

Clearbridge wins ¥3 mn award in Japan

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Singapore: Clearbridge BioMedics has won the 2012 Asian Entrepreneurship Awards, which was held from May 9-11, 2012, in Kashiwanoha, Chiba Prefecture, in Japan. A total of 18 start-up companies, from 12 Asian countries presented their business plans at this inaugural business competition.

Clearbridge BioMedics impressed the judges with its ClearCell System. This is a cell-based invitro diagnostic device that can isolate and retrieve intact and viable circulating tumour cells from blood. Clearbridge BioMedics, which was the only Singaporean company to participate, took home the ¥3 million (approximately Singapore \$47,000) prize money along with three years of free tenancy at the Tokatsu Techno Plaza in Chiba Prefecture. Clearbridge BioMedics is a spin-off company from the Faculty of Engineering, National University of Singapore (NUS).

"We are delighted and honoured to win the inaugural Asian Entrepreneurship Awards. Participating in this event was a great experience for us. We were able to network and present to an audience, including venture capitalists, entrepreneurs and potential partners. Japan is a very important market for us, winning this award will be a launch pad for us to bring the technology there." said Dr Andrew Wu, project director, Clearbridge BioMedics.

A total of 18 technology start-up companies were nominated to take part in the Asian Entrepreneurship Awards from countries throughout Asia. The majority of these companies came from business incubators or consisted of university spin-offs. The judging panel, which included Mr Masaru Murai, who was chairman of the judging committee and the is president of TX Entrepreneur Partners, looked for the start-up companies' innovativeness and the businesses' economic and social impact, as well as the companies' ability to implement their business strategies.

Professor Wong Poh Kam, from the NUS Entrepreneurship Center was the Singapore representative on the nominating committee, which also had representatives from China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, South

Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

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"Despite the large number of cutting edge technologies and patents, held primarily by universities and research institute, the ratio of business start-ups in Japan is still low. Through the Asian Entrepreneurship Awards, we hope to provide an opportunity to bring together entrepreneurs from across Asia to Japan, to introduce their innovative technologies to the world," said Professor Shigeo Kagami, chairman of the nominating committee for the Asian Entrepreneurship Awards 2012, who is also from the Office of Science Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development, Division of University Corporate Relations at The University of Tokyo.

"My heartiest congratulations to Clearbridge BioMedics. I believe that their ClearCell System has the potential to make a tremendous impact on the way cancer is diagnosed and treated in the future,"said Professor Kagami.

Moving forward, Clearbridge BioMedics plan to use the prize money from this award competition to further accelerate the development of its next-generation microfluidics biochips. They also plan to be exploring a wider number of applications in the life sciences and medical diagnostic fields.