



PRESS RELEASE

Astex and Fujisawa announce structure-based drug discovery agreement

Cambridge, UK and Osaka, Japan, 19th August 2003. Astex Technology Ltd, the fragment-based drug discovery company, and Fujisawa Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd, today announced a structural biology research agreement to facilitate the rapid design and development of drug candidates. The collaboration will focus on solving novel human cytochrome P450 crystal structures that will be used to optimise Fujisawa's compounds and so improve the success rate of drug development.

Under the terms of the agreement, Astex will apply its proprietary X-ray crystallography technologies to obtain crystal structures of cytochrome P450s complexed to Fujisawa's compounds. Financial details were not disclosed.

“We are very pleased that Fujisawa has chosen to work with Astex in this exciting drug discovery program,” commented Timothy Haines, Chief Executive of Astex. “This collaboration provides further validation of our structure-based drug discovery technologies and our leadership role in the P450 field. We look forward to building on our recent successes in solving the first 3-dimensional crystal structures of human cytochrome P450s 3A4 and 2C9 and to using this knowledge to benefit Fujisawa’s drug discovery programs.”

“We expect that this collaboration with Astex will lead to enhanced potential for research and development activities at Fujisawa,” commented Toshio Goto, Ph.D., Corporate Vice President, Global Research of Fujisawa. “Many candidate drugs fail due to adverse cytochrome P450 interactions. We will use the structural information of Fujisawa’s compounds in complexation with human cytochrome P450s obtained by Astex in order to design new drug entities with reduced cytochrome P450 liabilities and further improve the quality of our drug development.”

About Astex

Astex is a fragment-based drug discovery company pioneering the use of high-throughput X-ray crystallography for the rapid identification of novel drug candidates. The Company’s unique fragment-based drug discovery approach, termed Pyramid™, utilizes protein crystal structures to detect the binding of drug fragments, which are then optimized into potent lead compounds. Facilitating this approach is Astex’s integrated drug discovery platform, which covers all aspects of structure-based drug discovery including protein production, crystallization, structure determination, bioinformatics, computational and medicinal chemistry and biology and DMPK. Astex is focusing its drug discovery approaches on proprietary and public domain protein targets from families and/or pathways. This includes validated kinases, phosphatases and proteases implicated in human disease. Astex has drug discovery collaborations with Schering AG, AstraZeneca and Mitsubishi Pharma and with the Institute of Cancer Research, UK and Cancer Research Technology, has further research agreements with another large pharmaceutical company, and has structural biology research agreements with AstraZeneca, Aventis Pharmaceuticals and Mitsubishi Pharma focused on solving novel cytochrome P450 crystal structures.

About Fujisawa

Founded in 1894, Fujisawa Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. looks back on a history of over 100 years that have seen the Company develop into one of the leading pharmaceutical manufacturers in Japan. The Company forms the core of the Fujisawa Group, which as a result of global business expansion now has offices, plants and research facilities in Japan, North America, Europe and Asia with more than 8,300 employees worldwide. As a research-driven pharmaceutical company, Fujisawa's research and development activities are the key to its success in the highly competitive global market. Under the banner of "speed, focus and persistence," Fujisawa is deeply committed to innovative research to satisfy unmet medical needs. Its research activities currently target the discovery of compounds to be recognized as "best in the class, first in the class" in the four therapeutic categories on which Fujisawa focuses - immunology/inflammation, cerebral diseases, metabolic diseases and infectious diseases. Fujisawa is also keen on strengthening its strategic collaboration with outside institutions or emerging research ventures that possess novel technology or ideas for drug discovery.

Contacts

Astex Technology

Mr Timothy Haines
Chief Executive
Email: t.haines@astex-technology.com

Dr Jeremy Carmichael
Associate Director Business Development
Email: j.carmichael@astex-technology.com

Tel: +44 (0) 1223 226200
Web: www.astex-technology.com

Noonan Russo Presence

Veronica Cefis Sellar
Email: veronica.sellar@eurorscg.com

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7726 4452
Web: www.nrp-euro.com

Fujisawa Pharmaceutical

Mr. Hideo Shiba
Director, Corporate Communications
Email: corporatec@po.fujisawa.co.jp

Tel: +81 (6) 6206 7857
Fax: +81 (6) 6206 5016
Web: www.fujisawa.co.jp