



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Oxford Gene Technology in collaboration with the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute to develop a microarray to test for genetic defects in unborn children**

**Oxford / Cambridge, January 31, 2007** – Oxford Gene Technology (OGT) and the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute are pleased to announce the signing of a collaboration agreement to develop a single platform microarray to test for genetic defects in unborn children.

The collaboration between OGT and The Sanger Institute aims to develop and validate a microarray to specifically target a number of key pre-natal syndromes.

Speaking on the development, Professor Martin Bobrow, former Head of Human Genetics at Cambridge University, said: “Many thousands of people choose each year to test their early pregnancies for serious abnormalities of development. This new technology promises to make these tests, faster, more accurate and better targeted than current methods which have been in use for the past 30 years.”

OGT will design and develop the high quality optimised 60mer oligonucleotide microarray using its ink jet *in-situ* synthesis (IJSS) platform, and work with the Sanger Institute’s clinical network to target the most appropriate syndromes, a network of clinicians with samples that will be critical in array validation.

Dr John Anson, Research and Development Director at OGT said: “OGT is currently developing a number of products for array Comparative Genomic Hybridisation (aCGH), applications. The combination of OGT’s oligonucleotide microarray expertise with the Sanger Institute’s drive for the advancement of technology in human genetics will enable our two organisations to design and validate a cost-effective oligonucleotide (pre-natal) array with greater resolution and reproducibility. We are delighted to be collaborating with such a world-renowned team of scientists to develop this diagnostic test”.

Dr Nigel Carter at the Sanger Institute added:” I am excited at the prospect of converting our in-house array designs onto a commercial cost-effective platform which will provide wider

access to the clinical community. The new array will enable rapid identification of a wider range of genetic disorders in the unborn child than is currently possible with other technologies."

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**Notes to editors**

**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<sup>2</sup> 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 the Sanger Institute**

The Sanger Institute has established the DECIPHER database, which allows researchers around the world to submit clinical information of patients with sub microscopic chromosomal imbalance details using the internet. This patient information is then mapped onto the human genome in the public ENSEMBL browser, which enables collaborative investigations of these rare disorders. In this way, DECIPHER has already helped in the identification of new syndromes with subsequent improvements in care and genetic advice for affected individuals and families.

- <http://www.sanger.ac.uk/PostGenomics/decipher/>

**The Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute**, which receives the majority of its funding from the Wellcome Trust, is responsible for the completion of the sequence of approximately one-third of the human genome as well as genomes of model organisms such as mouse and zebra fish, and more than 90 pathogen genomes. In October 2005, new funding was awarded by the Wellcome Trust to enable the Institute to build on its world-class scientific achievements and exploit the wealth of genome data now available to answer important questions about health and disease. These programmes are built around a Faculty of more than 30 senior researchers. The Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute is based in Hinxton, Cambridge, UK.

*Website*

- <http://www.sanger.ac.uk>

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