Genzyme and ICGEB to Advance Treatments for Neglected Diseases

Genzyme Corporation, a global leader in biotechnology, and the International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), a not-for-profit research and development (R&D) organization, announced a new research collaboration to advance treatments for neglected diseases. The collaboration between Genzyme and ICGEB – that combines Genzyme’s expertise in drug development and ICGEB’s domain knowledge in malaria – will initially focus on the development of new, improved treatments for malaria, a debilitating infectious disease of developing countries.

ICGEB and Genzyme scientists are currently targeting *Plasmodium falciparum* and *Plasmodium vivax*, increasingly resistant parasites that cause up to 65% of malaria in India. ICGEB has already begun to identify promising targets that, with the drug development expertise of Genzyme, could lead to drug compounds effective against malaria. The research will take place both in ICGEB’s laboratories in New Delhi, India and in Genzyme’s facilities in Waltham, Mass., U.S.A. Under the agreement, scientists from Genzyme and ICGEB are expected to work in each other’s laboratories from time to time. The collaboration includes an innovative approach to intellectual property rights, providing ICGEB rights to commercial uses within the field of neglected disease on a royalty-free basis.

Both organizations bring strong capabilities in biotechnology research and drug development. The ICGEB is a premier global research organization, with the mandate to use biotechnology to find solutions to problems of the developing world. Funded in part by the Department of Biotechnology of the Indian Ministry of Science and Technology and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it conducts innovative research in life sciences and strengthens the research capabilities of its 57 member countries through training, funding programs and advisory services.

Genzyme is one of the world’s leading biotechnology companies, and uses the most advanced technologies in the life sciences to develop treatments for people with serious diseases. The company supports efforts to discover and advance novel treatments for neglected diseases such as malaria, Chagas disease and sleeping sickness through its Humanitarian Assistance for Neglected Diseases (HAND) initiative. The HAND initiative complements existing Genzyme programs that provide free medicines and help to build sustainable healthcare systems in developing countries.
[ Industry Watch ]

Genzyme established a formal presence in India in 2007 to actively collaborate with private and public institutions in the country and the region.

About ICGEB
The International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) is an inter-governmental organization that is dedicated to advanced research and training in molecular biology and biotechnology with special regard to problems of developing countries. Established in 1987, ICGEB currently has 57 member countries with laboratories in New Delhi, India, Trieste, Italy and Cape Town, South Africa and a network of affiliated centers in its member states.

ICGEB, New Delhi conducts basic and applied research on problems related to human health and agriculture, focusing on infectious diseases including malaria, HIV, tuberculosis, Hepatitis E, Hepatitis B and dengue. Research on malaria that focuses on understanding the biology of the malaria parasite and its interaction with the host is used to pursue novel approaches to develop drugs and vaccines to combat malaria.

About Genzyme Corporation
Genzyme, headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is one of the world’s leading biotechnology companies. Since 1981, the company has grown from a small start-up to a diversified enterprise with more than 10000 employees in locations spanning the globe and 2007 revenues of US$3.8 billion. Genzyme focuses on six broad areas of medicine: lysosomal storage disorders, renal disease, orthopaedics/biosurgical specialties, transplant and immune diseases, oncology, and genetics/ diagnostics.