

**VASTox plc**  
**(“VASTox” or “the Company”)**

**VASTOX RECEIVES GRANT FROM LEADING EUROPEAN NEUROMUSCULAR  
DISEASE CHARITY**

**Grant will support Spinal Muscular Atrophy drug discovery programme**

**Oxford, UK, 1 November 2006** – VASTox (AIM: VOX), a leading UK biotechnology company, announces today that it has received a grant from the Association Francaise Contre Les Myopathies (AFM), a leading European neuromuscular disease charity, to support to the company’s Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) drug discovery programme.

VASTox has developed an innovative *in vivo* screen, which models SMA in fruitfly larvae (*Drosophila melanogaster*). The Company is using this model to identify small molecules from its proprietary compound library. The financial support from AFM will allow VASTox to accelerate the preclinical screening and candidate identification phase of the programme and consequently aid the development of a novel therapy for SMA.

Spinal Muscular Atrophy affects 50,000 people in the developed world and is a genetic disease that causes loss of motor neurons in the spinal cord resulting in muscle atrophy. Patients either do not acquire or progressively lose the ability to move and death primarily occurs due to respiratory failure. In its severest form, known as type I, life expectancy is often less than two years.

AFM is one of the largest charities in the World that focuses on neuromuscular diseases; it has raised over €1.2 billion since 1987, the majority of which has been devoted to research and development. Founded in 1958 by a group of muscular dystrophy patients and families, AFM is focused mainly on developing cures for neuromuscular diseases and reducing the disabilities they cause.

Steven Lee, PhD, CEO of VASTox said: “VASTox is delighted to receive this grant from the AFM to help us accelerate our spinal muscular atrophy drug discovery efforts, particularly following the exciting progress we announced in the SMA programme last month. It is recognition that our unique, fruitfly-based approach to SMA research offers the potential for a novel treatment for this lethal disease. This is VASTox’s first charitable grant and we will work closely with the AFM and other like-minded charities to accelerate our drug discovery efforts wherever possible.”

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For more information please contact:

**VASTox**

Steven Lee, PhD, Chief Executive Officer  
Darren Millington, Chief Financial Officer

Tel: +44 (0)1235 443910

**Association Francaise Contre Les Myopathies**

Serge Braun, Scientific Director

Tel : +33 1 69 47 28 28

**Citigate Dewe Rogerson**

David Dible / Mark Swallow / Valerie Auffray

Tel: +44 (0)207 638 9571

**About VASTox plc**

VASTox is a biotechnology technology company that discovers and develops proprietary novel drugs and provides services to the pharmaceutical industry. The company's most advanced drug development programme is focused on developing a new treatment for Duchenne muscular dystrophy based on the up-regulation of utrophin. A second drug development programme for spinal muscular atrophy is also progressing rapidly. VASTox has four additional programmes focused on osteoarthritis, cancer, tuberculosis and stem cell therapies, which are expected to be out-licensed prior to entering the clinic.

The company's chemical genomics technology platform, which uses zebrafish and fruitflies, has the potential to dramatically reduce the time and cost of drug discovery and development. This is because using whole organisms allows VASTox to carry out high volume, high content screening that delivers data which is highly predictive of the efficacy and toxicity of potential drug compounds in humans. VASTox is growing revenues based on marketing its unique technology platform and its chemistry expertise. The company listed on the AIM market of the London Stock Exchange in October 2004.

Further information about the company is available at [www.vastox.com](http://www.vastox.com).

**About Association Francaise Contre Les Myopathies (AFM)**

The French Muscular Dystrophy Association (AFM) was founded in 1958 by a group of patients and their families, was recognised as being of public utility in 1976, and has a single objective : to defeat muscle-wasting, neuromuscular diseases. It has set itself two missions: to cure neuromuscular diseases and reduce the disabilities they cause. To achieve these goals, AFM organises an annual Telethon which is held at the beginning of December. This fund-raising event which combines a 30-hour TV show with tens of thousands of local events across France also aims to raise public awareness of neuromuscular diseases. The Telethon provides AFM with most of their donations and represents an important vehicle for information, communication and education. Since the first Telethon in 1987, major scientific progress and developments have marked AFM's fight, helped by the support and determination of patients, families, scientists, volunteers and the generosity of millions of French people.

Further information about the charity is available at [www.afm-france.org](http://www.afm-france.org)