

Cardiovascular and Metabolic Network

PROJECT PRESENTATION:

ScreenHelp to Boost Public Research Initiatives

Before a pharmaceutical candidate can be considered for clinical trials, a screening process is needed to determine which compounds give the intended effect. Screening is expensive, which means that new research ideas from universities and small biotech companies run the risk of not being taken up. This is the background to GöteborgBIO's ScreenHelp initiative from 2005 and MedCoast Scandinavia's major platform project Chemical Biology that began in autumn 2005, both designed to create the prerequisites to strengthen the region as a successful biotech cluster.

Screening resources are scarce in the Scandinavian market today. In fact, no public institutions or companies in Northern Europe provide adequate screening services to academic or private researchers at a reasonable price.

This means that many biotech innovations stemming from universities or small companies have to rely on the large pharmaceutical companies for further development, verification, and commercialisation. Since Big Pharma often tend to concentrate on commercially viable drugs, many promising leads for new pharmaceuticals will therefore never benefit the potential patients.

Pilot Project to Bridge Gap between Public and Private Research

This gap between public and private research constitutes a major bottleneck in the life science industry and in order to ensure that Scandinavia remains a competitive player, it needs to be bridged. This is why, in 2005, a pilot project – ScreenHelp – was initiated within the Cardiovascular and Metabolic Network. ScreenHelp is intended to support a competence build-up together with a support organisation within the Göteborg region.

Professor Sven Enerbäck at Sahlgrenska Academy, who has invested 10 years of research in understanding the importance of the FoxC2 gene for the metabolism of adipose tissue and has also developed a cell based screening method for the same gene, has been granted SEK 1 million to continue the development of the cell based screening model and communicate and co-ordinate screening experience at the universities in Göteborg.

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Chemical Biology Platform Project

MedCoast Scandinavia and GIBBS, Göteborg International Bioscience Business School, launched the Chemical Biology platform project, a further development of ScreenHelp, jointly. The intention is to create an integrated infrastructure platform for the Göteborg–Oslo region, to coordinate and support both public researchers and the biotech community with competence and infrastructure related to screening and molecular design to further increase the value of the research, which will ultimately benefit the patients.

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS:

- **AstraZeneca** – One of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. Provides medicines designed to fight disease in six medical areas: cancer, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, infection, neuroscience and respiratory.
- **GIBBS, Göteborg International Bioscience Business School** – Provides tomorrow's entrepreneurial leaders with the skills and support they need to succeed.
- **Medical Genetics, Institute of Medical Biochemistry, Sahlgrenska Academy at Göteborg University** – Conducts research on molecular mechanisms, especially transcription factors.

Would you like to know more about this project? Please contact:

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Sven Enerbäck
ScreenHelp Project Leader
Professor, Department
of Medical Biochemistry,
Sahlgrenska Academy at
Göteborg University

*ScreenHelp will further boost the trans-
lational tradition of the Göteborg region.
Many different players will benefit from
it; the researchers, the educational sys-
tem, and the small biotech companies.
There are only winners in this initiative.*



Kjetil Taskén
Centre Director, Biotechnol-
ogy Centre of Oslo at
University of Oslo

*This cross-organisational project is
very exciting and an excellent way to
increase collaboration in the Göteborg-
Oslo region.*



Jörgen Engel
Professor, Department of
Pharmacology, Sahlgren-
ska Academy at Göteborg
University

*Getting a regional centre dedicated to
chemical biology is important from a
pharmacological point of view and we
are looking forward to getting access
to this cross-organisational knowledge
base for future research.*

The Cardiovascular and Metabolic Network, CVM, is a competence network and co-operation project between health care, academia and industry. Its task is to increase the number of commercialisations in the cardiovascular and metabolic area, which in the long term will lead to better applications in health and medical care and more employment opportunities. The CVM Network validates suitable development projects and provides cutting-edge competence and capital. CVM is part of GöteborgBIO.