

## Opening of the ÖAW Life Sciences Center Vienna

*The Life Sciences Center Vienna of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) on the Campus Vienna Biocenter will be opened this evening with due ceremony. The building, which was built according to plans by Boris Podrecca, houses the two research institutes of IMBA (Institute of Molecular Biotechnology) and GMI (Gregor Mendel Institute of Molecular Plant Biology), as well as the Vienna Open Lab.*

One of the most modern laboratory buildings in Europe was completed at the end of 2005, after three years of planning and two and a half years of construction. Now that the interior has been fitted out and the scientific working groups have moved in, the research center is starting full operation and celebrating this event with representatives from science, business and politics. On a gross floor space of around 20,000 m<sup>2</sup>, the building houses laboratories, offices, guest rooms, an auditorium and seminar and discussion rooms. Special facilities include a 3D electron microscope and a pathogen-free zone, growth chambers and greenhouses. Around five-sevenths of the floor space is used by IMBA, and the rest by GMI.

IMBA (Director: Prof. Dr. Josef Penninger) combines basic and applied research in the area of biomedicine. Around one hundred scientists, currently divided into seven groups, are working on matters of functional genetics, especially with regard to the causes of disease. The aim is to use the knowledge acquired for the development of innovative approaches to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

GMI (Director: Prof. Dr. Dieter Schweizer) carries out basic research into the areas of cell and developmental biology and plant genetics. One area that the GMI's, so far, eight groups focus on is the molecular mechanisms of epigenetic phenomena. Around 50 researchers currently work at GMI.

Visitors explore the fascinating world of science and research in the "Vienna Open Lab" – a joint initiative by dialog<>gentchnik and IMBA. This is the first bioscientific hands-on laboratory for the public in Austria. The Vienna Open Lab offers school classes and other interested guests the possibility to perform their own molecular biology experiments together with young scientists.

"With the new building, we have been able to achieve our objective of making research transparent –says Josef Penninger. Plenty of daylight, a clear colour concept, open foyers and protected retreat areas also have an effect on day-to-day work. Dieter Schweizer says: "The architecture promotes communication between the researchers and makes ideal use of the unique location on the Campus Vienna Biocenter."

The new ÖAW building is located at Dr. Bohr-Gasse 3 in Vienna's third district. It is in the immediate vicinity of the Research Institute of Molecular Pathology (IMP) and the Max. F. Perutz Laboratories of the University and the Medical University of Vienna. A close research collaboration has been established between IMBA and IMP. The two institutes have access to a common scientific and administrative infrastructure under the name of "IMP-IMBA Research Center".

The total costs for constructing the building, including furnishings and fittings, came to around EUR 64 million. The purchase of the building site was financed by the City of Vienna. The construction costs of around EUR 30 million were borne by the City of Vienna, the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, by the National Foundation and by the ÖAW. The overall planner was Viennese architect, Prof. Boris Podrecca, whose design came top in an international competition for the project.