

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Research Agreement between the University of Michigan and Beijing Zenithnano Technology Co., Ltd.

Action Requested: Authorization to enter into Agreement

Preamble:

A statutory conflict of interest situation was identified by the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects while reviewing the Proposal Approval Form which then triggered a review by the UMOR Conflict of Interest Review Committee. A plan for management of the possible risks associated with the conflict of interest was then developed and approved by the Committee and agreed to by the parties involved.

This proposed research agreement (“Agreement”) falls under the State of Michigan Conflict of Interest Statute because Professor Lingjie Jay Guo is an employee of the University of Michigan (“University”), and a partial owner of Beijing Zenithnano Technology Co., Ltd. (“Zenithnano”). The law permits such an Agreement provided it is disclosed to the Board of Regents (“Regents”) of the University of Michigan and approved in advance by a 2/3 vote.

Background:

Dr. Lingjie Jay Guo, a Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science – Electrical and Computer Engineering Division, is a partial owner of a for-profit company called Zenithnano (the “Company”). The Company wishes to fund a project entitled “Ultra-thin Metal Based Electrodes for Flexible and Transparent OLED Applicants” (ORSP #20-PAF06261) in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science under the direction of Dr. Guo. The purpose of this project is to establish that an ultra-thin material-based electrode offers low sheet resistance, high flexibility, and the ability to relax waveguide mode of an organic light-emitting diode (OLED), making it an excellent candidate for the replacement of indium tin oxide (ITO) in flexible optoelectronic devices with improved performance.

Agreement Terms:

The terms of the Agreement conform to University policy. The period of performance for the project is approximately fourteen (14) months. The amount of funding support will not exceed \$144,132. Since research projects are often amended, this agreement includes a provision for changes in time and scope. University procedures for approval of these changes will be followed and additional conflict of interest review will be done as appropriate.

Impact of the Agreement:

The Agreement will support an effort by Dr. Guo to use his expertise and University laboratory, as well as other University resources, to produce ultra-thin material-based electrodes offering low sheet resistance, high flexibility, and the ability to relax waveguide mode of OLEDs.

Recommendations:

This matter has been reviewed and approved by the UMOR Conflict of Interest Review Committee. In light of this disclosure and our finding that the Agreement was negotiated in conformance with standard University practices, I recommend that the Board of Regents approve the University's entering into this Agreement with Beijing Zenithnano Technology Co., Ltd.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebecca Cunningham
Vice President for Research

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