



Astex and Daresbury Laboratory announce agreement to accelerate drug discovery using high capacity X-ray crystallography

Cambridge UK, 9th May 2001. Astex Technology, the structure-based drug discovery company, and the Daresbury Analytical Research and Technology Service (*DARTS*) today announced the establishment of a contractual agreement for Astex to access the Synchrotron Radiation Source (SRS) at the Daresbury Laboratory, UK.

The high intensity X-ray beam generated by the SRS will be used for rapidly solving protein crystal structures in Astex's proprietary *structural screening* technology for drug discovery. SRS Daresbury was the world's first dedicated X-ray synchrotron radiation source constructed, and provides excellent resources for high-throughput structure determination. Financial details of the agreement were not disclosed.

Dr Harren Jhoti, Cofounder and Chief Scientific Officer of Astex commented, "We are delighted to have established this arrangement with the SRS, as it will maximize our capacity for screening libraries of compounds against therapeutic targets to discover novel drug leads."

"SRS has remained at the forefront of protein crystallography for the last 20 years," commented Prof Samar Hasnain, Head of the Molecular Biophysics Group and Coordinator of NW Structural Genomics centre at Daresbury. "Through major upgrades in instrumentation, it continues to provide world competitive facilities for rapid collection of crystallographic data from which we are confident that Astex and its customers will benefit."

A synchrotron accelerates charged particles, such as electrons, to speeds close to that of light. At SRS Daresbury, the accelerated particles are injected into a 96m-circumference storage ring, where they travel in a vacuum, their path regulated by 16 bending magnets. The electrons are stored in this state for 10-20 hours at a time, producing synchrotron radiation. Synchrotron radiated light covers a broad area of the electromagnetic spectrum, from infrared through to hard X-rays. The emitted radiation is directed to 30 experimental stations, where researchers are able to select the portion of the spectrum they require for their experiments. Structures of proteins are investigated using X-rays.

Astex is a structure-based drug discovery company pioneering the use of High Throughput X-ray crystallography (HTX™) for the rapid identification of novel drug candidates. HTX™ is part of an integrated drug discovery platform that includes cutting-edge technologies covering all aspects of structure-based research, including protein production, crystallization, structure determination, bioinformatics and

computational and medicinal chemistry. Astex has established strategic collaborations with Janssen Pharmaceutica, to optimize lead compounds and solve a novel protein structure, and recently established an agreement with AstraZeneca to solve novel cytochrome P450 structures. The company recently closed a first round financing, raising £22.7m (\$32.5m) from investors in North America and Europe. Astex was formed by leading industrial and academic scientists and is based at the Cambridge Science Park, UK.

Contact Details:

Astex Technology

Dr Harren Jhoti

Co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer
Email: h.jhoti@astex-technology.com

Dr Emma Southern

Communications Manager
Email: e.southern@astex-technology.com

Tel: 01223 226200

Web: www.astex-technology.com

NoonanRusso

Dr Don O'Sullivan

Email: d.o'sullivan@noonanrusso.co.uk

Fiona Beckman

Email: fiona.beckman@noonanrusso.co.uk

Tel: 020 7726 4452

Web: www.noonanrusso.com

SRS Daresbury

Dr Liz Towns-Andrews

DARTS Manager
Email: e.towns-andrews@dl.ac.uk
Tel: 01925 603757
Web: www.darts.ac.uk

Tony Buckley

Press Officer
Tel: 01925 603272
Web: www.srs.dl.ac.uk
www.nwsgc.ac.uk