## Development of fragment-based workflows that enable rapid and cost-effective discovery of drug-like protein-protein interaction modulators targeting the Neuronal Calcium Sensor 1

**Daniel Muñoz-Reyes1, Warren Thompson2,3, Daren Fearon2,3, Kate Fieseler3,4,5, Eda Capkin2,3, Matteo Ferla2,3, Max Winokan2,3, Mathew Golding2,3, Sara Pérez-Suárez1, Celia Miró-Rodríguez1, Lorena Aguado6, Alicia Mansilla6, Frank von Delft2,3,4, Sánchez-Barrena MJ1**

*1Department of Crystallography and Structural Biology, Institute of Physical-Chemistry “Blas Cabrera”, CSIC, Madrid (Spain). 2Diamond Light Source, Harwell Science & Innovation Campus, Didcot, United Kingdom. 3Research Complex at Harwell, Harwell Science & Innovation Campus, Didcot, United Kingdom. 4Centre for Medicines Discovery, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom. 5Oxford Protein Informatics Group, Department of Statistics, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom.  6Department of Neurobiology, Instituto Ramón y Cajal de Investigación Sanitaria, Hospital Universitario Ramón y Cajal, Madrid (Spain)*

### xmjose@iqf.csic.es

Neuronal Calcium Sensor 1 (NCS-1) plays a crucial role in regulating protein targets involved in G-protein signaling pathways, including the dopamine D2 and cannabinoid CB1 receptors, both of which are associated with neuronal disorders. Previous research has identified the interaction interface between NCS-1 and the Gα chaperone and guanine nucleotide exchange factor Ric-8A as a promising therapeutic target, with potential applications in neurodegenerative and neurodevelopmental diseases [1,2,3].

Building on insights from crystallographic fragment screening, streamlined and cost-efficient drug discovery workflows have been developed. By integrating semi-automated procedures and robotic systems for chemical synthesis, fragment-based compounds have been systematically designed, synthesized, and analyzed using X-ray crystallography and grating-coupled interferometry, directly from crude reaction mixtures. This approach has facilitated an extensive exploration of the chemical space at the NCS-1 protein-protein interaction (PPI) interface, leading to the identification of structurally diverse molecules with PPI modulatory activity. These compounds serve as a strong foundation for the development of selective hit-to-lead candidates with drug-like properties, tailored to different pharmacological targets.

#### [1] Mansilla, A. *et al.* *(*2017) *PNAS*, **114***,* E999–E1008.

#### [2] Canal-Martín, A. *et al.* (2019)*Nat. Comms.* **10***, Art. No. 2798*.

#### [3] Muñoz-Reyes D. *et al.* (2023)*eLife Journal* **12***, e86151.*