

VASTox BECOMES A PARTNER IN THE EUROPEAN NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE TO ADVANCE THE TREATMENT OF RARE NEUROMUSCULAR DISEASES

“Network of Excellence” funded by €10 million EU grant

Oxford, UK, 31 May 2006 – VASTox (AIM: VOX), a leading chemical genomics company, today announces that the European Union has awarded a €10 million grant to the TREAT-NMD network, of which VASTox is a member. VASTox and a network of leading researchers, clinicians and patient associations have joined forces to progress the development of treatments for rare neuromuscular diseases (NMD), such as muscular dystrophies and spinal muscular atrophy. The EU grant will fund collaborative research and development efforts into these important therapeutic areas.

VASTox will work closely with the other members of the TREAT-NMD network of excellence to develop best practice in all areas of NMD research and development, in particular, ensuring the route of a drug candidate from the laboratory bench to an approved medicine is as efficient as possible. VASTox has drug development programmes in two NMD areas: Duchenne muscular dystrophy and spinal muscular atrophy. There are currently no medicines to effectively treat patients with either of these fatal genetic diseases.

Twenty-one organisations from 11 European countries will work together to ensure that future treatments for NMD diseases have the best chance of success by making the development of NMD drugs quicker and more cost-effective. The consortium is led by the University of Newcastle and will liaise closely with NMD charities and patient groups across Europe. The grant is phased over five years and will be split between the consortium members.

Steven Lee, PhD, CEO of VASTox said: "Being a key industry partner of this network of excellence is recognition of our expertise in the field of drug development for neuromuscular diseases. VASTox will bring an industry focus to ensure that new drug candidates have the very best chance of successfully reaching patients. VASTox is committed to developing safe and effective treatments for Duchenne muscular dystrophy and spinal muscular atrophy."

Nick Caitlin, CEO of Parent Project UK, a muscular dystrophy charity, said: "Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) is a severe genetic muscle wasting disease that has a devastating effect on both patients and the lives of everyone in their family. The research at VASTox and new funding for the TREAT-NMD network offers all our families real hope for the future. VASTox are at the forefront of developing new drug treatments in the UK that we hope will help us to win the race against time for this generation of children with DMD."



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About VASTox plc

VASTox is a chemical genomics 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 three additional programmes focused on osteoarthritis, cancer and tuberculosis that are expected to be out-licensed prior to entering the clinic.

The company's technology platform, which uses zebrafish and fruitflies, has the potential to dramatically decrease the time and cost of drug discovery and development. This is because using whole organisms allows it 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 vastox.com.

About Parent Project UK

Parent Project UK Muscular Dystrophy (PPUK) is the only national charity that exclusively funds research and campaigns for better medical care for Duchenne and Becker muscular dystrophy. PPUK was set up by parents of boys with Duchenne muscular dystrophy in 2001 and has since been instrumental in setting up a consortium of researchers to develop the first clinical trial for a Gene Therapy in the UK. The MDEX consortium has already won £1.6m of funding from the Department of Health following the lobbying of parents and supporters from PPUK. PPUK has networks of Parent Action Groups across the UK and has recently set up a DMD Registry, www.dmdregistry.org, that will be the first national database of all those living with DMD in the UK. PPUK will make this data available to help to accelerate future research and clinical trials.

Further information is available at www.ppek.org.