**The London Centre for Nanotechnology—a research center in the heart of London**

At the forefront of United Kingdom nanotechnology sit the academic institutions. Many of these are now well placed to both develop and ultimately exploit the technol­ogies through spinout, licensing, or technology transfer. In the remainder of this article, we introduce the new London Centre for Nanotechnology (LCN) as one possible model for driving nanotechnology, and describe its unique vision and highly transparent, outward-facing approach to delivery. There are of course a growing number of world-class institutions working in the nanotechnology area spread around the UK. The LCN, which collaborates with many of these institutions, is used here simply as one highly interdisciplinary and commercial model based on “best practice" for delivering the science to benefit the UK as well as areas far afield.

The LCN separates nanoscience from nanotechnology by- noting that each nanotechnology requires a clear vehicle for delivery', including not only the research and development (R&D) activities but also the management and technology transfer processes. Any one technology will typically require substantial development to take it from its basic research stage through to a product.

This includes devel­oping and protecting the basic ideas, determining the appropriate market and its needs, augmenting the basic idea with other intellectual property (IP), and creating a more credible commercial offering that can be effectively exploited. LCN integrates all of these processes seamlessly such that a basic technology can be taken through to incubation and industry.

The LCN is a new UK-based, multidisciplinary research enterprise structured to form the bridge between the physical and biomedical sciences, with a unique strategy and clear focus on exploitation and commercialization [5J (Figure 1). It brings together two internationally competitive institu­tions in nanotechnology, namely UCL and Imperial College London, in a unique operating model that accesses the combined skills of eight departments, including medicine, chemistry, physics, electrical and electronic engineering, materials and earth science, and two leading business centers. Notably, the LCN combines the capabilities of two leading biomedical universities and has been designed to compete internationally in this strategic area.

The center has a transparent organization, encompassing several technical centers of excellence, and a clearly defined strategy that is overseen by a mix of well-known academic and commercial figures.

Management best practice has been applied from the outset to ensure strategic vision and high- value operations and involves business professionals at the most senior levels to drive commercial strategy and connection with industry. The operational model is unusual for a university institute in that the staffs creative potential is enhanced and the throughput of technology to industry is maximized. It was designed from the outset to be interdisciplinary, with disciplines resident within the LCN and located adjacent to one another. The unique institutional and urban setting was chosen to maximize access to local investment. It boasts the world’s only dedicated nanoscale research facility to be located in the heart of a metropolis- providing superb access to corporate, investment, and industrial partners—and has dedicated in-house commercial expertise. Initial backing for this project came from the UK government, with research supported by the UK research councils, medical research charities, and industry.