

**1st June, 2004 – Press Release**

## **Researchers gain free access to industry-owned key patents in molecular biology**

### **Ascenion mediates licence agreements with Collectis and DuPont**

Munich, 1st June, 2004 – Ascenion GmbH has established for the first time a clear legal basis whereby the research institutions DKFZ, GBF, GSF and MDC may use key technologies for which Collectis SA and DuPont together with Bristol-Myers Squibb have dominant patent positions. The technologies are homologous recombination (Collectis) and the Cre-Lox system (DuPont and Bristol-Myers Squibb respectively) – fundamental molecular biology techniques widely used to investigate the function and regulation of individual genes. An important area of application for these techniques are so-called knock-out mice that are indispensable in both basic research and drug development.

The use of patent-protected methods, whether for research purposes or for commercial applications, requires a licence from the patent holder. With the newly signed licence agreements, the research institutions concerned obtain the rights to the free use of both methods for research purposes. Furthermore, terms have already been agreed with Collectis that assure the company a fair share in the profits resulting from any future commercialisation of the research results.

“We are moving in an explosive area of conflict”, commented Christian Stein, CEO of Ascenion. “Individual companies hold dominant patent positions in technologies that are practically indispensable in life-science research. As a result, the pressure is increasing on these companies to make short-term returns with the help of their patents.” Against this background, the present licence agreements are groundbreaking, believes Prof. Balling, Scientific Director of the GBF. “Ascenion has created long-term legal security and a fair balance of interests between research and industry, thereby safeguarding freedom of research.”

The new licence agreements also have a direct effect on day-to-day research. Previously, for example, a material transfer agreement had to be signed each time Cre-Lox materials were passed on, giving DuPont access and rights to all ensuing research results. “We can now conduct our research more freely and efficiently, and can cooperate with other research institutions without having to negotiate legal hurdles”, said Balling. ###

**Press Release**

Page 1/2

### **Contact**

Dr Christian Stein, CEO  
Ascenion GmbH

T: +49 (0)89 318814-0  
F: +49 (0)89 318814-20  
E: stein@ascenion.de



Berlin  
Braunschweig  
Munich  
Neuherberg

Ascenion GmbH  
Herzogstrasse 8  
80803 Munich  
Germany

**Intellectual Property  
Asset Management**

A Company of the  
Life-Science Foundation  
for the Promotion of  
Science and Research

## Further information

### Homologous recombination

Homologous recombination refers to the exchange of two functionally equivalent DNA fragments with identical ends. This enables a particular gene to be replaced by a mutant variant, or a deficient gene to be replaced with a functional copy. Collectis SA, a spin-off company of the Pasteur Institute, has a dominant patent position in this area. More information is available at [www.collectis.com](http://www.collectis.com)

### Cre-Lox

The Cre-Lox system enables the targeted insertion and activation of genes at defined positions in the genome. This allows, for example, the insertion of tissue-specific mutations (conditional gene activation/inactivation). DuPont and Bristol-Myers Squibb respectively hold important patents in this area.

**DKFZ:** German Cancer Research Centre

**GBF:** German Research Centre for Biotechnology mbH

**GSF:** National Research Centre for Environment and Health

**MDC:** Max Delbrück Centre for Molecular Medicine

### Ascenion GmbH

Ascenion is the first and as yet only patent management agency with a clear life-science focus. Ascenion supports and advises scientists and research institutions with regard to the protection and exploitation of their intellectual property (patents), and initiates and mediates licence agreements between research institutions and industry. Among Ascenion's particular strengths are start-up coaching and active investment management. Since its foundation in 2001, Ascenion has mediated in over 60 agreements and currently holds equity in eight life-science companies.

Ascenion is a 100% subsidiary of the Life-Science Foundation for the Promotion of Science and Research and the exclusive commercialization partner for the GBF, GSF, MDC and DKZF\*. Ascenion's headquarters are in Munich, with further offices in Berlin, Braunschweig and Neuherberg.

\* for the DKFZ, only in relation to findings from the NGFN

## Contact

Dr Christian Stein, CEO  
Ascenion GmbH

T: +49 (0)89 318814-0  
F: +49 (0)89 318814-20  
E: [stein@ascenion.de](mailto:stein@ascenion.de)



Berlin  
Braunschweig  
Munich  
Neuherberg

Ascenion GmbH  
Herzogstrasse 8  
80803 Munich  
Germany

**Intellectual Property  
Asset Management**

A Company of the  
Life-Science Foundation  
for the Promotion of  
Science and Research