

South Africa's CPGR turns to cell-culture based screening to advance drug discovery & development

Centre for Proteomic and Genomic Research (CPGR) and Simugen to join forces in order to advance toxicity testing of novel drug applications

For immediate release

Cape Town, South Africa, 19 March 2009 – CPGR (CT, South Africa) today announced that it has entered into an agreement with SimuGen (KL, Malaysia), involving the development of novel biomarker assays for the prediction of toxicity of existing and novel drug compounds.

The CPGR was founded in 2006 as part of a government initiative to provide scientists in South Africa with state-of-the-art analytical services, technical expertise, project support and collaborative research capabilities in the genomics and proteomics arena. The organization has a particular interest in translational research and advancing scientific findings from the bench to the clinic, including a focus on tackling pressing health needs in Africa. Today, CPGR is becoming a global biotech player, venturing into fields such as molecular diagnostics and drug discovery.

“We realized very early in our activities the potential value in a number of fields of combining our information-rich analytical capabilities with innovative cell culture models” said Reinhard Hiller, Ph.D., Managing Director of the CPGR. “The work we will do with Simugen, aimed at improving the ability to develop novel, safe drugs, fits perfectly into our vision of creating cutting-edge *ex-vivo* drug screening workflows that make full use of our genomic & proteomic platforms.”

Said Dr Quin Wills, CSO of SimuGen, “We believe that the greatest pharmacogenomics gains over the next few years are to be had within early stage drug discovery. This means the coming together of the best genomic modeling, genomic technologies and high throughput biological models. We are pleased to be working with a team that has the same vision for high quality science that can really help facilitate a compound go/no go decision.”

About Simugen

SimuGen is a pharmacogenomics company focused on predicting safety and off-target concerns early on in the drug development pipeline. Rather than offering traditional gene expression methods and bioinformatics, SimuGen develops novel dose-toxicity models for part particular toxic endpoints so that medicinal chemists can predict toxicity, the toxic potency and understand how to reduce the toxicity of their leads. Visit www.simugen-global.com for more information.

About CPGR

The Centre for Proteomic & Genomic Research (CPGR) is an integrated core technology facility, founded in South Africa in 2006 as a not-for-profit organization through a grant provided by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) by way of its investment vehicles the Cape Biotech Trust (CBT) and PlantBio (PB). Visit www.cpgr.org.za for more information or contact info@cpgr.org.za with specific requests.