

Press Release

6 April 2023

## By selecting the NETRI and ETAP-Lab industrial consortium, France 2030 is supporting "Innovations in biotherapies and bioproduction"



NETRI and ETAP-Lab are delighted to announce that their BIO-DIAMOND project has emerged as a winner of the "Innovations in biotherapies and bioproduction" call for projects funded by the French government as part of France 2030.

NETRI is an industrial start-up developing the innovative technologies necessary to the production of organs-on-chips for the pharmaceutical industry.

ETAP-Lab is a Contract Research Organisation (CRO) and has been providing the pharmaceutical industry and biotech companies with preclinical study designs that have high translational value for the past 30 years.

Lyon, France, 6 April 2023 – The "Innovations in biotherapies and bioproduction" call for projects is a funding mechanism that forms part of the "Biotherapies and bioproduction of innovative therapies" acceleration strategy. It is intended to catalyse and maintain excellence in biotherapy research by accelerating technology transfer and ensuring a constant flow of innovation from the lab bench to the patient's bed.

The BIO-DIAMOND project is a pilot demonstrating the value of using organs-on-chips to accelerate time to market for discovery and preclinical phase drug candidates in the fields of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). It also seeks to create France's first industrial biobank of human stem cells dedicated to the commercialisation of pre-cultivated organs-on-chips – thus providing immediate access to both healthy and pathological organ-on-chip models to healthcare companies engaged in the development of innovative biotherapies. This project will establish both players as European leaders in their markets and boost the competitiveness and resilience of the French pharmaceutical industry.

NETRI SAS, Bâtiment DomiLyon, 321 avenue Jean Jaurès,  
69007 Lyon, France  
SAS (simplified joint-stock company) with a capital of 1,712€  
registered at the R.C.S. of Lyon under the No. 840 248 744  
[contact@netri.fr](mailto:contact@netri.fr)

ETAP SA – 13, rue du bois de la Champelle  
54500 Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy, France  
SA (Limited company) with a capital of 45,735€  
registered at the R.C.S. of Nancy under the No. 380 676 767  
[contact@etap-lab.com](mailto:contact@etap-lab.com)

Over the past decade, no molecule tested in clinical trials to slow or cure neurodegenerative disease has made it to market. Because conventional preclinical *in vitro* and *in vivo* techniques fall short of allowing us to fully reproduce the complexity of human neurodegenerative disease, pharmaceutical research is limited in its ability to identify the most relevant molecules for use in humans.

In this context, there is a need for innovative methods that will both accelerate and enhance the relevance of the selection of new drug candidates. The BIO-DIAMOND project hopes to demonstrate that the use of organ-on-chip technologies developed by NETRI will allow preclinical actors like ETAP-Lab to address this challenge – and in so doing, increase their responsiveness to the needs of the pharmaceutical industry.

Because their skillsets are complementary, the teams at NETRI and ETAP-Lab decided to join forces. The goal of their collaboration is to develop preclinical models capable of reproducing neuropathological phenomena in detail, using organ-on-chip devices that allow cells of human origin to be cultivated in a compartmentalised structure, connected and controlled by microfluidic flows, mimicking cerebral architecture. As leader of the BIO-DIAMOND project, NETRI will bring its expertise in microfluidic technology, the application of this technology to the study of the central and peripheral nervous system, and the use of human stem cells for the design of *in vitro* physiological and pathological cell models. ETAP-Lab will contribute its expertise in the modelling of neurological diseases on animal cells and human stem cells, as well as its unique know-how in the development and manufacture of toxic oligomers (key molecules involved in the pathophysiology of neurodegenerative diseases) and its in-depth knowledge of preclinical drug evaluation.

Founded on the outstanding expertise of NETRI and ETAP-Lab, this project represents a strategic challenge for the pharmaceutical industries and the health ecosystem. In addition to boosting the growth of both partners, it will significantly strengthen the development and attractiveness of the biotherapy sector in France. In this way, it will support the emergence of new therapeutic solutions for neurodegenerative diseases and accelerate their introduction to the market.

