News release

22 February 2005

Breakthrough in treating cell failure

A vital step in preventing cell failure in the elderly or in critically ill cancer patients, could be on the way, thanks to Delta G, a new bio-tech company based in Cambridge. They have just received joint investment of £130,000 from NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) – the organisation that supports UK innovation - and the Cambridge University Challenge Fund, to take their research to the next stage of development.

Delta G was recently formed to develop research into mitochondrial bioenergetics. Mitochrondria form the powerhouse of the cell and generate energy for the body. Delta G's work in this area applies recent research in understanding how mitochondria fail as we age, and how that failure can be prevented using novel drugs.

The specific objective of Delta G is the development of pharmaceuticals to treat advanced cancers in therapeutic oncology.

The idea derives from the work of Dr Aubrey de Grey who is the originator of the Reductive Hotspot Theory of ageing and identified mitochondrial failure as a critical component of the ageing process. He is joined by Professor William Baines who is an experienced bio-tech entrepreneur with a background in genomics and IT applications in biological research.

Mark White, NESTA Invention and Innovation Director, comments on the investment: "One of our chief aims at NESTA is to give brilliant ideas the vital early stage support they need to get off the ground. We wish every success to Delta G in developing their research which could prove to be one of the most exciting opportunities in the biopharmaceutical sector in Europe."

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Notes to editors

- NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) investing in innovators and working to improve the climate for creativity in the UK.

- Established in 1998 and set up with an endowment from the National Lottery (£200 million, raised in 2003 to £250 million), NESTA invests the interest to support UK innovation. Since May 2000, when the programmes first opened, NESTA has spent over £58m on programmes supporting 624 awards. Visit www.nesta.org.uk to find out more.

- NESTA has a dedicated Media Room on its web site where news releases like this are easily available and where journalists can subscribe to receive any future releases. Other information, including high-resolution images to download and Communications contact details, are also available at www.nesta.org.uk/mediaroom

- NESTA's Invention and Innovation programme, which is the largest source of seed funding in the UK, has invested in 240 projects totally £15.6m since December 1999.

- Delta G was founded in 2002 to research and develop new drugs based on breakthrough understanding of how cells use energy. The company is headquartered near Cambridge, UK, and is conducting research in collaboration with the Medical Research Council in Cambridge. Visit www.delta-g.com to find out more.