

# PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

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## Fraunhofer IME integrates European ScreeningPort to enhance its expertise and capabilities in drug discovery

### Aachen, Hamburg

**The operative business of European ScreeningPort GmbH (Hamburg) has been integrated into the Fraunhofer Institute for Molecular Biology and Applied Ecology IME located in Aachen, with branches in Gießen, Frankfurt, Münster, Schmallenberg and international centers in the USA and Chile. This integration enhances the expertise and capabilities of the Fraunhofer IME in drug discovery sciences thus boosting its drug development research activities.**

At the new site in Hamburg, 30 employees will add their scientific skills and expertise to the 600 personnel currently working on IME research activities, creating a new organization called the IME-ScreeningPort (IME-SP). The new organization will act as a platform between basic research and industrial development and exploit synergies with other IME technology platforms along the drug discovery and development value chain. The implementation of this translational approach into early-phase drug research will allow the Fraunhofer IME to pursue innovative targets from academic research and advance their development, substantially contributing to applied drug research in Germany.

»We are excited about joining the IME family, which will allow us to provide both a strong link between basic research and industrial development and the critical mass required to drive projects forward. We also appreciate this as recognition of our previous success and our strong record in project delivery« said Prof. Dr. Carsten Claussen, department head of the newly-established IME-SP.

Prof. Dr. Rainer Fischer, senior executive director of Fraunhofer IME, agreed with this statement, and added: »The excellent platforms already established in Hamburg, the competence and knowhow of the personnel already employed there, and the diversified project portfolio (including academic and industrial partners) fit perfectly with the strategic positioning of the Fraunhofer IME. This will complement our expertise and capacities in the development of small-molecule based drug candidates and the assays needed to test and validate them«.

The IME-SP will continue to focus on small-molecule therapeutics rather than proteins and nucleic acids (biologics such as antibodies and vaccines) therefore complementing existing IME competences in these areas, particularly the highly-successful health, plant biotechnology and insect biotechnology programs and the drug-repurposing capacity.

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The IME-SP will direct its efforts onto the development of biological assay systems, high-throughput drug discovery (i.e. high-throughput screening, high-content screening and virtual screening), and the identification of diagnostic biomarkers (including those used for companion diagnostics in preclinical/clinical studies and pharmacological bioinformatics).

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Existing European ScreeningPort GmbH shareholders, including the City of Hamburg and the Hamburg biotechnology company Evotec AG, welcome and support this development.

Dr. Dorothee Stapelfeld, the Scientific Senator of Hamburg, stated: »The integration of European ScreeningPort into the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is an important step to strategically expand preclinical drug development in Hamburg. By networking with the biological structure research at DESY, with scientists at UKE, and together with the industrial applications at Evotec, a first class location at international level will emerge. With the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft we have secured an excellent partner. The Fraunhofer IME-ScreeningPort is an important element of the Fraunhofer strategy of the Senate, thereby promoting innovation of science and industry in Hamburg«.

The City of Hamburg has supported the integration and development of the IME-SP with funding of three million euro.

Colin Bond, the former head of the supervisory board and Chief Financial Officer of Evotec AG, commented: »Over the last few years, we have developed European ScreeningPort GmbH as a highly-successful contract research organization for academic researches, and the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft (and in particular the Fraunhofer IME) therefore represents the ideal partner for the further development of the organization as the IME-ScreeningPort. We fully support this strategic development. The role of Evotec AG will change from a founding shareholder of European ScreeningPort GmbH to a cooperation partner working with Fraunhofer IME«.

**About Fraunhofer IME**

The Fraunhofer Institute for Molecular Biology and Applied Ecology IME conducts research in the field of applied life sciences from a molecular level to entire ecosystems. Our interdisciplinary organization features laboratories with the state of the art infrastructure, including GMP production facilities and complex facilities for environmental simulations, allowing a wide spectrum of research and development services in the divisions of Molecular Biology and Applied Ecology.

The Molecular Biology Division focuses on complex research and projects in the business fields Drugs and Biopharmaceuticals, Bioproduction and Industrial Biotechnology and Agrosience for Food and Feed. The formation of the IME-SP is fully aligned with the Fraunhofer IME mission to take innovative products closer towards the market, to develop enabling technologies and provide scientific services to partners from academic institutions and industry.

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**FRAUNHOFER INSTITUTE FOR MOLECULAR BIOLOGY AND APPLIED ECOLOGY IME**

The Fraunhofer IME has approximately 600 employees working at its laboratories in Aachen, Schmallenberg, Münster, Gießen and Frankfurt as well as subsidiary research centers in the USA and in Chile.

The IME enjoys close ties with the Institute of Molecular Biotechnology at RWTH Aachen University, the Department of Biotechnology of Plants at the University Münster, the Department of Applied Entomology at the University Gießen and the Institute for Clinical Pharmacology at the Goethe University Frankfurt.

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**About European ScreeningPort GmbH (ESP)**

European ScreeningPort is located in Hamburg and was founded in 2008 as a public private partnership. Founding shareholders include the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and Evotec AG.

The mission of the European ScreeningPort was to bridge the gap between basic academic research and the life sciences industry in the field of drug discovery and development. With state-of-the-art infrastructure at the VolksparkLabs in Hamburg, established processes and innovative technologies, ESP was able to position itself as a world-leading contract research organization for small-molecule screening, particularly for targets identified by academic partners. ESP was successful in the competitive acquisition of public joint research projects (BMBF, EU, IMI) and has already acquired full project capacity for several years to come. Focusing on applied research, ESP has developed a strong network of academic as well as pharmaceutical industry partners.



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The **Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft** is the leading organization for applied research in Europe. Its research activities are conducted by 67 institutes and research units at locations throughout Germany. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft employs a staff of more than 23,000, who work with an annual research budget totaling 2 billion euros. Of this sum, more than 1.7 billion euros is generated through contract research. More than 70 percent of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft's contract research revenue is derived from contracts with industry and from publicly financed research projects. International collaborations with excellent research partners and innovative companies around the world ensure direct access to regions of the greatest importance to present and future scientific progress and economic development.

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