Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology

News Release

US$6 Million Venture capital raised for biotech spinoff from MIT SMART Centre

Singapore, 1 Jul 2010 - Research in infectious diseases carried out at the MIT SMART Centre in Singapore has led to the formation of start-up company Visterra Singapore, supported by 3 top US venture capital firms.

1. Visterra, Inc., Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART) Centre, and the National Research Foundation of Singapore (NRF) announced today the creation of Visterra Singapore Pte. Ltd. This new biotechnology company will apply Visterra's proprietary platform technology for the discovery and development of revolutionary new therapies, diagnostics and vaccines for challenging infectious diseases such as influenza and dengue fever.
2. Visterra, Inc. (formerly Parasol Therapeutics), based in Cambridge, MA and an MIT spin-off, has received US$6m in venture funding from Flagship Ventures, Lux Capital and Polaris Venture Partners, all based in the United States. The company focuses on technologies that can interrogate how pathogens interact with human cells, a critical first step in the disease process, to develop new treatments, diagnostics and vaccines. Visterra is a licensee to MIT patents arising from the laboratory of Professor Ram Sasisekharan, Edward Hood Taplin Professor of Biological Engineering and Health Sciences & Technology at MIT.
3. Visterra Singapore is the first spin-off of SMART and will benefit from the unique expertise and resources related to infectious diseases that are broadly present in Singapore and have been developed in the SMART Centre based on the ongoing research funding by NRF. Following the model of the relationship between Visterra, Inc. and MIT, Visterra Singapore intends to formalize a relationship with SMART and establish key advisory relationships with leading researchers and clinicians. Visterra Singapore is a local example of the type of organic, grassroots entrepreneurial activity in life sciences that MIT is well known for and that has grown to represent an important sector in the United States economy.
4. "We are extremely pleased to be expanding the global reach of our emerging company," said Zach Shriver, Ph.D., Vice President of Research of Visterra. "Visterra Singapore will complement and extend the research and development capabilities of our Cambridge operation, enabling us to move programs forward more rapidly while maintaining a lean and capital efficient organization," he continued.
5. "Visterra's goal is to translate fundamental discoveries about how infectious agents interact with human cells into powerful new therapies, better diagnostics and more effective vaccines," explained Ram Sasisekharan, Ph.D., an Investigator at the Infectious Disease Interdisciplinary Research Group at SMART. Sasiskharan has active laboratories in both Singapore and Cambridge studying diseases of worldwide concern, such as influenza, as well as tropical diseases, like dengue fever.

6. "One of our major goals in creating the SMART Centre was to recreate in Singapore the entrepreneurial environment that drives translational research around MIT in Cambridge," said Dr. Francis Yeoh, Chief Executive Officer, National Research Foundation. "We are excited to see great progress in this direction with the formation of Visterra Singapore," he continued.

The National Research Foundation (NRF)

The National Research Foundation (NRF), set up on 1 January 2006, is a department within the Prime Minister's Office.

The NRF sets the national direction for research and development (R&D) by developing policies, plans and strategies for research, innovation and enterprise, funds strategic initiatives, builds up R&D capabilities and capacities through nurturing our own and attracting foreign talent, and coordinates the research agenda of different agencies to transform Singapore into a knowledge-intensive, innovative and entrepreneurial economy. It provides secretariat support to the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Council (RIEC), chaired by the Prime Minister. A five-year budget of S$5 billion has been allocated to the NRF in 2006 to achieve this mission.

The NRF aims to:

- Transform Singapore into a vibrant R&D hub that contributes towards a knowledge-intensive, innovative and entrepreneurial economy; and
- Make Singapore a talent magnet for scientific and innovation excellence.

For more information, please visit www.nrf.gov.sg.

Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART)

SMART is a major new research enterprise established by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in partnership with the National Research Foundation of Singapore (NRF) in 2007. It is the first entity in the Campus for Research Excellence and Technological Enterprise (CREATE) being developed by NRF. Serving as an intellectual hub, cutting-edge research projects in areas of interest to both Singapore and MIT are undertaken at the SMART and interdisciplinary, experimental, computational and translational research are conducted.

Four interdisciplinary research groups (IRG) have been established to date: they are BioSystems and Micromechanics (BioSym), Centre for Environmental Sensing and Modelling (CENSAM), Future Urban Mobility (FM) and Infectious Disease (ID). The SMART Innovation Centre, similar to MIT's Desphande Centre, has also been established to identify and nurture ideas for emerging technologies and accelerate their migration from laboratories to the marketplace.

