FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Oxford Gene Technology in collaboration with St George's, University of London and St George's Healthcare NHS Trust to develop diagnostic chip to test for multiple sexually transmitted infections

Oxford / London, December 12, 2006 – Oxford Gene Technology (OGT), St George's University of London and St George's Healthcare NHS Trust are pleased to announce the signing of a collaboration agreement to develop a cost-effective single platform microarray to diagnose multiple sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

The collaboration between OGT and St George's aims to develop a diagnostic test with the capacity to detect the DNA of many sexually transmitted pathogens in one specimen from infected people.

The microarray test aims for more comprehensive and accurate diagnoses with accurate same-day results. Ultimately, the array technology lends itself to the development of point-of-care testing for multiple STIs combined with the highest standards of accuracy. The STI diagnostic microarray is a timely investment in new gene technologies that directly address the emerging crisis of STIs in the UK, highlighted by the recent report of the Health Protection Agency (2006).

Dr Tariq Sadiq, Senior Lecturer and Consultant Genito Urinary Physician at St George's, said on behalf of the University and NHS Trust "The incidence of STI continues to rise and is challenging our ability to provide care for our patients, directly costing the NHS in excess of £1 billion a year. As more responsibility for this care falls on settings such as GP practices, community based sexual health care providers and even high street pharmacies, concern exists for the need to maintain high standards of diagnostic accuracy while also recognising the increasing role of many infections not traditionally tested for. If successful, we think the

microarray may be an important tool in the attempts to reduce the burden of STIs and their transmission"

Diagnostic DNA microarrays or 'gene chips' have been pioneered by the research team of Professor Philip Butcher, of St George's, University of London, for bacterial and viral pathogen detection, exploiting expertise in bacterial microarrays built up by the Wellcome Trust funded BμG@S project (http://www.bugs.sgul.ac.uk).

In partnership with St George's clinical and microbiology expertise, OGT will design and develop the high quality optimised 60mer oligonucleotide microarray using its ink jet in-situ synthesis (IJISS) platform and will also investigate the use of its Multi Sample Array (MSA) format enabling the parallel analysis of multiple samples. This will aim to reduce the cost per sample and provide a rapid diagnostic result.

Dr John Anson, Research and Development Director at OGT said: "OGT's microarray technologies will provide a nucleic acid based tool which, coupled with PCR amplification, is aimed at producing a diagnostic test to improve the detection range, accuracy and the speed of STI diagnosis to meet clinician's needs."

The project will be jointly funded by the Heptagon Proof of Concept Fund and OGT and will last a year in the first instance. By then end of this period, the team hope to have a prototype which will then be validated using clinical samples.

To access a copy of the HPA report, "A complex picture: HIV & other sexually transmitted infections in the United Kingdom: 2006"
http://www.hpa.org.uk/publications/2006/hiv_sti_2006/default.htm

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Notes to editors

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About Oxford Gene Technology

- Founded in 1995 by the pioneer of Southern Blotting, Professor Sir Edwin Southern, OGT operates out of Begbroke Business Park near Oxford, with excellent access to a growing network of life science companies

- OGT offers a comprehensive custom microarray consultancy service, from experimental design through all stages to data analysis and interpretation. It has a strong proven track record in providing custom microarray service in a range of applications, and recently announced the launch of its first microarray product, an *Escherichia coli* K12 ChIP on chip, the first ChIP microarray product to be launched as part of OGT's Prokaryotic Chip^2 family

The key focus areas of OGT include:

1. **Array-based application products and services** for life science research and molecular diagnostics. OGT's flexible and cost-effective, customised DNA microarray service covers a range of applications, offering specialist support and assisting customers with every aspect of their research, from initial consultation and experimental design to probe selection, array design and fabrication through to data analysis and interpretation

2. **Development of innovative platform products** for clinical research and diagnostics

3. **Licensing**. OGT operates an open licensing policy which has successfully provided access for a number of companies to OGT's fundamental intellectual property, particularly in the area of microarrays

4. **Scientific collaborations** to generate diagnostic biomarker intellectual property

For further information on OGT visit http://www.ogt.co.uk/

About St George's, University of London

St George's, University of London is the only independently governed medical school in England and provides training to a wide range of healthcare students on one site. As well as providing courses in medicine and biomedical sciences, the Medical School also offers courses in midwifery, nursing, physiotherapy, radiography and social work in conjunction with Kingston University. The school is extremely active in research and has a high reputation in areas such as infection as well as diseases of the heart and circulation. Other areas of expertise include stroke rehabilitation, air pollution and addictions.

About The Heptagon Fund

The Higher Education Innovation Fund provides proof of concept funding for its seven London university partners for new technologies in life sciences and healthcare. The Fund addresses the translation of novel and inventive ideas from fundamental research to commercial demonstration, leading to soundly based propositions able to attract licensing deals or commercial investment funding.
http://www.enterprise.sgul.ac.uk/poc_funding.htm

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