

## Entrepreneurial ID «venture leaders» 2007



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**Project: immuTrace: T Cell Tracker (TCT) Diagnosis Kits**

*Industry: Life Science*

### *Biography*

Dieter Naeher was born in Basel in 1973. At the age of 11, he founded a student newspaper at the school he visited and sold several hundred copies on a monthly basis. During his studies in molecular biology a political issue was raised in Switzerland aimed to ban most of the genetic techniques used in medical research. As a consequence he founded together with two other students the 'Junges Forum Gentechnologie' a non-commercial organisation which informed the public about the detrimental consequences of banning gene technology in Switzerland and which was part of the national campaign against banning gene technology. Within two years, the organisation consisted of more than 250 students and scientists who were actively informing the public about the issue by organising public events and being present in swiss radio and TV broadcasts. Shortly after the public voted against banning gene technology he obtained his MSc in Biochemistry at the Biocenter of the University of Basel. He then switched to the private industry by joining the 'Basel Institute for Immunology' of F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd., where he worked as a PhD student in basic research projects exploring immunological 'self non-self' discrimination. His strong interest in applied biomedical research guided him to the transplantation department of the University Hospital in Basel, where he continued his work on the role of T cells in 'self non-self' discrimination and developed different clinical diagnosis tool for organ transplant rejection monitoring. While his efforts in basic research lead to the determination of the key differentiator of immunological 'self non-self' discrimination ('An affinity constant defining T cell tolerance', in press), he in parallel developed a novel methodology to detect organ specific T cells in blood samples of organ transplanted patients.

### *Company / project*

The business idea of 'immuTrace' foresees the development and production of a novel diagnosis method (TCT Diagnosis) aimed to revolutionize the diagnosis of organ rejection in organ-transplanted patients. Currently, reoccurring organ rejection reactions can only be monitored upon organ damage resulting in reduced organ function. T Cell Tracker (TCT) Diagnosis, which is currently developed will allow the detection of aggressive, organ-directed cells of the immune system (T Cells) at the earliest timepoint possible, before the transplanted organ is damaged. The tests will be put together as patient specific kits and sold to the laboratories of the transplantation centers, which take care of the individual patients. The customer laboratories will perform the test with patient blood using regular laboratory equipment. Early and quantitative diagnosis of organ rejection reactions will allow a very accurate and immediate adjustment of the existing therapy, thereby prolonging the organ survival time and improving the patients life quality while reducing the overall therapy costs. Given the high therapy costs per patient and year (60'000 USD) and the high number of organ transplanted patients worldwide (>500'000), TCT Diagnosis is aimed to be placed and influence a billion dollar worldwide market. Dieter Naeher intends to found immuTrace beginning of 2008 and to offer TCT Diagnosis to the first key account customers in Switzerland by the end of 2008. In the first phase immuTrace will consist of the founder and tow medical advisers as well as two laboratory technicians. The costs associated with the first phase of product development amount to roughly CHF 2.55 million. From interviews with target customers determining the assumed TCT testing frequency per patient and year, immuTrace is expecting revenues rising from CHF 121.500 in 2008 to CHF 3.483.000 in 2011 for the swiss transplantation market. From 2010 immuTrace expects to enter the US and EC market. **Call for action:** Advice for company founding in the medical diagnostic field. Potential investors and benefactors are sought.