TOUCHLIGHT

TOUCHLIGHT GENETICS LTD. PRESS RELEASE: World leading DNA technology is expanding its operations in London as it grows to meet global DNA demand.

Touchlight Genetics Ltd has developed a revolutionary DNA technology that can synthetically manufacture commercial scale DNA in a two-week process – a technology that is disrupting the decades old fermentation approach. The process uses two enzymes, and basic benchtop laboratory equipment to produce DNA of any sequence for therapeutic applications.

New medical technologies are driving an exponential increase in the global demand for DNA, such as CRISPR genome editing or gene therapy, that allow 'one shot' cures of previously unaddressable genetic diseases, for example Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Current DNA fermentation technology is failing to meet demand due to the need for significant space and capital investment, and inherent limitations in the process.

"We are revolutionising DNA," says Jonny Ohlson, Touchlight Founder and CEO. "We were established on the conviction that DNA would underpin the next generation of medicine – 10 years later, our technology can produce DNA for advanced therapeutics in 1/10th of the time, 1/10th of the space, and for 1/10th of the cost, compared with alternative DNA sources. We can address significant DNA hurdles that hamper the progress of real solutions to diseases of great unmet need."

Touchlight's operations are expanding in order to support numerous commercial product collaborations with large pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies around the world. Additionally, with the fastest and most scalable DNA technology, Touchlight looks to drive forward the next generation of DNA vaccines, that are safer, more effective, faster to manufacture, and easier to distribute to resource-constrained environments.

Touchlight's expansion comes at a time where there is great emphasis in growth in the area of advanced medicines and vaccine manufacture. Interest in DNA vaccines is growing, as the risk of infectious disease epidemics increasingly threatens global health. In an interview following the launch of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI), its champion Bill Gates, identified the advancement of DNA and nucleic acid vaccines as a primary focus of the $1bn multinational fund[1].

Advanced medicines manufacturing is a growing focus in the UK, gaining significant investment from both private and public sources, including £270m through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund[2]. Led by Sir John Bell, this fund aims to advance the life science sector from the bottom up by supporting UK SMEs who are rapidly developing ground breaking technology. Expansion of Touchlight's DNA platform, that aims to underpin the success of advanced medicines, will directly support this mission to establish the UK life sciences sector as a world leader.

Touchlight is expanding operations into a tailor-made laboratory, within the restored Hampton Water Works situated on the River Thames [Photos on next page]. This grade-two listed facility was formed in 1852 by Joseph Quick in response to the London Cholera epidemics, and was a part of some of the greatest life-saving innovation of the era. Operating until 1950, the buildings were left largely untouched until they were purchased in 2012 by Mr Andrew Black, Co-Founder of Betfair.

Andrew's vision is to utilise the 4,000 square meters of dramatic Victorian architecture to create a new scientific community. "Science, and biotech as a daughter, is often forgotten as one of the great creative industries. Most other creative industries put great onus on a conducive working environment, but less so in Biotech where laboratories are often subterranean and utilitarian. I wanted to create a light and inspiring atmosphere, one to support great science, like the work going on at Touchlight."

The first phase of Touchlight's laboratory expansion is now complete, with the second phase to be completed in November. The expansion means that Touchlight is now ideally placed to enable a revolution in medicine with its cutting-edge DNA technology.

More information about Touchlight on our website: www.Touchlight.com

Sources

1. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/davos-world-economic-forum-bill-gates-outsmart-global-epidemics-cepi-coalition-for-epidemic-preparedness/ - "The idea is to take a new way of building vaccines that could let us develop in less than a year a novel vaccine, called DNA/RNA vaccines," Gates told CBS News senior producer Lulu Chiang at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Part of CEPI's research would explore ways to create "plug-and-play" vaccines using genetic sequences of pathogens to identify effective antibodies against infections"
2. http://www.abpi.org.uk/media-centre/newsreleases/2017/Pages/Medicines-manufacturing-can-be-high-growth-sector-for-UK-economy-of-the-future.aspx

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