



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**6 March 2006**

**Ithaka secures funding for revolutionary technology**

Ithaka Life Sciences has helped secure almost £300,000 funding that will enable pioneering plant technology to be developed for biomedical and agricultural markets.

Ithaka – the consultancy based in Cambridge and Durham – has been working with Creative Gene Technology (CGT), a spin-out from Durham University. Ithaka's Dr Paul Rodgers has been acting as CEO of CGT, aiding the company to secure a £200,000 investment from the Centre of Excellence for Life Sciences (CELS). The funding will allow CGT to develop its work in advanced proteomics ('high throughput protein identification and analysis') to find solutions for agriculture and health. In addition, CGT has secured £90,000 in venture capital funding from the NorthStar Equity Investors' (NSEI) North East Proof of Concept Fund.

Dr Paul Rodgers said, 'We have been working with CGT's founders for a number of years helping to establish and develop the business. This important funding means CGT can more rapidly get to market with applications to, for example, improve crop yields without chemical treatment and to produce pharmaceuticals in plants.'

Dr Ian Robson of CELS said, "This is a great example of how life science companies in our region can work together for mutual benefit. Combining the research expertise in early start-ups with the commercial acumen of companies like Ithaka can really help to accelerate economic growth".

CGT was founded in 2000. It is the culmination of over a decade of the internationally recognised research of Professors Toni Slabas and Keith Lindsey of the School of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, in plant biochemistry, molecular biology and developmental genetics. CGT is using the powerful technologies of proteomics and new techniques in plant genomics ('DNA chip technology') to find suitable market applications such as crop yield enhancement and plant oil quality (plant oils are used in healthcare and cosmetics sectors, and production of bio-diesel) and improve yields of plant products, such as proteins, starch and oils, which could have key benefits for the healthcare, food and chemicals industries..

Professor Keith Lindsey of Durham University, and scientific director at CGT said: 'The £290,000 funding will enable us to undertake further vital research and develop our technology one step closer to becoming a reality in the marketplace. Our aim over the next few years is to build a business with an expanding intellectual property portfolio and with the help of CELS and Ithaka, attract further direct investment from VC companies and multinational corporations.'

**ENDS**

**Further information:**

Dr Paul Rodgers, 01223 703146 [paul.rodgers@ithaka.co.uk](mailto:paul.rodgers@ithaka.co.uk)

**Press information:**

Jane Heeney, Elements PR, 01223 421605 [info@elementspr.co.uk](mailto:info@elementspr.co.uk)

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Ithaka Life Sciences**

Ithaka was founded in 2000 and has quickly built a reputation as one of the UK's leading consultancy and interim management service providers, specialising in new and growing life science businesses. It offers expertise in a number of sectors including pharmaceutical R&D, medical devices, diagnostics and sensors, agriculture and food biotechnology. Ithaka has worked with Creative Gene Technology for a number of years, developing the business plan and securing investment for R&D and growth. Its clients include universities, research institutions, life science businesses, investors and public sector bodies. It has offices in Cambridge and Durham.

[www.ithaka.co.uk](http://www.ithaka.co.uk)

### **CELS**

The Centre of Excellence for Life Sciences (CELS) is funded by One NorthEast. CELS' remit is to drive the healthcare economy of the North East. It acts as a growth catalyst for research and development activity in the region. Working with both universities and business, it is dedicated to overseeing the implementation of a regional growth strategy for healthcare, including identifying regional strengths and opportunities in R&D, technology transfer and business development. CELS also acts as a coordinating hub for academic and business cluster activity.

CELS receives support through the European Regional Development Fund to regenerate the region and create a vibrant economy.

[www.celsatlife.com](http://www.celsatlife.com)

### **Creative Gene Technology Ltd (CGT)**

(CGT) was formed in December 2000 as a spin-out company from Durham University. The two co-founders and scientific directors are Prof. Toni Slabas and Prof. Keith Lindsey, from the School of Biological and Biomedical Sciences. In 2002, CGT won a £45k SMART Award from the DTI, and was recently awarded £90k in venture capital from NorthStar Equity Investors' (NSEI) North East Proof of Concept Fund. In January 2006 CGT was awarded £200k from the Centre of Excellence for Life Sciences. Durham University holds shares in the company.

[www.dur.ac.uk/scientific.enterprise/Creative\\_Gene\\_Page.htm](http://www.dur.ac.uk/scientific.enterprise/Creative_Gene_Page.htm)