



For Immediate Release

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VIDEO: San Diego-based Cypher Genomics wins MetroConnect Grand Prize to expand global reach



B-roll can be downloaded [here](#).

San Diego – In an effort to cement San Diego’s reputation as a world class innovation hub and help SMEs expand their global reach, Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer, San Diego Regional EDC and JPMorgan Chase & Co. awarded the MetroConnect Grand Prize to San Diego-based genomics startup [Cypher Genomics](#). The Grand Prize winner was voted on by an audience of more than 100 people at the MetroConnect PitchFest.

Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer said, “San Diego’s world-class economy grows from local ideas, startups and businesses that sprout into global companies. I’m proud to host MetroConnect, which not only helps strengthen our overall economy at its roots, but fosters and supports startups like Cypher Genomics at the local level. I hope that Cypher Genomics will continue captivate investment abroad in the same way that they’ve found success here at home. ”

Ashley Van Zeeland, co-founder & CEO, Cypher Genomics said, “Cypher is grateful to win the MetroConnect Grand Prize and to participate in the vibrant and innovative San Diego entrepreneurial community. This award will help us build collaborations around the globe with countries who can use our genome interpretation technology to uncover the genetic causes of rare diseases and cancer, which can inform new therapeutics and improve healthcare around the world.”

Pharmaceutical manufacturer [IriSys](#) also took home the runner-up prize.

Brennon Crist, head of JPMorgan Chase’s Middle Market Commercial Banking Group in San Diego said, “JPMorgan Chase is delighted to recognize all of these outstanding San Diego businesses that have

thoroughly embraced the region's go-global vision. We hope the MetroConnect Prize Program will enable Cypher Genomics and IriSys to continue advancing their global strategy by connecting with potential customers in target international markets. Over time, this outreach can be a win not only for these companies, but for economic growth and job creation for the region.

Nikia Clarke, director of World Trade Center San Diego said, "MetroConnect targets small and medium sized businesses like Cypher and Irisys because they are really the drivers of the regional economy. The more they export their products and technology, the more connected, competitive, and resilient San Diego becomes."

Managed by San Diego Regional EDC, and presented by JPMorgan Chase, the MetroConnect Grand Prize offers \$50,000 – \$35,000 for the winner and \$15,000 for the runner-up – to further aid these companies in foreign market expansion. In June, [15 San Diego companies](#) were selected as finalists for the MetroConnect prize, and given \$10,000 to pursue strategies to export in foreign markets. Over the course of four months, the 15 companies demonstrated their ability to export to foreign markets. A panel of judges consisting of representatives from Biocom, CONNECT, Qualcomm Ventures, Quantum Designs, San Diego Regional EDC, Tech San Diego and Wireless Life Sciences Alliance reviewed companies' accomplishments and goals as a means of selecting the top [four finalists](#) to present at the PitchFest: Applied Membranes, Aventyn, Cypher Genomics and IriSys.

A spin-out of the Scripps Research Institute, San Diego-based Cypher Genomics is a 13 person startup that's revolutionizing the way we understand and deliver personalized healthcare. Through its technology, Cypher Genomics is able to rapidly sequence the human genome, enabling scientists and medical professionals to find individualized therapies to combat rare diseases. With the MetroConnect Prize, Cypher was able to partner with [Genome England](#) on its large-scale study to sequence 100,000 human genomes.

With the \$35,000 Grand Prize, Cypher will be exploring additional foreign markets, such as Saudi Arabia and Sweden, that are investing in population-scale genomics. Because of this foreign activity, Cypher is able to boost product innovation, translating into further job creation and capital investment in the San Diego market.

Global engagement is essential if San Diego wants to catalyze its economy and workforce. The benefits of companies going global and engaging foreign markets are well-documented. According to the Brookings Institution, [companies that are global](#) pay their employees higher wages, are less likely to go out of business and spur more efficient development of technology and R&D.

For more information about the MetroConnect Prize, please go to MetroConnectsd.org

More information and statistics about San Diego's Global Initiative can be found at Goglobalsd.org

For the complete list of the 15 MetroConnect Prize Recipients, please [click here](#).

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