

## **Asterand signs partnership to supply drug discovery services to Japan**

July 6, 2006

Detroit, MI, July 6, 2006: Asterand plc(LSE: ATD), the human tissue research company, announced that it had entered into agreements with Mitsui Corporation and Toyobo Co. Ltd., to offer drug discovery services to the Japanese market. The agreement was signed during a visit to Detroit of a high-level delegation from the two Japanese companies.

Asterand will supply Japanese drug discovery companies with biological samples, data and research services covering a range of diseases, including cancer, gastrointestinal, respiratory, metabolic disorders, inflammatory, cardiovascular, as well as diseases of the Central Nervous System such as Alzheimer's.

“The Japanese pharmaceutical market is a major developer of new drugs,” says Randal Charlton, CEO of Asterand. “The use of human tissue in preclinical research can shorten the drug development process. However, Japanese drug research companies have limited access to high quality samples and data and this creates an opportunity for Asterand. We can meet the demand through our world bio-bank and our global network of hospitals that provide ethically consented samples and data for approved research.”

Mitsui is one of the largest corporations in the world and second largest trading house in Japan. Toyobo is a market leader in Japan, operating the largest contract manufacturing business for antibody drugs. “They are powerful partners and we are honored to be working with them,” says Charlton.

Under the agreement with the two companies, Asterand has been guaranteed a minimum level of business. However, Charlton emphasizes that Asterand and their partners are taking a long-term view of the Japanese market where very high quality service is critical to success. “We expect to grow revenues carefully and steadily over several years,” he says.

“We will provide full scientific and technical support,” adds Mike Null, Asterand's Vice President of sales and marketing. This will include scientific support from Asterand's research team, technical literature in Japanese and a Japanese language web site, plus regular visits to support the Toyobo sales team.

The agreement was signed in Detroit on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006 with a four men Japanese delegation consisting of Dr Bunsei Kawakami, General Manager, LifeScience Department, Mr Hideyuki Komatsubara, Technical Manager, LifeScience Department, Mr Naoki Takahashi, Group Manager, Legal Department of Toyobo Co.Ltd. and Mr Kimihide Kondoh, Project Manager, LifeScience Division of Mitsui Corporation.

Inquiries

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