As NETRI CEO and Co-Founder Dr Thibault Honegger puts it: *"Our ambition is to accelerate the development phases of new treatments for the benefit of patients. We are designing organs-on-chips with end-users at the heart of our concerns, using a multidisciplinary, industrial and standardised approach. In the space of just five years, NETRI has designed, manufactured and validated more than ten devices that are now in use worldwide. It is by combining our predictive models with ETAP-Lab's recognised core competencies in the field of neurological disorders that we will best be able to serve our joint pharmaceutical industry clients. And it is because of this shared vision and the complementary skills of our teams that we are ready to take up this challenge together."*

Dr Nicolas Violle, CEO at ETAP-Lab adds: *"For more than 30 years, ETAP-Lab has been dedicated to supporting clients' pharmacological research for the benefit of human health. Our contribution is based on constant investment in the creation and validation of innovative disease models and the use of relevant protocols to predict the effectiveness of drug candidates. The field of neurodegenerative disease currently faces the challenge of translation to the clinic; we intend to rise to that challenge. This is the common goal we share with NETRI. They offer a winning combination of technology and drive that makes them the natural choice – a partner whose ambition matches our own."* The support of the General Secretariat for Investment, acting under the authority of the Prime Minister, demonstrates the importance of our approach and further strengthens our motivation.

## About NETRI

NETRI is an industrial start-up that designs organs-on-chips for the health and wellness industry. NETRI supports its clients throughout the development of their drug candidate or product by providing predictive answers on toxicity, efficacy and modes of action in the discovery, preclinical and clinical phases. Organ-on-chip devices allow the production of both healthy and pathological physiological models. Using its own high-throughput microfluidic technologies, NETRI's models recreate human physiology *in vitro* by co-culturing cells (whether primary or derived from human stem cells) that are compartmentalised and coupled with functional activity measurements. NETRI is now marketing its NeuroFluidics™ organ-on-chip models for both pain and cosmetic applications. The company is located in Lyon (France), where it has 300 m<sup>2</sup> of clean rooms and P2 laboratories as well as more than 50 employees, a dozen of whom are PhDs working as part of a multidisciplinary team (engineering, biology and digital).

Find out more: [netri.com](https://netri.com)

## About ETAP-Lab

ETAP-Lab is a preclinical CRO renowned for its expertise in the fields of dermatology and neurology. It assesses the effectiveness of drug candidates and medical devices. Founded in 1991, ETAP-Lab has successfully worked with a wide range of companies, from small biotechs to large pharmaceutical groups, both in France and further afield. Since the outset, ETAP-Lab models have consistently offered high translational value associated with relevant protocols. Mainly comprised of scientific experts, our team analyses client requirements, offering guidance and advice in the development of a tailor-made solution. ETAP-Lab studies are conducted to exacting quality standards, ensuring the reproducibility, transparency and traceability of tests while maintaining responsiveness and offering regular dialogue with our project managers. The company currently has 30 employees spread across two sites in France. It is serving more than 150 customers, and in 2022 achieved turnover of 2.3 million euros – 90% of which was generated by exports. Endogenous growth is expected to reach 30% in 2023, and the company is strengthening its market position through external growth and strategic research projects like BIO-DIAMOND.

Find out more: [etap-lab.com/](https://etap-lab.com/)

Laura Ejarque

Press Contact

[laura.ejarque@netri.com](mailto:laura.ejarque@netri.com) – +33 (0) 669 454621

Christophe Muller

Marketing & Communication Manager - ETAP-Lab

[cmuller@etap-lab.com](mailto:cmuller@etap-lab.com) – +33 (0) 383 444635

Thibault Honegger

[thibault.honegger@netri.com](mailto:thibault.honegger@netri.com) – +33 (0) 652 970938

Nicolas Violle

[nviolle@etap-lab.com](mailto:nviolle@etap-lab.com) – +33 (0) 383 444635