

HDC Celebrates Re-opening of Altana/Nycomed HTS Labs with Open Day

15.04.2014 –The newly founded screening services provider HDC celebrates the re-opening of the former Altana/Nycomed's HTS and compound logistics facility with numerous guests from industry and academics.

More than hundred guests from Germany, Europe and Japan were invited to an open day of the Hit Discovery Constance (HDC) GmbH on the former Altana/Nycomed premises in Constance. At the symposium, expert representatives from European pharmaceutical companies like Lorenz Mayer from Astra Zeneca, Ingo Kober from Merck Serono, Julio Martin from GSK, and Henning Steinhagen from Gruenthal were presenting talks covering themes around innovation in life sciences and high throughput screening. The participants from industry and academia, like the University of Constance, or the Max-Planck-Institute for Infection Biology in Berlin, used the reception with finger food and cocktails as a chance for informal networking and information exchange.

During guided lab tours, prospective customers had the opportunity to have a closer look at the re-opened facilities. The three modern high-throughput screening stations and a fully integrated compound logistics infrastructure with a capacity of more than 20 million probes at -20°C had been designed and planned at times when Altana Pharma, and later Nycomed, were active on the premises, and still had ambitious plans. This infrastructure complemented by the HDC with a screening library of 240 000 small molecules, which had been compiled according to latest medicinal chemistry design principles, and inspired by the longstanding screening experience of the mother companies.

The services offered by the HDC comprise assay development, HTS with conventional biochemical, cellular and radiometric readouts, phenotypic screening by high-content imaging, as well as storage and management of large sample collections. "We are in a position to offer unique readout technologies, as the screening stations had been designed by physicists, rather than by engineers." says Jan Eickhoff, one of the managing directors of the HDC.

In 2006, Altana Pharma in Constance had been taken over by the multinational pharmaceutical company Nycomed. In May 2011, Nycomed was purchased by the Japanese pharma giant Takeda for 9.6 billion €. Soon afterwards, Takeda began restructuring the site in Constance. Research units were shut down, and the sales department was relocated. The HDC now reopens the existing screening- and compound management labs, including key personnel. HDC is a joint venture effort between the two renowned translational research centers Lead Discovery Center (Dortmund/Germany) and Centre for Drug Design and Discovery (CD3, KULeuven, Leuven/Belgium) as well as the established Italian research and discovery services provider Axxam (Milan).

