MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10 MARCH 2015, 5:30PM (SST)

A*STAR’S INSTITUTE OF MATERIALS RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING (IMRE) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPOINTED TO SENIOR ROLE AT HONG KONG UNIVERSITY (HKU)

Singapore—A*STAR congratulates Professor Andy Hor Tzi Sum, Executive Director (ED) of IMRE, on his appointment as Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) at HKU. Prof Hor is expected to take up his new appointment on 1 September 2015.

Prof Hor has been at the helm of A*STAR’s IMRE since June 2010. He is on secondment from the National University of Singapore (NUS) where he is Professor of Chemistry. Prof Hor is also Concurrent Professor at Fudan University of China.

During his leadership of IMRE, the institute enhanced its standing as a world-class research institute in materials. International research publications annual output rose 42% from about 330 in 2010 to 470 in 2014 while annual citations rose 94% from about 8,500 in 2010 to about 16,500 in 2014. Prof Hor established four new thematic laboratories in IMRE promoting fundamental materials science in porous materials, soft surface and interface, bioinspired structures, and plasmonics. He also deepened IMRE’s science capability building in strategic areas such as metamaterials, piezoelectric sensing, molecular materials and polymers, and advanced characterisation techniques.

This enabled the institute to meet the R&D needs of companies in a wide range of industry sectors such as aerospace, energy, electronics, medtech and consumer care. In 2014 alone, the institute started 15 new projects with industry partners. Prof Hor spearheaded the formation of the Materials Centre of Innovation in partnership with SPRING Singapore to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) better utilise technology to increase productivity and create new products for commercialisation. He was also responsible for establishing the Industrial Coating and Packaging Consortium, a platform that helps companies build new capabilities in new coating and packaging technologies. In addition, he established Singapore’s first Nanoimprint Foundry. The innovative 3D film for the
iPhone was also a co-invention of IMRE in partnership with Nanoveu Pte Ltd and Temasek Polytechnic.

In addition to his work with multinational companies and SMEs, Prof Hor oversaw the spin-off of two companies that started as research projects in IMRE: ACM Biolabs, a synthetic biology company; and Sofshell, which markets impact protective products.

Prof Hor continues to contribute to the local and international scientific community through his appointments on committees and advisory panels. He has been President of the Federation of Asian Chemical Societies since 2013 and President of the Singapore National Institute of Chemistry since 2003, among others.

Looking back at his time at A*STAR, Prof Hor commented, “I have been privileged to work with a talented group of researchers both at IMRE and other A*STAR Research Institutes through cross-disciplinary projects. I am grateful to A*STAR for the opportunities I had to do excellent science, work with leading companies, and bring economic growth to Singapore. I believe it is this package of successes that HKU expects me to help deliver in my new role.”

A*STAR will initiate an international search for Prof Hor’s successor. In the interim, an Executive Committee headed by Dr Tan Geok Leng, Executive Director of A*STAR’s Science & Engineering Research Council, will be put in place from June 2015 to oversee operations at IMRE and ensure a smooth transition.

Mr Lim Chuan Poh, Chairman of A*STAR, paid tribute to Prof Hor, saying, “Under Andy’s leadership, IMRE has grown from strength to strength. In addition to driving cutting-edge R&D with a strong industry focus, Andy has prioritised nurturing and developing talent above all else. This is evident in the number of young scientists from IMRE who have won international awards. All of us at A*STAR are proud that HKU has recognised his sterling work in R&D and innovation at A*STAR and offered him this prestigious appointment.”

Mr Lim added, “At the same time, Andy will continue to maintain his links with A*STAR and Singapore through an A*STAR Senior Fellowship after he takes up his new appointment.”
About the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)

The Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) is Singapore’s lead public sector agency that fosters world-class scientific research and talent to drive economic growth and transform Singapore into a vibrant knowledge-based and innovation driven economy.

In line with its mission-oriented mandate, A*STAR spearheads research and development in fields that are essential to growing Singapore’s manufacturing sector and catalysing new growth industries. A*STAR supports these economic clusters by providing intellectual, human and industrial capital to its partners in industry.

A*STAR oversees 18 biomedical sciences and physical sciences and engineering research entities, located in Biopolis and Fusionopolis, as well as their vicinity. These two R&D hubs house a bustling and diverse community of local and international research scientists and engineers from A*STAR’s research entities as well as a growing number of corporate laboratories.

For more information on A*STAR, please visit www.a-star.edu.sg.