

Symeres and Axxam Appoint Russell Thomas as Chief Scientific Officer to lead their collaborative integrated discovery platform

Nijmegen, Netherlands and Milan, Italy – July 1, 2026 – Symeres, a leading contract research, development and manufacturing organization (CRDMO), and Axxam, a leading provider of biology-driven discovery services, today announced the appointment of Russell Thomas, Ph.D., as Chief Scientific Officer to drive a joint collaboration between Symeres and Axxam that combines the unique R&D services offering of both organizations.

The appointment strengthens the scientific leadership of both Symeres and Axxam as they continue to build a closely connected, science-led offering for pharmaceutical and biotechnology partners. By bringing together the complementary capabilities of both organizations, customers can receive support across integrated discovery and development programs. The integrated solutions offered span all the way from target assessment, screening and testing, lead identification and optimization all the way to development candidate nomination and IND ready packages.

As CSO, Thomas will help shape and execute the scientific strategy of Symeres and Axxam, as well as working closely with scientific and commercial teams across both companies. His role will include supporting the development of integrated client solutions, connecting scientific capabilities, and identifying opportunities to further strengthen the combined discovery and development capabilities. The appointment comes as pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies increasingly seek partners able to provide solutions, that connects scientific support across the drug discovery and development continuum.

Symeres and Axxam will provide customers with integrated access to a palette of scientific expertise, established R&D platforms and long-standing teams across Europe and the US. The collaboration brings together the unique scientific depth, specialist capabilities and practical delivery mindset of Symeres and Axxam to meet the needs of increasingly complex customer programs. Their shared commitment to high-quality science and practical collaboration will deliver lasting value for partners.

Thomas returns to Symeres after a year supporting growing biotech and biomaterials companies. As well as his experience at Axxam and Symeres, he has held scientific and leadership positions at organizations including GSK, Evotec, Siena Biotech, and Proteros. His wealth of experience spanning the entire R&D value chain will be a significant advantage to customers discovery and development programs.

“Returning as Chief Scientific Officer feels very exciting as it connects two parts of a story. Having spent important parts of my career at both Symeres and Axxam, I’m excited to help bring together expert led complementary science, strong transatlantic teams and a shared mindset to support partners and projects in a truly integrated way,” said Thomas.

Thomas first joined Symeres in January 2020 as Head of Business Development and later served as Chief Scientific Officer. During his tenure, he played a key role in developing strategic customer relationships and strengthening the company’s scientific profile across the global pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors.

Before joining Symeres, Thomas served as Director of Discovery Research and later Director of Strategic Alliances at Axxam. He helped establish and manage the integrated medicinal

chemistry relationship with Symeres, giving him a deep understanding of both organizations ensuring he is aligned to the scientific and cultural foundations customers value.

“Russell’s appointment reflects our commitment to building value for customers that matches their drug discovery and development needs,” said Henning Steinhagen, CEO of Symeres. “As customer programs become more complex, scientific leadership that can connect capabilities, people and platforms across organizations becomes increasingly important. Russell brings a rare combination of scientific expertise, industry experience and first-hand knowledge of both Symeres and Axxam, together with a strong understanding of how to translate early discovery projects into preclinical development and beyond. This makes him ideally placed to help us deliver value for customers and support our long-term growth strategy.”

“Russell’s appointment is aligned to the vision of integrated discovery and development linking two organisations that know each other well. The common objective is to develop faster and better drugs for the pharmaceutical industry and ultimately improve patient’s lives” said Ciriaco Maraschiello, CEO of Axxam. “Russell’s appointment is an important step in strengthening the connection between both companies, with his experience providing a valuable perspective on how to connect scientific capabilities to customer needs. Having worked within both Axxam and Symeres, he understands the strengths, culture and potential of each organisation, and is well placed to support the growth of both companies.”