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January 24, 2013 2:09PM

French pharma research company to call Newark home

By [Katie Eder](#)

A French pharmaceutical research corporation that had been considering sites in New York and Boston to build its North American headquarters will soon break ground in an emerging mixed-use technology park in Newark adjacent to the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, the New Jersey Institute of Technology and Rutgers University-Newark.



Biotrial S.A. recently purchased a 1.2-acre parcel of land in University Heights Science Park, where more than 90 incubator companies are located within the 351,000 square feet of office and research space that already has been developed. As Biotrial hopes to occupy the new building in early 2014, New York-based architecture firm Francis Cauffman has completed the master design plan for the facility and expects to commence its construction this spring.

Jean-Marc Gandon, president and chief executive officer of Biotrial, said in a statement the company needed “proximity to superior research and medical facilities and to a major transportation center” to expand in the United States, and it “looked at many locations around the world before deciding that Newark and University Heights Science Park best meet the many key requirements and standards we have for conducting our research.”

In October 2011, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority board [approved a \\$689,850 Business Employment Incentive Program grant](#) for Biotrial S.A. to bring 60 jobs to Newark, though the board noted the incentive could increase to \$1.2 million over 10 years if the company picked a site in the city over New York and Massachusetts.

EDA spokeswoman Rachel Hartman said the agency has not yet determined the exact award amount because it is awaiting confirmation on the site selection from Biotrial, and the company would then need to submit other conditions for the BEIP.

Joel Bloom, president of NJIT and chairman of the science park’s 23-member board, said in a statement Biotrial’s planned 100-bed research unit and administrative space “continues the momentum for developing a world-class science and technology center in Newark. This means hundreds of construction jobs and permanent jobs to follow, and greatly enhanced purchasing power impacting the surrounding communities, which address the primary goals of the science park leadership team.”

Since the research organization desires to partner with nearby academic institutions to leverage their specialized intellectual and clinical services, Rutgers-Newark Interim Chancellor Phil Yeagle said in a statement Biotrial will “create an opportunity for the significant numbers of biologists and other life sciences

researchers and educators that are members of our Newark faculties.” Essex County College President Edith Abdullah said it “gives our region’s college students experiential education opportunities through internships, as well as creates research opportunities for the Newark-based universities’ Ph.D. students.”

Noting that Biotrial currently manages more than 80 drug studies and trials each year, either in their own clinics or in cooperation with specialist hospitals and general practitioners, UMDNJ Interim President Denise V. Rodgers said in a statement “we anticipate Biotrial’s new headquarters here will spark a series of collaborations with the pharmaceutical and biotech industries to advance learning, discovery and innovation.”

“This will focus more attention on Newark, the state and the region as a research center, attracting the best in the biomedical and health sciences and advancing leading-edge interventions to improve health outcomes locally and around the world,” Rodgers added.

Since 2010, Biotrial has worked on every step of drug discovery companies’ development processes. The company’s Newark research unit will perform mostly early-stage studies and serve European clients who need clinical trials to be performed in the United States.

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