



For Immediate Release

Pharmagene plc enters strategic alliance with WITA Proteomics AG

- Providing validated targets to Pharmaceutical and Biotechnology Companies -

Royston, UK and Teltow, Germany, 13 March 2001 – Pharmagene (LSE: PGN) plc and WITA Proteomics AG announced today that they have signed an agreement to jointly identify, validate and develop potential drug targets for pharmaceutical and biotechnology partners. The financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Under the terms of the agreement, Pharmagene will combine its experience, expertise and broad range of capabilities in human tissue, genomics, databases and functional pharmacology with WITA's proteomics technology platform. The pooled resources and know-how will be offered to pharmaceutical and biotechnology partners as a seamless package to take potential drug targets from gene to protein, through to functional pharmacology, all within the context of human tissue.

The target validation step is critical in the drug discovery process and currently represents a major expense and bottleneck in pharmaceutical R&D. The addition of proteomics to Pharmagene's existing target validation capabilities allows confirmation of earlier gene expression results as well as providing an alternative means of target identification. Proteomics also identifies whether there are any post-translational events that may prove of significance in the drug discovery and development process.

"Advances in genomic technologies have left the pharmaceutical industry awash with potential drug targets, very few of which have been validated," commented Alastair Riddell, MD, CEO of Pharmagene. "Exclusive access to novel and validated drug target programmes, protected by valuable intellectual property rights, will provide significant value for our existing and future pharmaceutical customers. This alliance will also help us to progress our internal therapeutics programmes at Pharmagene."

Andreas Köpke, WITA's CEO, commented, "By combining our technologies, WITA and Pharmagene will be able to create and offer customers a comprehensive package for target identification and validation in human tissue. Our partnership with Pharmagene will enable us to have unrivalled access to normal and diseased human tissue samples and access to functional pharmacology, which coupled to our proteomics technology will streamline selection and validation of relevant targets associated with important diseases."

WITA GmbH (founded 1992) spun out WITA Proteomics AG in 2000. WITA Proteomics AG is a research based company involved in the mass identification of disease related proteins, with the goal of identifying proteins of interest for the diagnostic, drug development and predictive toxicology markets. WITA has developed its own proprietary methods for achieving high resolution 2DE using patented technologies and combines this with either or both MALDI-TOF or ESI/MS/MS technologies. Within its first year, WITA has entered into several collaborations with pharmaceutical companies including Janssen Research Foundation and B.R.A.H.M.S GmbH.

Founded in 1996, Pharmagene is a human tissue-based business serving the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. It is dedicated to improving the efficiency of the drug discovery and development process. Pharmagene has three inter-dependent product offerings: PhaseZERO™, TargetEvaluator™ and Indication Switch™. Further information on Pharmagene can be found at www.pharmagene.com.



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