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## BUSINESS

### Enzolve products target developing world

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by Bryan Collins

*Enzolve Technologies, a UCD spin-out, is to begin production of a range of diagnostic kits which screen for disorders affecting newborn infants.*

The company has just completed a successful funding round to begin its work and is targeting the developing world. It received funds from Enterprise Ireland, under the National Development Plan, and from around 10 different private investors. While Enzolve Technologies would not disclose how much it received, the figure is understood to be substantial.

The investment will enable Enzolve, which is based at NovaUCD, to begin production of its NeoScreenPak. Each kit contains sufficient materials to allow up to 1,000 newborns to be tested.

The screening of newborn infants for a range of potentially harmful disorders is well established in economically-developed regions like the US and Europe. In these regions, typically all newborns are tested for five common disorders: phenylketonuria (PKU), maple syrup urine disease, homocystinuria, galactosaemia and congenital hypothyroidism. If left undetected and untreated these disorders will cause long-term and serious impairment to the infant.

"In Ireland all babies are screened and in most of Western Europe and the US. If you don't identify that a baby has a particular element called PKU, then it is associated with the development of mental retardation," explained Dr Declan Bogan, business development director, with Enzolve Technologies, speaking with ENN.

Here, out of the 65,000 infants born each year, four or five typically have the PKU disorder. This can be treated with dietary management. However, in the developing world many cases go undetected, something Enzolve is hoping to address.

"We've had interest from China, Russia and South America, huge markets where they are only at the beginning of the process of making newborn screening standard practice," said Professor Paul Engel, Director of Enzolve Technologies.

Enzolve is currently in consultation with a company based in Armenia and a distributor for China, Chile and Brazil for its products -- in particular its PKU testing kit. Dr Brogan said the company has received positive feedback from the samples it has sent out to date and is planning a number of other products aimed at developing countries' testing procedures for newborns.

"In the long-term it saves a country money. You don't have to then manage the repercussion of not identifying the person. There are other newborn screening tests on the market, but... we have created a modification to those which we believe is more rapid, more stable and is cheaper to manufacture. It makes sense in a developing country where costs are an issue," Dr Bogan told ENN.

Enzolve Technologies was co-founded by Professor Paul Engel and Dr Suren Aghajanian as a spin-out company from UCD's School of Biomolecular and Biomedical Science at the Conway Institute. It employs four full-time staff, along with a number of consultants and board members.

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