

## In Brief

## Strem into Europe

Strem Chemicals of the US has expanded its nanomaterials initiative with a European nanochemistry laboratory, headed by Dr Nina Matoussevitch at the University of Strasbourg's *Institut de Science et d'Ingenierie Supramoleculaires*. It will work with the US facility and Professor Helmut Bönemann of the Max-Planck Institute, from whom Strem originally licensed nanoparticle technology in 2004, to supply custom-made nanostructured materials to R&D groups.

## Oil on water

UK-based speciality chemicals producer Zirax has agreed a three-year contract worth about €10 million with an unnamed oil and gas producer in the Middle East. Under this, it will supply about 14,000 tonnes/year of its PelletOil calcium chloride pellets, which are used as drilling muds and in enhanced oil recovery technologies. The company added that it expects to increase PelletOil capacity at its sites in Italy and Russia to 170,000 tonnes/year from mid-2009.

## Pharmaterial world

UK-based CRO Pharmaterials has announced a 1,400 m<sup>2</sup> facility, which it will fit out to meet the requirements of GMP manufacture. From 2009, this facility will offer GMP manufacture for Phase I clinical trials, notably in inhalation and oral dose forms. The company said that this was the logical next step from its existing expertise in pharmaceutical materials science, salt selection, polymorphism, amorphous materials and pre-clinical formulation.

## CORRECTION

In the article by Direvo Technologies in last month's edition (*SCM*, November 2008, page 18-19), the colours representing the respective residual activities of the company's Variant 17.2 engineered enzyme and wild-type enzyme in a bar chart on Figure 1b were incorrectly transposed. This implied that Variant 17.2 has a lower activity than the wild-type, whereas the opposite is in fact the case, as the text of the article should make clear.

## Recipharm acquires third facility

## SWEDEN

Recipharm, a Swedish CDO and CMO, has acquired the AstraZeneca Biotech Laboratory (ABL) a GMP biomanufacturing facility in Södertälje, Sweden. This was the company's third acquisition in as many months. Financial terms were not disclosed.

As in most of its previous deals, Recipharm will run the newly acquired site via a specially formed subsidiary, Recipharm Biotech, and will keep on most of the staff. The acquisition will take effect on 1 January 2009.

Recipharm Biotech will take a renewable lease to the ABL, initially for 12 years and will buy all of the associated equipment, while also entering into a Phase I-II supply agreement for a development project. AstraZeneca (AZ) itself has consolidated its biotech activities in its newly acquired MedImmune facility in the UK and the US.

"This acquisition considerably expands our service offering, as we can now provide contract drug development and production services for both small and large molecular drugs," claimed Thomas Eldered, CEO and managing director of Recipharm. The company he added, ultimately aims to be one of the world's top three CDOs and CMOs in pharmaceuticals.



Eldered - Recipharm can now make small and large molecules

The ABL is a pilot plant facility for the small-scale development and supply of recombinant proteins and monoclonal antibodies for use in clinical trials and regulatory approvals. Up to 1,000 litres of culture supernatant/week can be purified to a bulk drug substance. Plans are in place to install a new suite of 250-1,000 litre disposable bioreactors to increase fed-batch capacity.

Recipharm said this would complement its acquisition in August of some recently updated lyophilisation facilities from Inotech Labor in Basel,

Switzerland, by giving it the ability to take outsourced projects from cell-line development through to finished products for pre-clinical and early clinical studies.

The Swiss facility can handle vial sizes of up to 250 litres of drug substance at a time, preparing materials for clinical trials and support small-scale commercial drug production. "Bringing lyophilisation into our service offering represents an important step in our strategic drive to expand into the realm of biologicals," Eldered commented.

In October, Recipharm revealed plans to acquire a production site at Fontaine-Lès-Dijon in France from Solvay's Laboratoires Fournier subsidiary. This site includes tablet, capsule and manufacturing facilities and complements another former AZ facility in France that was acquired last year. Recipharm will continue most of the site's current activities and develop it by diversifying its clients and product ranges.

Prior to all this, Recipharm had seven main manufacturing facilities in Sweden, France, the UK and Switzerland. It supplies about 600 different drug products in forms including solid dose granulates and powders, steriles, semi solids,  $\beta$ -lactams, hormones and dry powder inhalers.

## Metrics plans 'unique' potent facility

## US

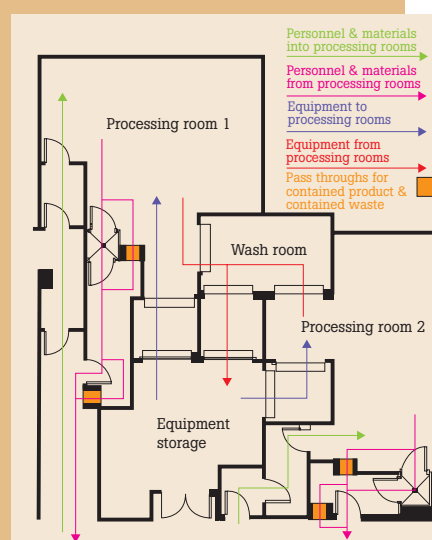
Metrics, which offers pharmaceutical formulation development, Phase I-III clinical trial material, commercial manufacturing and analytical development and validation services for the pharmaceuticals industry, will open a dedicated potent and cytotoxic drug development facility (*right*) at its site in Greenville, North Carolina, in early 2009. This, said company president Phil Hodges, will be unique of its kind.

The facility will provide total engineered containment of pharmaceutical processes via the use of customised hard-wall isolation technologies, thus removing any need for powered air-purifying respirators. Equipment and change parts will be dedicated to potent and cytotoxic use and containment levels will be about 30 ng/m<sup>3</sup> of

room air. This, Hodges claimed, has "increased our capacity to work with more potent APIs".

The facility is designed for a one-way flow of material, personnel and equipment. It features two processing rooms, each with double entry airlocks, decontamination showers and exit airlocks, equipment airlocks and access to a dedicated washroom. There is also a dedicated air handler, bringing in 100% outside air, with HEPA-in and -out filtering at a rate of over 300 m<sup>3</sup>/minute and 25 air changes/hour.

This is part of an ongoing €14 million expansion. Metrics recently opened a 4,400 m<sup>2</sup> expansion, adding four new analytical laboratories to the existing three plus stability storage with environmental specialities chambers and online



antibiotic assay and sterility testing. The company has also recently taken on 50 new pharmaceutical scientists and technicians.