

PRESS RELEASE (FINAL)

Chinese plant-based medicine mission forges links with Cambridge

22 September 2009

A delegation of twelve leading scientists and industrialists from South West China specialising in traditional Chinese plant-based medicines has forged links and shared their expertise with leading academics at the University of Cambridge.

The visit, arranged by the British Consulate in Chongqing, China, in conjunction with EEI - the region's inward investment agency - enabled the group to explore new ways of researching and developing plant-based pharmaceutical and/or botanical products.

The delegation met with local companies including Global Regulatory Services, Biotica and Phytopharm as well as hearing presentations from several University departments. The delegates also visited Professor Duncan Maskell (the University's Veterinary School), Professor Kay-Tee Khaw (Clinical Gerontology) and Dr Anthony Davenport (Clinical Pharmacology Unit) in addition to touring Addenbrooke's Centre for Clinical Investigation and Cancer Research UK Cambridge Research Institute at the Li Ka Shing Centre. Professor Fan Xin-jian (President of Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine) said "We are particularly honoured to visit Cambridge and share our knowledge in this burgeoning field as part of its 800th Anniversary Campaign. We are very eager to join forces with the University and become a partner of the 2020 Vision of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus"

Hosting the group, Nykki Rogers of East of England International said: "Our region is a world leader in health and life sciences research and development. Building closer links with Chinese expertise in this way will lead to the potential for future inward investment into the region for R&D and manufacturing companies operating in this specialised area. I am delighted that EEI has been able to partner with the University

on this initiative.”

Professor Ian Leslie (Pro-Vice Chancellor of Research) and Professor Christopher Gilligan (Head of School of Biological Sciences) welcomed the opportunity of long-term collaborations with Chinese academics, clinicians and pharmaceutical companies who are committed to the high standards of scientific research on which Cambridge prides itself. With an exciting talk on *Engineered Biosynthesis of Natural Product Drugs - Nature's Chemistry Set and the Science behind Biotech*, Professor Peter Leadley (Department of Biochemistry) highlighted that natural products are an outstanding source of effective medicines, and that biosynthetic engineering means that IP and business opportunity can be created to meet important medical needs.

Chairing the seminar, Dr Tai-Ping Fan, Head of the University's Angiogenesis & Chinese Medicine Laboratory, an Honorary Professor of Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and a member of Chinese Ministry of Science & Technology Expert Committee on Traditional Chinese Medicine, said: “Basic research and clinical studies in China have already shown that traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) holds the potential for therapies to treat leukaemia, eczema, diabetic foot, diabetic retinopathy and endometriosis, as well as neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's. As a key member of the three-year FP7 Programme 'Good Practice in TCM Research in the Post-genomic Era (GP-TCM)' funded by the European Commission, Cambridge is very well placed to become an international centre for validating these old medicines and developing them into new therapies.”

The arrival of the delegation signifies the world-wide importance of Cambridge and the wider region in the research, development and manufacture of plant-based medicines. The University's global prominence in the field will be significantly enhanced by a new £89 million research facility for the study of plant science, funded by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, which will open in 2010.

Ends

Photo caption: (front row, from left to right)

Dr Duan Jun-guo, Professor Ophthalmology, Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Dr Tai-Ping Fan, Department of Pharmacology, University of Cambridge

Dr Fan Xin-jian, Professor Infectious Diseases, President of Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Professor Ian Leslie, Pro Vice Chancellor for Research, University of Cambridge

Nykki Rogers, Life Sciences Business Development Manager, East of England International

Professor Chris Gilligan, Head of School of Biological Sciences, University of Cambridge



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Note to Editors

Traditional Chinese Medicine, also known as TCM includes a range of traditional medical practices originating in China. Although well accepted in the mainstream of medical care throughout East Asia, it is considered an alternative medical system in much of the western world.

TCM practices include such treatments as herbal medicine, acupuncture and dietary therapy. TCM claims to be rooted in meticulous observation of nature, the cosmos, and the human body, and to be thousands of years old.

East of England International (EEI) works with companies seeking to trade internationally and assists foreign-owned businesses looking to invest in the region.

EEl is funded by and works in partnership with the UK Government, the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and a wide range of businesses and partners in the region.

In the East of England, EEl's Trade Team delivers UK Trade & Investment's export services.

UK Trade & Investment is the government organisation that provides integrated support services for UK companies engaged in overseas trade and foreign businesses focused on the UK as an inward investment location. It brings together the work of teams in British embassies and FCO posts overseas and government departments across Whitehall. In England, international trade support is coordinated by nine International Trade Directors working in partnership with each Regional Development Agency.

East of England Development Agency (EEDA) is the driving force behind sustainable economic regeneration in the East of England: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Its vision is to create a leading economy, founded on a world-class knowledge base, creativity and enterprise to improve the quality of life for all who live and work here. EEDA funds EEl's Inward Investment activity.

For further information on the above organisations visit:

www.eei-online.com

www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

www.eeda.org.uk