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## **Back in Business: M-fold Biotech offers membrane protein services to Pharma and Biotech Customers**

M-fold Biotech GmbH today starts operations in the facilities of former m-phasys GmbH in Tübingen, Germany. The new startup was recently founded by m-phasys' scientific founder Hans Kiefer and Eva Reska-Haischer, MBA INSEAD. The M-FOLD™ technology for the production of purified, functional membrane proteins is the basis of M-fold  
5 Biotech's activities.

VC-funded m-phasys, funded in 1999, had to close down in February of this year after a decision of its investors to discontinue financing. Previous attempts to consolidate the company through a tradesale or merger had by that time failed. "Timing of our M&A activities was far from ideal, as the business model had been changed only 18 months  
10 ago. The new products were still at an early stage and did not create enough value to justify an acquisition", comments Hans Kiefer. "However, we were encouraged to see that there was interest in our technology and consequently a basis for a service business."

Immediately after applying for receivership, Kiefer was offered help by the towns of Tübingen and neighbouring Reutlingen as well as by the regional biotech network BioRe-  
15 gio STERN. A task force composed of representatives of Technologiepark Tübingen-Reutlingen (TTR), BioRegio STERN, lawyers and certified accountants managed to stabilise the company and secure assets while shaping the concept for a viable re-start.

A lucky coincidence in this situation was the involvement of Eva Reska-Haischer who became interested in the new startup. The business economist adds her experience  
20 to the company gained from consulting SMEs in reorganisation and international business relation matters. "The number of parties interested in the M-FOLD technology clearly indicated that there is a sound basis for business. I followed quite a number of SMEs in the past, and this one definitely has some potential", Reska-Haischer says. Both Reska-Haischer and Kiefer are shareholders and Managing Directors of M-fold Biotech.

25 When time started to run out because receivership was followed by a layoff of m-phasys' staff, Reska-Haischer and Kiefer put all efforts on defining a sustainable business model for the new company. "It is now partly centred on service business and partly on

the continuation of existing partnerships", Reska-Haischer explains, who is also politically active in LIM, an organisation representing and supporting SMEs in Germany.

30           The company rents m-phasys' former facilities in the Technologiepark Reutlingen-Tübingen and acquires all relevant assets of its predecessor. TTR representatives were pleased to see that the research laboratories and equipment will continue to be used in the most efficient way.

35           Revenues of the startup are expected from collaboration agreements with Biotech and Pharma companies as well as from grants. To start off with, M-fold Biotech will take over m-phasys' former part in an NIH projected granted to a consortium with principal investigator Professor Stan Opella at UCSD. The goal of this project is the determination of receptor protein molecular structures that would boost existing and future drug discovery programs.

40           The company offers services in all areas where purified membrane proteins are required. Those include the generation of diagnostic and therapeutic antibodies directed against GPCRs, in-vitro assay systems for drug screening, as well as protein structure analysis projects with the goal to advance structure-based drug design. Pharma and Biotech companies will be M-fold Biotech's principal customers.

45           The company's team of PhD scientists and technicians is currently being built up from previous m-phasys staff who over seven years of operation accumulated unprecedented specific know-how and expertise in the field of membrane proteins. This will ensure continued quality of the services and products delivered according to Kiefer.

50           The Biotech region Tübingen is an expanding cluster of VC-funded drug discovery as well as more service-based SMEs with a rich pool of highly qualified life science researchers and technicians. With the inception of M-fold Biotech, Hans Kiefer and Eva Reska-Haischer want to contribute to the local biotech boom.

#### **About M-fold Biotech GmbH:**

M-fold Biotech recently emerged from former m-phasys GmbH. Based on proprietary technology and many years of experience in protein chemistry the company provides services to the pharma and biotech industry. The scalable M-FOLD™ technology platform gives access to purified functional membrane receptors and ion channels. Those products offer unique applications in areas as diverse as antibody generation, structure analysis and assay development.

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