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The fifth BioSpectrum Asia Pacific Awards 2013 were given away at a glittering ceremony at Hotel Fort Canning, Singapore, on March 15, 2013. Industry leaders and heads of companies from the Asia Pacific life sciences industry were present on the occasion.

The event provided an opportunity to cheer the best in the industry and network with the leaders. "For the fifth year in a row, the eminent members of the international jury, which included some of the past awardees, have announced their unanimous choices," said Mr Narayanan Suresh, chief editor, BioSpectrum Asia.

This year, the BioSpectrum Asia Pacific Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Professor Sir George Radda, one of cornerstones of Singapore's bioscience industry. Reacting to the announcement, Prof Radda said, "I am pleased to receive this award. I have never worked for recognition or awards and I am delighted to know that my association with Singapore is acknowledged by the regional industry."

Prof Radda retired from UK Medical Research Council and took up the responsibility of providing direction to the city state's nascent bioscience industry. He joined the international biomedical advisory council of Singapore and helped strategise the growth of the industry. Since 2008, he has been the chairman of Singapore's Biomedical Research Council. Prof Radda, who has done pioneering work on nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) methods used to study the human body, has worked to change the research community's mindset in the country. "Scientists were committed to their science and didn't really appreciate that there was tremendous importance in application of that science and this mindset has changed in the last three years," he says.

Much of this has helped Singapore evolve as one of the forerunners in the bioscience industry in the world. Commenting on Prof Radda's contribution to Singapore, Professor Steven Myint, senior fellow at A*Star & chairman, Plexpress Oy, said: "The most important thing to state about George is that he is an outstanding human being who is willing to give his experience and wisdom to a new generation. Singapore has greatly benefited from this."

"George's reputation, his ability to attract and lead quality scientists in the field and his ability to assemble a tangible vision of success in imaging technologies is remarkable. We all wish him continuing success and appreciate his contribution to science in Singapore," said Mr Leigh Berryman, CEO, Maccine, Singapore.

Dr Deborah Rathjen, CEO & MD, Bionomics, an Australian company, has been named the BioSpectrum Asia Pacific Person of the Year 2013. Steering Bionomics' focus towards large markets where there is a defined clinical need for new treatments, Dr Rathjen helped it gain global recognition for its multiple drug candidates and targets in the therapeutic areas of cancer, anxiety, multiple sclerosis and epilepsy. Her agenda is to see Bionomics grow into a company with $1 billion market capitalization. Its current market cap is $150 million approximately.

"I am delighted and extremely honored and humbled by the award. I thank all those involved in the award. I am very grateful to the Bionomics team for their support and I acknowledge their important role in the award," she said. A scientist with a keen interest in science, especially neuroscience, Dr Rathjen has led Bionomics from the front in its growth story. Her role has also been critical in shaping the life sciences industry of Australia in the past few years. As one of the few women to have broken through glass ceiling of the industry in the Asia Pacific region, her contribution is of great significance.

The BioSpectrum Asia Pacific Entrepreneur of the Year Award was given to Dr Sean Simpson, co-founder and chief scientific officer of LanzaTech, a green fuel technology company. LanzaTech, with its proprietary microbes that turn waste gases into biofuel, is already making waves in the steel and manufacturing industries, helping them reduce their carbon footprints and at the same time providing a solution to the energy crisis.

"It is a tremendous honor to be a recipient of the BioSpectrum Asia Pacific Entrepreneur of the Year Award. I am in great company with the other winners, which is very humbling," he said. "I feel fortunate that my work at LanzaTech never feels like a job. It is my life and my passion and I have a great team that has helped me realize my wild and crazy ideas into a real commercial possibility. Any award such as this is really a reflection of the tremendous job done by the team at LanzaTech who have enthusiastically and imaginatively approached the development of this process from being a notion on paper to a large-scale plant operating at a steel mill in China."

Among the products launched in the last one year, MenAfriVac, a vaccine manufactured by Serum Institute of India to address the contagious bacterial meningitis disease epidemic of sub-Saharan Africa, shared the Product of the Year prize with another

innovative solution for treating type 2 diabetes. The EndoBarrier therapy developed by GI Dynamics allows patients to get off regular doses of insulin through a brief, less invasive, and reversible implant procedure.

Eight start-ups in the bioscience industry across Asia Pacific were identified as the BioSpectrum Asia Pacific Emerging Companies of the Year 2013. The companies are:

- AseaCyte, Malaysia
- Biomics Biotechnologies, China
- Novo Informatics, India
- Shanghai BravoBio, China
- Vaxxas, Australia
- VeriStem Technologies, Singapore
- VolitionRx, Singapore
- XCode Life Sciences, India

While the BioSpectrum Asia Pacific Emerging Companies of the Year awards are Editor's Choice Award the other winners are selected by the industry-jury constituted by the publication. BioSpectrum Asia Pacific Awards 2013 jury comprised Dr Chia-Lin Jeff Wang, president, Development Center for Biotechnology, Taiwan; Dr John Ballard, co founder-director, BioAngels, Australia; Ms Samantha Su, director, Services and Biomedical Cluster, Industry Development, SPRING Singapore; Mr Ganesh Kishore, managing director, Burrill & Company, Malaysia; Mr Jong-il Hong, vice president, KoreaBio, Korea; Dr P M Murali, MD & CEO, Evolva Biotech & president, Association of Biotechnology-Led Enterprises, India; and Mr Narayanan Suresh, chief editor, BioSpectrum Asia, CyberMedia, India.