



Press Release

University of Tsukuba and Astellas Confirm a Strategic Partnership

*- Accelerating the development of the life science ecosystem centered on
Tsukuba -*

*- Promoting innovative drug discovery research using AI and digital
technologies and creating new drug discovery startups -*

TOKYO and IBARAKI, November 16, 2023 - University of Tsukuba (President: Kyosuke Nagata) and Astellas Pharma Inc. (TSE: 4503, President and CEO: Naoki Okamura, “Astellas”) today announced that they have signed a letter of confirmation regarding a strategic partnership to accelerate the digitalization of the drug discovery research field, as well as the development of the life science ecosystem in Tsukuba and Kashiwa-no-ha, and to further accelerate innovative drug discovery research and development.

Under this agreement, the two parties will exchange information on and discuss:

- Promotion of drug discovery and other research, and creation of new startups through industry-academia collaboration between the two parties
- Utilization of cutting-edge research equipment, drug discovery-related data and research seeds mutually owned by the two parties
- Implementation of discussions and seminars to accelerate and develop collaborative research already conducted by the two parties
- Promotion of drug discovery research and creation of new startups through exchange and communication with third-party venture company innovators in residence at SakuLab™-Tsukuba*1

Based on this agreement, the University of Tsukuba will establish an office in Astellas’ SakuLab™-Tsukuba for the Tsukuba Digital-Bio International Center*2, where they are participating as a lead organization. The center will provide an environment where researchers from different fields including researchers specializing in medicine, biotechnology, and the AI/digital analytics field from the University of Tsukuba and Astellas’ researchers specializing in drug discovery can discuss freely and energetically, aiming to create a place for innovative and active co-creative research through the fusion of different fields.

Hiroyuki Nishiyama, M.D., Ph.D., Leader of Tsukuba Digital-Bio International Center

“In western drug discovery ecosystems, researchers and innovators have quick and easy access to cutting-edge research results and trends in their fields of expertise. Japanese pharmaceutical companies tend to look there because they can’t obtain enough information in Japanese drug discovery ecosystems. Against this background, we have been discussing with Astellas for the past one and a half years to change the conventional frame of reference. I believe that we can flexibly and speedily formulate new joint research themes not limited to specific fields and execute efficient research by sharing our research information (seeds) and areas of research interest at Astellas. We will work to build a drug discovery ecosystem in Japan that will enable start-ups to be implemented in society. We hope that this initiative will be one opportunity to overcome the barrier known as the “valley of death” that exists when translating academia research results into social implementations.”

Yoshitsugu Shitaka, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer (CScO) of Astellas

“We are very pleased to confirm this strategic partnership with the University of Tsukuba, the flagship university of Tsukuba Science City. We believe our scope of knowledge and experience in drug research, and our global network will pair well with the University of Tsukuba’s outstanding expertise in medicine, biotechnology, and the AI/digital field. Together we aim for further growth in the life science ecosystem in Tsukuba and the Kashiwa-no-ha areas, with SakuLab™-Tsukuba as a starting point for innovation. We envision the collaboration will enable visionary ideas and specialized knowledge to converge, turbocharging the development of pioneering healthcare solutions.”

Astellas has already reflected the impact from this agreement in its financial forecast of the current fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

***1 SakuLab™-Tsukuba:** SakuLab™-Tsukuba is an open innovation hub and is located on the premises of Astellas’ Tsukuba Research Center.

***2 Tsukuba Digital-Bio International Center:** Tsukuba Digital-Bio International Center is a network organization led by University of Tsukuba, with the vision of “realizing a society that supports the well-being of all generations of people through interdisciplinary research using bioresources and digital technology with Tsukuba as its core”. The project was launched in December 2020 in accordance with the policies of “the Cabinet Office’s Bio Strategy 2019/2020,” aiming to build a digital bioeconomy society through the creation of new industries and the development of young human resources by promoting digital-bio research in the fields of medicine, food, and the environment in cooperation with local governments and related organizations. For more information, please visit our website at <https://tsukubadigitalbio.jp/en/>

About University of Tsukuba:

The University of Tsukuba was established in October 1973, due to the relocation of its antecedent, the Tokyo University of Education, to the Tsukuba area. As the new concept comprehensive university, the university has featured "Openness" with "New Systems for Education and Research" under a "New University Administration." The university is striving to create a unique, active, and internationally competitive university with superlative education and research facilities.

About Astellas

Astellas Pharma Inc. is a pharmaceutical company conducting business in more than 70 countries around the world. We are promoting the Focus Area Approach that is designed to identify opportunities for the continuous creation of new drugs to address diseases with high unmet medical needs by focusing on Biology and Modality. Furthermore, we are also looking beyond our foundational Rx focus to create Rx+[®] healthcare solutions that combine our expertise and knowledge with cutting-edge technology in different fields of external partners. Through these efforts, Astellas stands on the forefront of healthcare change to turn innovative science into VALUE for patients. For more information, please visit our website at <https://www.astellas.com/en>.

Cautionary Notes (Astellas)

In this press release, statements made with respect to current plans, estimates, strategies and beliefs and other statements that are not historical facts are forward-looking statements about the future performance of Astellas. These statements are based on management's current assumptions and beliefs in light of the information currently available to it and involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties. A number of factors could cause actual results to differ materially from those discussed in the forward-looking statements. Such factors include, but are not limited to: (i) changes in general economic conditions and in laws and regulations, relating to pharmaceutical markets, (ii) currency exchange rate fluctuations, (iii) delays in new product launches, (iv) the inability of Astellas to market existing and new products effectively, (v) the inability of Astellas to continue to effectively research and develop products accepted by customers in highly competitive markets, and (vi) infringements of Astellas' intellectual property rights by third parties.

Information about pharmaceutical products (including products currently in development) which is included in this press release is not intended to constitute an advertisement or medical advice.

###

Contacts for inquiries or additional information:

University of Tsukuba
Bureau of Public Relations
+81-29-853-2040

Tsukuba Digital-Bio International Center
digitalbioeco@md.tsukuba.ac.jp
+81-29-853-1131 ex. 91421 or 91416

Astellas Pharma Inc.
Corporate Communications
+81-3-3244-3201