

For Immediate Release



Asterand Subsidiary BioSeek and US EPA Expand ToxCast™ Collaboration

BioSeek's BioMAP® Systems Platform Used to Predict Toxicity of Environmental and Other Compounds on Human Health

Detroit, MI (January 31, 2012): Asterand plc (LSE: ATD) today announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has expanded its collaboration and Phase II funding commitment with Asterand's subsidiary BioSeek LLC. Under the EPA ToxCast™ screening program, BioSeek is employing its unique BioMAP® Systems human primary cell assay platform to predict the biological activity and potential toxicity of environmental and other chemicals on human health. The new agreement provides \$696,000 in additional funding for BioSeek and adds a further 100 compounds to the more than 1000 environmental compounds, pesticides, failed pharmaceuticals, and nanomaterials already analyzed using BioMAP Systems in this ongoing effort.

"Through our work with EPA, BioMAP is yielding a rich harvest of biological information on a wide variety of environmental and other chemicals and their potential effects on human health," said Ellen Berg, Ph.D., General Manager of BioSeek. "The long-term goal of the ToxCast™ program is to establish *in vitro* assays that can forecast the toxicity of chemical compounds and other materials in humans and animals, and several of our primary human cell assays are contributing to predictive models in this effort."

"As later phases of the ToxCast program include a variety of pharmaceutical compounds," Dr. Berg continued, "our proprietary BioMAP compound database is gaining a rich dataset for mining with our pharmaceutical partners, to help understand the activities and potential safety of their own compounds in the context of human biology. Such insights can then be applied to better prioritize compounds in development prior to undertaking costly human clinical trials."

"We commend EPA's efforts to develop superior techniques for predicting the potential health risks of environmental chemicals through its ToxCast program," said Jack Davis, Chairman and Interim Chief Executive Officer of Asterand plc. "We look forward to continuing our support of the EPA in this endeavour."

About BioMAP

BioSeek's proprietary BioMAP technology platform bridges the gap between *in vitro* and *in vivo* testing and connects primary human cell-based assay data to clinically relevant results. Compounds tested in BioMAP Assay Systems generate biological activity profiles that are compared to those of thousands of well-characterized agents in our proprietary BioMAP database, using a variety of predictive computational analyses. BioMAP Assay Systems are

physiologically relevant and concurrently provide multifactorial readouts relevant to compound efficacy and safety. Thus, a compound's detected activities effectively preview *in vivo* results and forecast potential clinical outcomes. The BioMAP technology platform is consistently reproducible within and between assays, is high throughput, and supports drug discovery programs from library screening to lead optimization and candidate selection. For more information on BioMAP, please visit our website at <http://www.bioseekinc.com/>.

About Asterand

Asterand plc is a leading supplier of high quality human tissue and tissue-based services. Our comprehensive approach to human tissue and research services offers pharmaceutical, biotech and diagnostic companies the unique opportunity to have one company meet all of their human biomaterial needs along the continuum of drug discovery and development. BioSeek LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Asterand plc, is improving the success rate of pharmaceutical research and development by integrating human biology from the earliest stages of drug discovery onward through its unique BioMAP® predictive human-based models. Our mission is to accelerate target discovery and drug compound validation and enable our clients to take safer and more effective drugs into the market.

For more information about Asterand and BioSeek, please visit <http://www.asterand.com>

About the US EPA ToxCast™ Program

The U.S. EPA ToxCast™ Program is developing approaches to predict chemical toxicity using data from high-throughput and high content *in vitro* assays. The goal of ToxCast™ is to develop and verify "toxicity signatures," which are algorithms using *in vitro* and *in silico* data to predict *in vivo* toxicities. Phase I of ToxCast™ has produced data from >300 chemicals, ~500 *in vitro* assays and ~100 *in vivo* endpoints, providing a powerful dataset for evaluating the applicability of various analytic approaches for predicting the potential for an adverse response. The initial results from Phase I of the ToxCast™ program were presented on May 14-15, 2009 at the First ToxCast™ Data Analysis Summit held in Research Triangle Park, NC. Phase II of the ToxCast™ program will expand on and verify the ability of this approach to predict potential human toxicity. In Phase III, ToxCast™ will expand the list to thousands of environmental chemicals, delivering an affordable, science-based system for decision-makers to prioritize chemicals for more detailed toxicological evaluations.

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