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## Enzolve Technologies to commence production of novel newborn screening kits for international markets

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Enzolve Technologies, a UCD spin-out company based at NovaUCD, has received substantial investment from Enterprise Ireland under the National Development Plan (2007-2013) and private investors. This investment will enable it to commence production of 'NeoScreenPak', a range of diagnostic kits for screening a variety of disorders that affect newborn infants. The initial test in the 'NeoScreenPak' range will screen for phenylketonuria (PKU) and each kit will contain sufficient materials to allow up to 1,000 newborns to be tested.



Dr Denise Cornally and Dr Anna Edvardsson, Development Scientists with UCD spin-out Enzolve Technologies

The screening of newborn infants for a variety of disorders that seriously damage their long term health is well established in economically developed countries but less so in under-developed countries. In Ireland all newborns are routinely tested for five common disorders, phenylketonuria (PKU), maple syrup urine disease, homocystinuria, galactosaemia and congenital hypothyroidism. If left undetected and untreated any of these disorders will cause long term and serious impairment to the infant.

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Enzolve's new diagnostic screening package, 'NeoScreenPak' offers several key advantages over other available screening methods. 'NeoScreenPak' is a single format test-package which will be used to screen for seven of the eleven most commonly screened disorders affecting newborns, thus eliminating the necessity for completely different set-ups for screening each of these conditions. Enzolve's 'one-step' tests are also faster, more reliable, convenient and cost effective than tests currently available on the market. Such advantages are proving to be particularly attractive in international markets, especially those where newborn screening programmes are as yet under-developed or under-funded.

Professor Paul C. Engel, Director of Enzolve Technologies and UCD's Professor of Biochemistry, said, 'The 'package deal' aspect of Enzolve's screening kits is really compelling. It makes it easy to use by hospital laboratory staff and it is cost effective, which is very important in less economically developed countries. He added, '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.'

Enzolve Technologies, which is commercialising genetically engineered enzymes, enzyme-based specialty products and enzyme expertise, was co-founded by Professor Paul C. Engel and Dr Suren Aghajanian as a spin-out company from UCD's School of Biomolecular and Biomedical Science at the Conway Institute. The company which now employs 4 full time staff occupies laboratory and office space at NovaUCD the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre at UCD. Enzolve has partnered with another Enterprise Ireland High Potential Start-Up, Europharma Concepts Ltd, based in Co. Offaly, to manufacture the kits.

Looking ahead, the company also plans to use its engineered enzymes as 'biocatalysts' in asymmetric synthesis, powerful tools for making key building blocks for the pharmaceutical industry.

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