

# EUREKA EUROSTARS PROJECT 6482 DORA



## MEET ANDREW YOUR INTELLIGENT LAB ROBOT

**Through the EUROSTARS DORA project, the Andrew Alliance has been able to rapidly commercialise Andrew: a novel intelligent pipetting robot for use in life science laboratories. Andrew is the first industrial robot that can be used by professionals with no knowledge of robotics. It was launched in January 2013, has received four noteworthy awards, and already achieved significant global sales.**

The execution of routine liquid handling operations can be a painful and delicate activity within the life sciences industry; but it is one that is vital to the discovery and exploitation of new pharmaceuticals and in delivering advanced healthcare.

“Robotics and other digital technologies are set to change humanity,” says Piero Zucchelli, CEO of the Swiss company Andrew Alliance. “Today, we have intelligent people spending hours at the bench doing repetitive manual, but intelligent, operations and large ‘dumb’ automation systems performing high throughput testing. Robots like Andrew fit between these two scenarios: integrating part of the human intelligence that is required for exacting execution and releasing human scientists for higher level functions.”

The name Andrew comes from an Isaac Asimov story ‘The Bicentennial Man’ in which a robot begins to display

characteristics such as creativity, traditionally the province of humans; the robot is ultimately declared a human being.

From a technical viewpoint all the components to enable Andrew were already available, but required innovative design and integration to make a reliable device. However, convincing customers in big pharma companies would be a more difficult challenge.

The DORA project was critical to Andrew’s success. Probably the most important factor in a start-up company succeeding is to secure that first sale or contract. “In an ideal world you want to develop a product together with your customers from the first step,” explains Piero. “But normally, no customer will invest their precious resources and time to work together with a start-up of unknown history and success.”

The project allowed the Swiss company to work with two potential customers, CEREP S.A. in France and Population Genetics Technologies Limited in the UK, to fully develop the product including vital user feedback. The EUROSTARS programme helps companies across borders to create joint ventures to develop new technologies and products that address global markets.

### Global impact

According to one of the awards that Andrew Alliance received after the product launch, Andrew is the first industrial robot that can be used by professionals with no knowledge of robotics. This intuitive

usability is a key success factor and one that the DORA project helped to achieve.

And Andrew is making a global impact. The company now boasts more than 15 of the top 20 pharma companies as customers, as well as the largest diagnostics companies and top ranking universities around the world.



**Robotics and other digital technologies are set to change humanity.**

Although still relatively young, the Andrew Alliance is now a mature company with a total of 25 employees, a sales office in the US, and hundreds of customers worldwide using their robots daily.

“We are continuing along the direction of developing companion robotics and new solutions that improve the lab experience. I would argue that we are one of the world leaders in a novel wave of industrial robotics, where the final users are not robotics experts nor engineers, but are using our robots as daily tools to improve their working conditions, the quality of their results and, ultimately, making all our lives better,” concludes Piero.

This project has received funding from the Eurostars-2 joint programme with co-funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme



### MAIN PARTNER

Andrew Alliance SA, Switzerland  
www.AndrewAlliance.com  
Piero.Zucchelli@AndrewAlliance.com

### OTHER PARTNERS

Population Genetics Technologies Ltd,  
United Kingdom  
Cerep SA, France

### TOTAL R&D INVESTMENT

€ 1.2 million

### DURATION

September 2011 to May 2013

### COUNTRIES AND NATIONAL FUNDING BODIES INVOLVED



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