

International collaborations create chemistry

Case study: PHARMASEA



Professor Marcel Jaspars built an international collaboration, using €9.47m FP7 funding to find treatments for conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and epilepsy from marine invertebrates, bacteria and fungi, typically in deep sea and cold environments such as the Arctic, Antarctic and deep water trenches.

Professor Marcel Jaspars' team at Aberdeen University worked with both industry and academic partners across 24 institutions in 14 countries on a project funded by the final round of the EU's Framework Programme 7 (FP7) finishing in March 2017. "The international nature of the project group brought together complementary skills in specialist areas of science, policy, administration and publicity, so it ended up working really well."

Marcel explains: "We had everything from the beginning to the end of a drug discovery project, so we decided to treat things as a pipeline. We had groups in Ireland, Norway and Italy with expertise in isolating bacteria, then colleagues in Spain, Norway, China and Costa Rica building the extract libraries. Next was the biological screening of the libraries: this was done in Belgium, Spain and Norway. We had scale up and downstream testing which was done in Austria and Spain."

Shaping global policy

The biggest success Marcel's team didn't foresee was with

Training the next generation of biodiscovery scientists

Members of the [PIARMASEA](#) consortium also went on to win a further €3.21m Horizon 2020 funding for two follow on projects [MarPipe](#) and [Ocean Medicines](#). MarPipe trained 11 PhD students and has helped ensure the next generation of marine biodiscovery scientists are conversant in the legal, policy, innovation and entrepreneurial potential of their research. Ocean Medicines created a network of scientists from academia and SMEs across Europe to further develop lead compounds from the marine microorganisms already identified by [PIARMASEA](#).

Collaboration after EU exit

Marcel has continued to be invited to participate in EU scientific advisory boards since the UK left the EU, with his expertise increasing. Although [potential research partners](#) were pretty honest about not wanting to work with UK scientists because of the risks towards the end of Horizon, 2020, Marcel's experience it is