

NRGene Selects St. Louis for U.S. Headquarters

GlobalSTL initiative attracts fourth Israeli agritech company to St. Louis

ST. LOUIS – April 8, 2016 – GlobalSTL, the initiative of BioSTL focused on attracting high-growth international companies to St. Louis, announced that Israeli genomics company NRGene has selected St. Louis as the location of its U.S. headquarters. NRGene is the fourth company to move to St. Louis through the GlobalSTL initiative.

NRGene develops advanced computational tools leveraging big data to identify genetic traits to improve yield, environmental tolerance, and disease resistance. It was the first to successfully assemble the whole genome sequence for wheat, one of the most complex plant or animal genomes, five times larger than the human genome, and has assembled more than 80 genomes in less than a year.

“Missouri as the ‘heartland’ of American agriculture is the natural U.S. home for NRGene,” says Gil Ronen, CEO of NRGene. “Our strong partnership with the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center brought us to St. Louis, and GlobalSTL convinced us to stay.”

The recruitment of NRGene is another example of GlobalSTL’s focus on prospects that match St. Louis’ strengths and is a step forward in creating international recognition for St. Louis as a preferred location for innovation-driven businesses. “With each successful recruitment, we are building a cluster of world-class agritech companies that bring with them technology and talent that enrich the St. Louis ecosystem,” said Donn Rubin, President and CEO of BioSTL, which launched the GlobalSTL initiative in 2014. NRGene is another exciting and highly-respected Israeli company that follows GlobalSTL’s prior recruitment of Kaiima Agro-Biotech, Evogene, and Forrest Innovations.

The GlobalSTL team first encountered NRGene in Israel in April 2015 on a trip that brought together representatives from Monsanto, KWS, and the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center. NRGene connections with Danforth Center scientists influenced NRGene’s decision to consider St. Louis as its North America base. Since the initial meeting, GlobalSTL has hosted NRGene in St. Louis, introducing them to potential local corporate partners and customers, St. Louis’ innovation districts, and to state agencies to aid in relocation incentives.

Capping off the recruitment process, Gov. Jay Nixon and legislative leaders were able to personally reinforce the message of Missouri’s commitment to NRGene’s success during a trade mission to Israel last month.

“NRGene’s decision to locate its U.S. headquarters in St. Louis is another big win for the region and a testament to our commitment to competing worldwide for jobs and investment,” said Gov. Jay Nixon.

The Missouri Partnership facilitated NRGene’s access to state incentives.

NRGene will establish its initial St. Louis location with six employees and headed by Paul Chomet, Ph.D., at CIC@CET in the Cortex district.

About GlobalSTL

GlobalSTL, an initiative of BioSTL, recruits high-growth international companies to locate their North American base of operations and R&D in the St. Louis region. By connecting St. Louis with the most dynamic innovation ecosystems worldwide, starting with Israel in 2014, GlobalSTL enriches St. Louis' innovation community with technology, talent and high-growth companies from abroad. The initiative targets companies with technology in areas that match St. Louis' own strengths – such as agritech, healthcare, cyber security, financial tech, and defense/aerospace. Rather than building new infrastructure, this initiative leverages the capabilities of existing St. Louis corporations, investors, universities, and organizations.

About BioSTL

BioSTL advances St. Louis' economic vitality by cultivating a strong bioscience and innovation ecosystem. BioSTL organizes business, university, and philanthropic leaders around a set of deliberate strategies that capitalize on St. Louis' strengths in medical and plant sciences. Focus areas include: building and investing in startups through our venture development arm, BioGenerator; improving access to investment capital; ensuring appropriate physical infrastructure; promoting science- and innovation-friendly public policy; fostering a more inclusive entrepreneurial talent pool in the region; attracting the U.S. presence of international companies; and raising global awareness of St. Louis' strengths. Please visit www.biostl.org for additional information. Follow BioSTL on twitter [@BioSTL](https://twitter.com/BioSTL).

About NRGene

NRGene is a genomic big data company developing cutting-edge software and algorithms to reveal the complexity and diversity of crop plants, animals, and aquatic organisms for the most advanced, sophisticated breeding. NRGene tools have already been employed by some of the leading seed companies as well the most influential teams in academia. NRGene is located in Ness Ziona, Israel. www.nrgene.com

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