**Potential Stem Cell-Based Cure for Severe Structural Airway Disease**

**Leeds, Liverpool and London, UK – July 31, 2013:**A tracheal replacement project, led by Videregen Ltd and involving a team of UK experts, has been awarded almost £2m by the UK Technology Strategy Board under its Regenerative Medicine and Cell Therapy competition. The consortium will use the funds to progress a promising clinical prototype through a rigorous development process and early clinical trials for the treatment of severe structural airway disease (SSAD). The market for this life-threatening condition is thought to be worth more than £70m pa.

As well as Videregen as the commercial partner, the consortium includes the Cell Therapy Catapult as clinical trial sponsor (plus for regulatory pathway expertise), NHS Blood and Transplant (for tissue sourcing and scaffold processing), the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust and UCL (University College London; for clinical tissue engineering and the lead clinical investigator). Other organisations, such as UCL Business, the technology transfer arm of UCL, will be supporting the consortium. Key activities for the team include optimising process development and GMP manufacturing, liaising with the regulatory agencies, conduct of clinical trials and generation of health economic data.

SSAD is associated with significant airway obstruction leading to high levels of morbidity and a 50% mortality rate if not treated successfully. Current treatment involves surgery which has a high incidence of failure and lack of efficacy. In contrast, this tracheal replacement approach, which involves repopulating an acellular trachea ‘scaffold’ with the patient’s own stem cells and epithelial cells, has the potential to be a one-off treatment without the need for a lifetime of anti-rejection drugs thereafter.

Dr Steve Bloor, CEO of Videregen Ltd, said ‘Everyone in the tracheal replacement project team is delighted to have received this significant funding and validation from the Technology Strategy Board. The consortium brings together many of the UK’s experts in their respective areas to take forward this promising treatment for severe structural airways disease. The TSB funding will enable us to formally demonstrate the technology platform in a scientifically and clinically rigorous way, moving it further towards commercial reality.’