 2005.

Austrianova also focusses on novel therapies for the treatment of other solid tumours. The Company's versatile encapsulation technology utilized in its lead product, NovaCaps®, can also be used for the production of other biomolecules. In addition, Austrianova also has a number of proprietary gene transfer systems based on retrovirus vectors.

www.austrianova.com

The Founders of Austrianova: Brian Salmons, Walter H. Günzburg and Thomas Fischer (f.l.t.r.); Photo: Austrianova / Petra Spiola

A RECIPE FOR EXCELLENCE

Novartis Research Institute (NRI) From fundamental research to tested product

Novartis Research Institute in Vienna (NRI) was originally founded in 1970 as Sandoz Research Institute. Since mid 2002 it has formed part of Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research (NIBR), headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, and now concentrates on research into inflammatory diseases, including skin diseases, and related allergies and immune deficiencies.

NRI's latest development is a cortisone-free cream used in the treatment of atopical dermatitis (neurodermatitis), Elidel®. The active ingredient in this novel drug is pimecrolimus, which was discovered by NRI scientists in Vienna and developed and registered jointly with the Novartis research team in Basel. NRI was also heavily involved in the development of Lamisil®, a highly effective drug which is now a standard therapy in the treatment of fungal infections of skin and nails.

As of the end of 2003, NRI employed some 240 staff, with investments in R&D amounting to EUR 44.3 million.

www.novartis.at

LIFE SCIENCES CENTRES IN THE VIENNA REGION

... (to be continued)

IFA Tulln – centre for green and grey technologies

At the inter-university Institute for Agrobiotechnology (IFA) in Tulln the research emphasis is on food and feedstuffs safety, the use of renewable resources, and environmental technology and analysis.

The Christian Doppler Laboratory for Mycotoxins Research has been established here since 2002. Its purpose is the study of the breakdown of mycotoxins by microorganisms: one principle aim is the development of feedstuff additives for detoxifying mycotoxins, another the development of analytical methods for the simultaneous identification of different mycotoxins at very low concentrations. A Marie Curie Training Site for mycotoxin research has also been set up.

www.ifa-tulln.ac.at

University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences – centre for bioprocessing technology

The research focus of the Institute for Applied Microbiology (IAM), headed by Hermann Katinger, is on the fermentation of microorganisms and animal cells under GMP conditions.

The site is also the home of the Austrian Center for Biopharmaceutical Technology (ACBT), which concentrates on optimising production processes for biopharmaceuticals. The aim is to achieve a substantial increase in the efficiency of biopharmaceutical development processes, so as to be able to make optimised production processes for clinical testing and mass production available in as short a time as possible. Development time should thereby be drastically reduced, ensuring a readier availability of innovative and highly effective drugs.

www.boku.ac.at/iam
www.acbt.at

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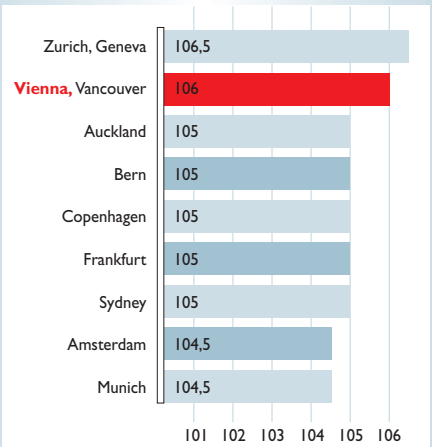
: Vienna – a city you would like to live in!

OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE – RANKING, TOP 10 (NEW YORK= 100)



Culture, environmental quality, high living standards, security, classic dwellings and shopping - Vienna has it all and more, when it comes to everyday quality of life.

No wonder that Mercer Consulting ranked Austria's capital number 2 worldwide in quality of life in 2003!

Source: Mercer Consulting, 2003

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lisa[vr]news

LIFE SCIENCE AUSTRIA → **vienna region's newsletter**

WHO IS WHO?

LIFE SCIENCE AUSTRIA (LISA) VIENNA REGION – your partner for life sciences

LISA VR is the Vienna Region's central consultancy and coordination office for researchers and companies in the life sciences.

The LISA VR team offers

- Help in setting up businesses and preparing business plans
- Pre-seed and seed financing for new ventures
- Access to investors through our international venture capital network
- Access to regional and federal funding
- Financing for patents and patent marketing

In addition to these core services, LISA VR focuses on developing linkages between key figures in the Austrian life sciences scene, on strengthening international contacts, cluster management and on educational and public awareness issues.

www.vienna.lifescienceaustria.at

BEST OF BIOTECH – HOW IT WORKS

Best of Biotech runs from October 2004 to June 2005 in two phases.

Dr. Michel Canavaggio, Vice President, Global R&D, Baxter BioScience, at the BOB-Kick off in Vienna on 14th of October, 2004

During Phase 1 (14 October to 17 December 2004) participants have the opportunity to present a short summary of their business idea: the five most innovative ideas each receive a prize of EUR 1,400.

Phase 2 (13 January to 15 April 2005) is for the development of the detailed business plan. Cost-free intensive workshops offer all participants (including those joining at this stage) the chance to familiarise themselves with the details of starting a biotech business. Participants are also given training in presentation skills, so as to be able to convince the jury – which includes international venture capitalists – of the merits of their project. The best business plan is awarded a prize of EUR 18,000 at the gala closing ceremony in June 2005. Not only the prize-winners benefit from taking part – all potential entrepreneurs have access to extensive business expertise and can pick up tips for when they start their own businesses. Best of Biotech relies on an international network of business and scientific experts who provide help in the form of coaching, specialist talks and feedback opportunities on the participants' projects.

Further information:

▸ *www.bestofbiotech.at*

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