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Sharpening the gene scissors together

The Max Delbrück Center, Berlin, and the biotech company AlgenScribe from France have agreed to cooperate to further develop their gene-editing tools. The aim is to utilize synergies, accelerate research, and ultimately develop cell therapies for genetically determined diseases.

A special kind of German-French friendship is being fostered here: The Max Delbrück Center and the French biotech company AlgenScribe want to jointly further develop and improve their genome editing tools. To this end, Frédéric Zampatti, CEO of AlgenScribe, and Dr. Ralf Kühn from the Max Delbrück Center signed a cooperation agreement in July, 16, 2024. They aim to utilize synergies between their respective technologies, expand, and accelerate research together.

Dr. Ralf Kühn, head of the “Genome Engineering & Disease Models” research group at the Max Delbrück Center, has been researching gene editing techniques for more than ten years. His team uses and improves the CRISPR-Cas9 gene scissors. The HIROS/replace technology developed in his laboratory can also efficiently exchange genetic fragments in differentiated and non-dividing mammalian cells in a very targeted and sequence-accurate manner. Kühn's aim is to gain a better understanding of genetic diseases and to develop novel cell therapies with the help of the sharpened gene scissors.

This goal is shared by AlgenScribe, a biotechnology company based in Nice and Paris, which has also developed a proprietary gene-editing platform. Frédéric Zampatti, CEO of AlgenScribe, said at the signing of the cooperation agreement: "This academic collaboration, the first one outside France, will enable us to expand the scope of our platform as we immediately spotted potential synergies. We’re eager to see the results of this collaboration. We’d like to thank the technology transfer office of the Max Delbrück Center and its longstanding technology transfer partner Ascenion. Thanks to this support, we were able to reach an agreement just a few months after our first meeting."

Ralf Kühn emphasized: "For us, the cooperation with AlgenScribe offers an ideal opportunity to expand our gene repair tool and hopefully bring it to application and commercialization more quickly. I look forward to this international collaboration."

Dr. Sigrid Scheek, Technology Manager at Ascenion, said: “We are delighted that we were able to initiate this cooperation at the French partnering event BioFit in Marseille.” Dr. Gerd Müller, Head of Technology Transfer (interim) at the Max Delbrück Center, added: “It offers a great potential of synergies to jointly develop therapeutic applications.”

Further Information

Kühn Lab: Genome Engineering & Disease Models

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Max Delbrück Center

The Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in the Helmholtz Association (Max Delbrück Center) is one of the world's leading biomedical research institutions. Max Delbrück, a Berlin native, was a Nobel laureate and one of the founders of molecular biology. At the locations in Berlin-Buch and Mitte, researchers from some 70 countries study human biology – investigating the foundations of life from its most elementary building blocks to systems-wide mechanisms. By understanding what regulates or disrupts the dynamic equilibrium of a cell, an organ, or the entire body, we can prevent diseases, diagnose them earlier, and stop their progression with tailored therapies. Patients should be able to benefit as soon as possible from basic research discoveries. This is why the Max Delbrück Center supports spin-off creation and participates in collaborative networks. It works in close partnership with Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin in the jointly-run Experimental and Clinical Research Center (ECRC), the Berlin Institute of Health (BIH) at Charité, and the German Center for Cardiovascular Research (DZHK). Founded in 1992, the Max Delbrück Center today employs 1,800 people and is 90 percent funded by the German federal government and 10 percent by the State of Berlin. www.mdc-berlin.de

AlgenScribe
Founded in 2022, AlgenScribe SAS is actively crafting a genome editing framework tailored for Human Health encompassing therapeutics, bioproduction, research tools and diagnostics. AlgenScribe's objective is to unlock the complete potential of genome editing, focused on eliminating obstacles that hinder the application of these technologies across specific-use scenarios. The company is supported and financed by the Provence Côte d'Azur incubator (PCA) and the South Region. www.algenscribe.com