

## CASE STUDY

## QED BIO-ENTREPRENEUR SCHOOL 2007

### **Dr John Okyere - CrossGen Ltd**

Molecular biologist Dr John Okyere has made steady progress in his Nottingham-based bioscience business since incorporating in 2005 and securing funding through the DTI Investigating an Innovative Idea grant programme. He gained a further boost from attending the first UK Bio-Entrepreneur School in February of this year. Dr Okyere, whose company supplies software application tools to enable gene expression data analysis, was introduced to Connect Midlands whilst on the School and now works with a business coach at Ithaka Life Sciences who is part funded by the organisation.

“Having someone to help me put some shape into my business plan has been invaluable,” says John. “Connect Midlands support means I can be sure that my company is investor-ready when the time is right to look for funding.”

The Bio-Entrepreneur School was especially valuable in providing Dr Okyere with intellectual property advice as well as creating a networking opportunity within BioCity Nottingham. Dr Okyere says “An awareness of the complexities and pitfalls in protecting intellectual property is crucial for my business. Patent protection gives my business a competitive advantage since it represents a market entry barrier to competitors”. Being able to meet and talk with tenants based in the bioscience incubator meant that John could learn from their shared experiences and not feel so isolated.

“One of the most rewarding exercises we were put through on the School was preparing for the ‘Dragon’s Den-style pitch to the panel of experts. The process made me focus on what I really need to say to investors to get the desired outcome. It has also helped me to pitch more effectively to potential clients.”

When Dr Okyere secured his first major contract this summer, and an industry partner with access to specialist equipment, the real impact of the Bio-Entrepreneur School with access to partners like Connect Midlands became apparent.