The Moredun Research Institute and Moredun Scientific are partners in a €9 million EU-funded research project launched today to improve the safety of European drinking water.

The five-year Aquavalens project will develop and apply more rapid methods of detecting viruses, bacteria and parasites in water to reduce the incidence of water-related disease.

The project is led by the University of East Anglia (UK). The 39 consortium partners include small businesses, industries, universities and research institutes from 13 European countries. The project is funded by the European Union`s Framework Programme 7.

Lead researcher Professor Paul Hunter from UEA`s Norwich Medical School
said: "With the technologies we currently have it can take two or more days to identify infectious risks in drinking water and by then the affected water is likely to have been consumed. This project will develop more rapid methods so that problems can be identified earlier."

Dr Frank Katzer, Principal Investigator at the Moredun Research Institute,
commented: "Moredun has a long standing expertise in research into protozoan parasites such as Cryptosporidium species and Toxoplasma gondii that can be important sources of contamination in water supplies. Our role will be to help develop innovative diagnostic techniques to detect these pathogens in collaboration with the other project partners."

Professor Willie Donachie, Managing Director of Moredun Scientific said: "We are very pleased to be a partner in the Aquavalens project which brings together experts from across Europe. It is hoped that the project will deliver significant improvements to human health through a reduction in the incidence of water-related disease."

END - Embargoed until 00.01 BST London time Wednesday 17th April 2013

Aquavalens main logo RGB 300dpi EU emblem

Notes to editors

1. Moredun Scientific is the commercial arm of the Moredun Foundation. It is a contract research organization providing research and testing services to the animal health, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries to support the development, registration and manufacture of veterinary and human medicines. Further information about the portfolio of services can be found at www.moredun-scientific.com <http://www.moredun-scientific.com>

2. Moredun Research Institute conducts internationally recognised research on the infectious diseases of livestock, caused by important viruses, bacteria and parasites. It employs 170 scientists and vets that work to improve animal welfare, ensure food safety, reduce adverse impacts on the environment, and to contribute to sustainable communities through economic development across Scotland and beyond. Moredun's research focuses on understanding the interaction of the disease pathogen with the host species, in identifying new targets for improved diagnostic tests and in development of novel vaccines for many diseases. For further details visit www.moredun.org

3. Aquavalens is a European consortium involving industry, universities and research institutes with the mission of protecting the health of European citizens from contaminated drinking water and water used in food processing.
Further information about the project and the project partners can be found at www.aquavalens.org

4. The University of East Anglia (UEA) is based in Norwich, UK. It was founded in 1963 and this year celebrates its 50th anniversary. It has played a significant role in advancing human understanding and in 2012 the Times Higher Education ranked UEA as one of the 10 best universities in the world under 50 years of age. The university has graduated more than 100,000 students, attracted to Norwich Research Park some of Britain's key research institutes and a major University Hospital, and made a powerful cultural, social and economic impact on the region.

www.uea.ac.uk/50years

5. UEA's Norwich Medical School has a reputation for exciting and innovative approaches to education, supported by a strong and rapidly developing research programme. Around 90 per cent of UEA research was rated internationally excellent in the last Research Assessment Exercise, with over 50 per cent 'world leading'. www.uea.ac.uk/med

6. Cryptosporidium is a protozoan parasite which causes a disease called Cryptosporidiosis in both humans and a wide range of animal species.
Vulnerable groups include the very young, the elderly and those that are immuno-compromised. Infection with Cryptosporidium is mostly attributed to drinking contaminated water or eating contaminated food. Further information can be found at www.moredun.org

7. Toxoplasma gondii is a parasite which causes Toxoplasmosis, an important infectious disease of humans and sheep. Toxoplasmosis in humans is usually attributed to infection of the foetus if the mother has contact with the parasite for the first time during pregnancy. Immunosuppressed individuals can also suffer serious disease as a result of Toxoplasma infection. The organism is transmitted through ingestion of oocysts.
Contamination of the environment (including rivers and coastal waters) by Toxoplasma oocysts is widespread. Further information can be found at www.moredun.org

For further information please contact

Rhona Macdonald

Head of Marketing
Moredun Scientific
Pentlands Science Park
Bush Loan, Penicuik
EH26 0PZ
UK

rmacdonald@moredun-scientific.com
<mailto:rmacdonald@moredun-scientific.com>