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Merck, genOway form CRISPR/Cas9 Strategic alliance to develop Rodent Models

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genOway to acquire exclusive rights to Merck's foundational genome-editing patents to produce, sell rodent models



Merck, a leading science and technology company and leader in genome editing, has announced a strategic alliance in the CRISPR/Cas9 rodent model market with France-based biotechnology company genOway.

"We are committed to making our patented CRISPR technology broadly available to the global research and discovery community," said Udit Batra, member of the Merck Executive Board and CEO, Life Science. "Together with genOway, we will get the best research models out to the pharmaceutical and biotech industries as well as academic laboratories quickly, so we can help accelerate their research, shorten drug development timelines and treat previously untreatable diseases in faster and more targeted ways. We will continue to play an active role, responsibly and ethically, in ensuring that scientists have access to the latest CRISPR technologies."

Through an exclusive worldwide license of Merck's foundational CRISPR integration patents, genOway will develop new models and solutions allowing non-profit and for-profit scientists to use CRISPR/Cas9 technology. Under the agreement, genOway will also develop a network of sublicensees in both the model creation and distribution businesses and preclinical services for all potential applications worldwide, with a strong focus in the United States, Asia and Europe. Financial details were not disclosed.

Both Merck and genOway have identified research fields where they can combine their respective technologies and expertise to develop and validate new CRISPR/Cas9-related products and solutions. Merck's patented CRISPR integration technology is a strong entry point through which innovation can be developed and launched.

At Merck, excellence and expertise in animal care, use and welfare are of the highest priority. In line with its mission to develop innovative medicines and chemicals based on scientific excellence and the established ethical standards, Merck is committed to conducting animal research activities only if no other method or testing is available for obtaining the result or product sought, not entailing the use of a live animal.

"The CRISPR/Cas9 IP landscape has been complex and uncertain over the last years," said Alexandre Fraichard, CEO of genOway. "The situation has changed and the Merck IP portfolio is clearly central to CRISPR/Cas9-based eukaryotic genome-editing applications. This alliance, combining research and business, will enable us to provide the scientific community with more physiologically relevant models and the necessary intellectual property rights which will ultimately speed delivering better drugs to patients."