

## Clearbridge BioMedics among world's best tech start-ups

Clearbridge BioMedics, an NUS spin-off specialising in cancer research and diagnostics, has been recognised as one of the world's top 50 enterprising start-ups. It was presented with the 2014 TIE50 Award by TIE Silicon Valley, a global non-profit network of entrepreneurs and professionals dedicated to the advancement of entrepreneurship. The 2014 TIE50 Awards attracted 2,800 companies from 27 countries.

The 50 winners were announced at TIEcon, one of the world's largest conferences for entrepreneurs, on 16 May in Santa Clara, US. The nominees were evaluated based on their business model, IP value and leadership team. The TIE50 six-year track record shows that 94 per cent of the winners and finalists have secured billions in investments. Many have been acquired or merged, while others have gone public.

Clearbridge BioMedics has garnered numerous awards since its establishment a few years ago. It was recently identified as one of the hottest start-ups to watch in 2014 by *Singapore Business Review*.

The firm's flagship product is its innovative microfluidic biochip that detects, enumerates and isolates Circulating Tumour Cells from the blood of cancer patients. Also known as liquid biopsy, the test provides clues on the malignancy and spread of cancer and enables real-time monitoring of the patient's condition as well as possible early detection of the disease.

The technology development, led by NUS Professor Lim Chwee Teck and his Department of Biomedical Engineering team, has also resulted in the region's first Circulating Tumour Cell Centre of Research Excellence. It was established earlier this year at the Singapore General Hospital in partnership with the National Cancer Centre Singapore.



Part of the Clearbridge BioMedics management team: (from left) General Manager Dr Andrew Wu (holding a former award won by the company), Managing Director and founder Mr Johnson Chen, and Advisor and Founder Prof Lim

## US firm Zendesk acquires NUS incubatee

NUS-incubated live-chat firm Zopim has been acquired by San Francisco-based Zendesk, a leading cloud-based customer service provider which filed for IPO recently.

The multimillion acquisition, announced on 10 April, sees the start-up becoming

Zopim's co-founders: (from left) Mr Wu, Mr Tay, Vice President of Customer Wow Ms Lim Qing Ru and Mr Kwok



a subsidiary of Zendesk, a 500-employee corporation offering helpdesk ticketing, issue tracking and customer service support.

Set up by four NUS students six years ago, Zopim offers a customer-support chat widget used by more than 150 countries worldwide. The founders, who include Mr Royston Tay, Mr Kwok Yang Bin and Mr Wu Wenxiang, conceptualised the live-chat idea while they were on the NUS Overseas Colleges (NOC) programme in Silicon Valley.

"We started Zopim with a vision of changing the way businesses interact with their customers," said Mr Tay, Zopim's CEO. "Zendesk's culture and focus on building great customer experiences fit our own philosophy. Together, we believe we'll be able to improve the customer experience for even more businesses around the world."

Zopim is the sixth company founded by alumni of the NOC programme to be acquired. The other five are tenCube, Peekspy, Techsailor, Brandtology and SGEntrepreneurs.

Dr Lily Chan, CEO of NUS Enterprise said: "It is indeed gratifying to see our home-grown start-ups, which have emerged from the NUS entrepreneurial community, make global impact and change the way the world works. We hope that this successful exit will help to motivate the many other technology start-up companies, encouraging them to reach for greater heights."

### NOC alumni start-ups acquired

- **Brandtology by iSentia**  
Analyses online positioning of brands by monitoring online channels and social networking sites
- **Peekspy by eBay's StubHub**  
Offers online 3D view of chosen seats in a venue
- **SGEntrepreneurs by Tech in Asia**  
Blogs on technology start-ups and entrepreneurship
- **Techsailor by TO THE NEW**  
Provides social media, location and mobile media solutions
- **tenCube by McAfee**  
Makes mobile security suite WaveSecure that protects data and ensures privacy on lost mobile devices
- **Zopim by Zendesk**  
Offers customer live-chat services

## International panel to tackle transboundary pollution

Smoke haze from forest fires blanketing Southeast Asia during the dry season, the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan and oil spills that spread across maritime boundaries – these events underscore the fact that pollution respects neither state nor border.

As such, a pressing need exists to reassess international law governing such incidents as well as to raise awareness among regional governments of their rights and responsibilities under international law.

A conference titled "Transboundary Pollution: Evolving Issues of International Law and Policy" organised by the Centre for International Law (CIL) at NUS earlier this year sought to address this challenge.

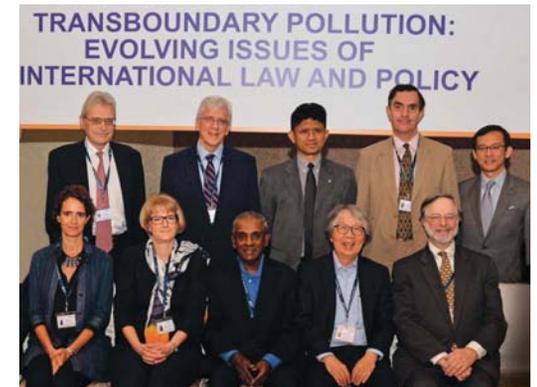
Co-chaired by former Deputy Prime Minister Professor S Jayakumar, Chairman of CIL's International Advisory Panel, and Ambassador-at-Large Professor Tommy Koh, Chairman of CIL's Governing Board, the conference was attended by leading experts, senior government officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations from around the world. They examined general principles of international environmental law, state responsibility for transboundary pollution, and cross-border cooperative mechanisms to combat transboundary pollution.

Taking into account the conference's outcomes, the Singapore Government has appointed an International Advisory Panel on Transboundary Pollution (IAP-TP). Singapore's Minister for the Environment and Water Resources Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, when establishing the IAP-TP, noted that "legal experts" at the CIL conference "agreed that clearer international rules, effective institutions and strong cooperation mechanisms are needed to address transboundary pollution."

Prof Jayakumar and Prof Koh are Co-Chairs of the IAP-TP. At least two international experts who participated in the CIL conference have been invited to join the IAP-TP, such as Professor Nicholas Robinson (Pace University) and Professor Catherine Redgwell (University of Oxford).

Also serving on the IAP-TP are of CIL's own International Advisory Panel member Judge Jin Hyun Paik (International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea), CIL's Governing Board member Mr Rodman Bundy (Eversheds LLP), former Judge of International Court of Justice Dr Abdul G Koroma, and Professor Edith Brown Weiss (Georgetown University Law Centre).

The first meeting of the IAP-TP took place in May 2014.



Prof Jayakumar (front row, centre) and Prof Koh (front row, 2nd from right), Co-Chairs of the International Advisory Panel on Transboundary Pollution, with Prof Redgwell (front row, 2nd from left), Prof Robinson (front row, far right) and participants at the conference