

## **CHRISTIAN A. STEIN**

Christian Stein (German) holds a PhD in molecular biology from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich and a MSc in Management of Intellectual Property Law from Queen Mary and Westfield College in London. During his studies, he was Assistant Editor-in-Chief for the International Journal of Antiviral Chemistry & Chemotherapy and was instrumental in founding Retroscreen Ltd, a thriving spin-off of the London Hospital Medical College. Between 1997 and 2001 Christian Stein headed the Patent and Licensing Agency for the German Human Genome Project (PLA/DHGP) at the Fraunhofer Patent Centre in Munich. In 2001 he became director of the Department for Project Management, that included the PLA and also Bayern Patent – the Patent Initiative for Bavarian Universities.

Christian is the co-founder and ex-director of Ventrateg GmbH, a company responsible for the coaching and management of start-ups based on patents financed by the Fraunhofer Patent Centre. Since August 2001, he is the CEO of Ascenion GmbH, a 100% subsidiary of the Life Science Foundation for the Advancement of Science and Research. Ascenion is responsible for the intellectual property asset management of the life science institutes of the *Hermann-von-Helmholtz Gemeinschaft*, in particular the DKFZ in Heidelberg, the GBF in Braunschweig, the GSF in Munich and the MDC in Berlin.

## **IP STRATEGIES FOR THE HELMHOLTZ LIFE SCIENCE CENTERS**

**From an IP Management Perspective**  
**Christian Stein, Ascenion GmbH, Germany**

The dissemination of knowledge and information is a key issue in publicly financed research. The protection of the intellectual property (IP) of public scientific institutions and the commercial exploitation of IP and know how receives increasing attention. This is reflected by European and national programmes that fund activities in the field of technology transfer and also in the number and size of technology transfer offices at universities and public research organizations all over Germany.

At present there seems no concerted policy in Germany on the protection of life science IP (in particular, of genomes, nucleic acids and proteins), that considers the needs of life science research institutions, a right for public access and the access of scientists to research tools. Some institutions, however, are eager to define at least in house rules for the handling of IP rights in the genomic and proteomic sectors. As the pharmaceutical industry is only willing to develop drugs that are based on substantiated intellectual property, it is not only advisable but also the duty of research institutes to patent their respective inventions. Whether it is necessary and right to patent everything patentable is an entirely different matter and must be judged in the context of strategic and ethical implications, and, last but not least, on economic grounds.

The strengthening of professional conduct in IP asset management needs to address a number of points concerning questions of law (*e.g.*, grace period, research exemptions), and of economics (*e.g.*, inter-institutional IP strategies and handling of reach through patents).

A further point not directly related to the above is that the need for universally used material transfer agreements (MTAs) for public research institutions is as apparent as the denial with which most institutions treat this question. While probably the majority of publicly funded research organizations has started to introduce MTAs when sending out materials, these are hardly ever followed up. This is made particularly difficult, because the agreements are not even consistent within one organization. An MTA with basically identical conditions between academic institutions that can be signed without further ado would be a great simplification for scientists and administration alike.