

<http://www.ddn-news.com/index.php?newsarticle=12131>

A meeting of metabolomics

02-13-2018

by Mel J. Yeates | [Email the author](#)

INNSBRUCK, Austria—[Biocrates Life Sciences AG](#), a leader in targeted metabolomics, announced at the beginning of January the acquisition of [Metanomics Health GmbH](#). Metanomics Health is a metabolomics biomarker development and healthcare services specialist based in Berlin. At the same time, Biocrates was closing a significant financing round to support future growth.

BASF Plant Science GmbH, the former owner of Metanomics Health, will keep a minority share of Biocrates. The complementary skills and technologies of the merged companies will enable Biocrates to serve the fast-growing metabolomics market as a total solution provider, with a focus on healthcare and pharmaceutical applications. The joint company combines years of metabolomics-based discovery in the development, approval and marketing of novel diagnostics, aiming to become the world leader in early disease detection.

According to Dr. Wulf Fischer-Knuppertz, CEO of Biocrates, Metanomics Health's general manager Dr. Tim Bölke is a former colleague. "After a first exchange of information, it became clear that the technology and skills of Metanomics are complementary to Biocrates. The investors and owners of both companies shared this view and got engaged in the negotiations."

"Together, Biocrates and Metanomics Health provide the broadest technology and metabolomics product portfolio in the industry. This will enable us to provide deep metabolic phenotyping through targeted metabolomics profiling services, customized assays, targeted screening kits and comprehensive data interpretation. Moreover, the merger will enable us to develop kits for both diagnostics and companion diagnostics," says Fischer-Knuppertz. "We are looking forward to further developing and expanding our offerings in the life-science market. The completed financing round along with the merger allows us to increase our growth through accelerated kit development and regional sales expansion."

"With the merger of both entities BASF Plant Sciences GmbH, a 100-percent BASF affiliate and the sole owner of Metanomics, will hold a 36-percent [stake] in the Biocrates Life Sciences AG. BASF Plant Sciences, the major previous investors in Biocrates' MIG Fonds and GA Asset Fund GmbH&Co KG (GAF), participated in an additional financing round with about €5 million,"

Fischer-Knuppertz notes. "At the same time, talks are ongoing with financial and strategic investors."

Metabolomics is the comprehensive analysis of endogenous and exogenous small molecules such as lipids or amino acids, called metabolites. During the last few years, fingerprints of metabolites emerged as an essential biomarker approach in pharmaceutical and academic research. They allow researchers to better understand how genetic predisposition, together with lifestyle and environmental factors, influences health and the response to therapies.

Metabolomics is a powerful technology that is increasingly being adopted in life-sciences research and believed to have the potential of considerable contribution to population health and precision medicine.

When asked if Biocrates and Metanomics plan to keep separate names or whether the companies will be folded in together, Fischer-Knuppertz notes, "For [a] time, let's say a year, for outside communication there will be co-branding, using both names in parallel. Legally there are two companies, Metanomics Health GmbH in Berlin and Biocrates Life Sciences AG in Innsbruck. Metanomics is a 100-percent affiliate of Biocrates."

"The joint company will be the technology leader in metabolomics with the capability of broad profiling, targeted phenotyping, standardized kit portfolio for use in researchers' labs and the ability to develop customized assays and companion diagnostics for pharma drug development.

This technology and product portfolio will allow pharma companies one-stop shopping for metabolomics, and for the joint company to play the role of the total metabolomics provider to the market," he continues. "In parallel, there is an advanced biomarker program running to develop diagnostic tests for indications with high medical need in cancer, CV and neurological diseases."

Biocrates is reportedly the only worldwide company to provide metabolomics kits that are capable of multiplexing for up to 400 metabolites across multiple analyte classes in a single run. These kits have contributed to more than 800 scientific publications, and are being used in more than 100 mass spectrometry laboratories throughout the world. Metanomics Health contributes a rich portfolio of novel metabolite-based cancer and cardiometabolic clinical biomarkers, addressing high unmet medical needs as well as gaining a strong technical foothold in broad profiling with global service customers.

"Metabolomics has the potential to become [the] next-generation routine diagnostic by replacing current single analyte testing in clinical chemistry by a broad metabolite screening and disease specific signatures, which will be more informative than the single analyte. The joint company is uniquely positioned to be the forerunner in this field. Unfortunately, public funding is still going mainly into genomic research, which has not fulfilled expectations, and too little is going into the exploitation of the potential of metabolomics," says Fischer-Knuppertz.

Bölke will continue to lead operations in Berlin and will join the Biocrates management team as chief medical officer. He commented that, "Metabolomics has the potential to bring a new dimension to diagnosis and patient stratification in precision medicine as well as to improve the drug discovery and development process. We are looking forward to extending and broadening our services and offerings to improve prognosis and diagnosis in areas of high unmet medical need, ultimately leading to earlier and better treatments."

Code: E021803