About Visterra
Visterra, Inc. is dedicated to the discovery and development of innovative products for the prevention, treatment and diagnosis of infectious diseases. The Company focuses on technologies that can interrogate how pathogens interact with human cells, a critical first step in the disease process. The company's lead programs are focused on seasonal and pandemic influenza. The company is backed by Polaris Venture Partners, Flagship Ventures, and Lux Capital and has licensed technology from MIT.

Flagship Ventures
Flagship Ventures is a venture capital firm focused on creating, financing and building innovative companies. Founded in 2000, Flagship manages over $600 million in early-stage funds and operates from its offices at Kendall Square in Cambridge, MA. With an active portfolio of over 40 companies, the firm's strategy is to balance its investments across three principal business sectors: Therapeutics, Life Science Tools & Diagnostics, and BioEnergy/Cleantech.

The Flagship investment team consists of 10 professionals and is led by co-founders Noubar Afeyan and Ed Kania. Complementing our internal team is our extensive network of academic and industrial advisors who are actively engaged in evaluating and helping develop our new ventures. During the past two decades Flagship's principals have been involved as founders or investors in many highly successful ventures including: Adnexus Therapeutics, Alere Medical, Aspect Medical, Celera Genomics, ChemGenics Pharmaceuticals, Color Kinetics, Cytyc, DataSage, Exact Sciences, Helicos Biosciences, Hypnion, IDEXX, Morphotek, PerSeptive Biosystems and TripAdvisor.

To maximize the returns to our investors, we combine our experience, our passion for innovation, our focus on value creation and our commitment to the success of each company's leadership team.

For more information, please visit www.flagshipventures.com/

Lux Capital Management
Lux Capital Management is a research-driven investment firm focused on founding, seed and early stage investments in the physical and life sciences. Lux takes an active role in helping entrepreneurs build successful businesses in high growth sectors. Our investment team has built over 20 companies from scratch. Lux's investment strategy ensures our portfolio companies are better connected, have deeper insight, and command industry leadership faster than their competitors.

The Lux team is recognized internationally as pioneers and thought-leaders in early stage venture capital. Our team has a successful track record of building, investing in, and adding highly strategic value to leading emerging technology companies started at more than 40 leading academic centers and government labs including MIT, Harvard, Stanford, Caltech, Columbia, Cornell, Texas, UCLA, UC Berkeley, Washington University, and Lawrence Livermore National Labs. We've been invited by the President to the Oval Office, appear frequently on CNBC, CNN and Fox News, and are regularly cited in The

Economist, Forbes, Business Week, Barron's, and other leading financial and technology publications.

Lux has co-invested with leading private equity firms and multinational corporations. Some of Lux's investment partners include Goldman Sachs, Credit Suisse, Sequoia Capital, Venrock Associates, Polaris Venture Partners, Intel, Motorola, Genentech, and Medtronic.

Lux launched strategic portfolio companies in market research/business intelligence (Lux Research), media (Forbes/Wolfe Emerging Tech Report) and public policy (NanoBusiness Alliance). These entities provide us with multiple edges over other venture capital funds for sourcing deals, adding value to the entrepreneurs and companies we invest in, and exiting investments.

For more information, please visit www.luxcapital.com/index.htm

Polaris Venture Partners
Polaris Venture Partners is a partnership of experienced venture capital investors and technology executives. Our mission is to identify and invest in seed, first round, and early stage technology and life science businesses with exceptional promise and help them grow into sustainable, market-leading companies. In addition, Polaris is committed to providing growth equity and shareholder liquidity to established companies in the technology, healthcare, manufacturing, media, communications, and business services sectors. As a national venture capital firm with offices in the high-tech centers of Boston and Seattle, we're able to invest in businesses throughout the United States and around the world. The firm has over $3 billion under management and current investments in more than 100 companies.

Through our philosophy of lead investing and active, long-term partnering with early stage and growing revenue stage companies, the firm has helped a number of companies achieve outstanding success. Among them are Advanced Inhalation Research (AIR) (sold to Alkermes); Akamai Technologies, Inc. (NASDAQ: AKAM); Allaire Corporation (sold to Macromedia); Aspect Medical Systems(NASDAQ: ASPM); Centra Software (NASDAQ: CTRA); deCODE genetics (NASDAQ: DCGN); Paradigm Genetics, Inc. (NASDAQ: PDGM); and Solidworks (sold to Dassault Systemes).

For more information, please visit www.polarisventures.com

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