

**6<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

**CAMBRIDGE, UK**

## **CellCentric Widens Drug Screening in Shanghai**

### ***CellCentric has expanded its agreement with Shanghai-based HD Biosciences to move epigenetic targets from screening into drug discovery***

CellCentric, the biotechnology company unlocking epigenetic control mechanisms, is pleased to announce that it has signed an enlarged agreement with HD Biosciences (HDB), a company specialising in drug discovery contract research, in order to further build CellCentric's portfolio of drug discovery programmes.

Prior to signing this expanded Master Services Agreement, CellCentric and HDB worked together on an initial set of targets identified and prioritised by CellCentric. The new agreement provides a framework to drive these programmes forward.

HDB is acknowledged as a leading drug discovery contract research organisation CRO, and the company was presented with Pfizer Inc.'s "2008 Top Research Service Partner Award" in recognition of the quality, productivity, and value delivered to its client.

This expanded contract with HDB will increase CellCentric's activities in building a portfolio of drug discovery programmes against multiple enzyme classes, including demethylases, methyltransferases and ubiquitin-associated enzymes. Importantly, each programme benefits from ongoing input from the leading researchers in the field.

CellCentric has a unique Principal Investigator discovery platform that is the largest commercial knowledge resource in epigenetics, leveraging interactions with multiple world leading researchers in the field. CellCentric's ability to utilise the different, but overlapping disciplines of molecular biology, developmental biology and cellular therapeutic models gives the platform a highly competitive advantage in the identification, prioritisation and validation of epigenetic drug targets.

Drug discovery strategy and implementation is being led by Dr Neil Pegg. Neil was recruited to CellCentric from Piramed where, as Director of Chemistry, he oversaw the development of small molecule inhibitors in multiple programmes, including a major collaboration with Genentech, and ultimately company acquisition by Roche.

Dr Xuehai Tan, Chief Executive Officer of HD Biosciences said:

"HDB has developed quality operations and a strong reputation from working with many major pharmaceutical companies. CellCentric is recognised as a key leader in developing the field of epigenetics and we are pleased to help them develop novel therapeutics in an exciting scientific field."

Commenting on the expanded activities in Shanghai, Dr Pegg, Director of Discovery Research, added:

"We are delighted with the interaction with HD Biosciences. In a short space of time, and with input from our Principal Investigator network, we have been able to generate multiple hits and move from a screening exercise into a drug discovery operation. The next 12 months will be extremely exciting as CellCentric continues to expand its portfolio of discovery activities."

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**Epigenetics**

Epigenetics concerns the processes that help govern chromatin structure and function, by which cell fate is controlled. This is an emerging field that is leading to a series of novel approaches to intractable diseases, including cancer. DNA demethylases and histone deacetylases (HDACs) have pioneered the therapeutic potential of the space, but it is clear that there are many other rational targets associated with epigenetics that could have real clinical impact.

**About HD Biosciences**

HD Biosciences Inc. (HDB) is a Shanghai-based biotech company specializing in drug discovery contract research. HDB has developed extensive knowledge and comprehensive technology platforms for drug discovery including assay development, high-throughput drug screening, SAR, closed-loop and hit-to-lead biology solutions, as well as natural product-based lead discovery. The Company has signed multiple-year research agreements with clients including Pfizer, Organon and other pharmaceutical and biotech clients and is an indisputable leader in high value-added biology-based drug discovery CRO business in China.

See: [www.hdbiosciences.com](http://www.hdbiosciences.com)

**About CellCentric**

CellCentric's business model and strategy is designed to ensure that it has the best chance of success in delivering the next wave of epigenetic targets and product candidates.

Currently CellCentric is running small molecule discovery programmes on 6 novel targets that have been prioritised from a wide pool of candidates identified through disclosures from individuals and multiple sources. Targets include methyltransferases, demethylases and ubiquitin-related enzymes. Importantly, each programme benefits from ongoing input from the leading researchers in the field.

The company also has generated a series of epigenetic-related screens and markers that cover cellular reprogramming and induced pluripotency. CellCentric was founded in 2004 with Prof Azim Surani *FRS*, University of Cambridge.

See: [www.cellcentric.com](http://www.cellcentric.com)