

Press release

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For immediate release

Welsh business shines on PM's trade mission

The founders of a cutting-edge life sciences business with headquarters in Cardiff are reflecting on their role in Prime Minister David Cameron's recent trade mission to Brazil.

Cansford Laboratories which is based at the medtech and biotech incubator Cardiff Medicentre was invited to join the business delegation, led by Trade and Investment Minister Lord Green, accompanying the Prime Minister on his visit to strengthen links between Britain and Brazil.

The business which has pioneered techniques for quicker, more effective testing of hair samples for evidence of drug and alcohol misuse opened a sister laboratory, Chromatox Limitada, in Brazil earlier this year. As part of the trade mission, the UK's Minister of State for Universities and Science David Willetts led a visit to the Chromatox lab. The delegation which included members of the British Embassy and Professor Colin Riordan, Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff University, was given a guided tour of the facilities and a detailed explanation of the existing and potential benefits of hair testing and its various applications.



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Cansford Laboratories' co-founder Dr Lolita Tsanaclis said, "As a Brazilian who has lived in the UK for over 25 years, it was a privilege to be representing Wales and the UK on this trade mission. Chromatox is quickly following in the footsteps of Cansford and making a real name for itself in South America. We were delighted to demonstrate to both the British and Brazilian Governments that successful co-operation between the two countries is in full swing."

The Brazilian economy is now the sixth largest in the world, ahead of India and Russia. The UK is building on the level of exports to Brazil, aiming to double these to £4 billion per year by 2015.

"It's great to see Cansford play its part in this," said Dr Mark Bowman, Director of Innovation at Cardiff Medicentre. "From day one we had very high hopes for the business which has, in John Wicks and Lolita Tsanaclis, two very experienced and driven leaders. They are a shining example of what business incubation is all about."

Wicks and Tsanaclis set up Cansford Laboratories last year after developing the concept of testing human hair to assess drug use in people and to combat the harmful effects of drug addiction. Testing hair samples is the ideal method for this assessment as it provides information on drug use over a long period.

The pair previously founded Cardiff-based TrichoTech which they sold for £11million in 2007. The addition of Chromatox Limitada is expected to increase the group company's turnover from the testing market by around 50 per cent.

Dr Tsanaclis said, "There is big demand out there for the services we're offering. We are thrilled to have transferred the technology and to be taking our businesses – founded in Wales and supported by the superb incubation facility, Cardiff Medicentre – onto the global stage."

Ends

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Notes to editors:

For more information about the Prime Minister's visit to Brazil, please see:

<http://www.ukti.gov.uk/uktihome/media/news/381000.html>

About Cansford Laboratories

Please visit www.cansfordlabs.co.uk

About Cardiff Medicentre

Cardiff Medicentre is a dedicated incubator for biotech and medtech startups. The facility is set in the grounds of the University of Wales Hospital and is a neighbour to Cardiff University's School of Medicine.

Established in 1992, Cardiff Medicentre is a joint venture between Cardiff Council, Cardiff University, the Welsh Government and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board. It was the first incubator of its kind in the UK and now provides 32 units of high quality office and lab space accommodation ranging from 284 sq ft to 1,045 sq ft. Low-cost desk leasing facilities are also available to encourage entrepreneurs to enter the Cardiff Medicentre community while writing business plans and raising finance.

Tenants at Cardiff Medicentre benefit from specialist support in establishing and growing their businesses. Their aim, and the aim of the Cardiff Medicentre management team, is graduation – the process of tenant businesses outgrowing the incubation facilities and moving into their own follow-on space, or being acquired.

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Examples of successful graduate companies include:

- Q Chip Ltd (completed \$6 million venture capital investment round in 2011)
- Cardiff Bioanalytical Services Ltd (acquired by LGC Ltd in 2010)
- Cardiff Research Consortium (acquired by Capita Group plc for £11.6 million in 2009)
- BioDynamics Research Ltd (acquired by Quotient BioResearch Ltd in 2008)
- TrichoTech Ltd (acquired by Concateno plc for £11.25 million in 2007)
- OnExamination Ltd (acquired by BMJ Publishing Group in 2007)

For more information about Cardiff Medicentre and its tenants, please visit www.cardiffmedicentre.co.uk.

To arrange an interview with or additional commentary from Cardiff Medicentre's Director of Innovation, Dr Mark Bowman, contact Carina Phillips on 07815 058283.