

## **Mitsubishi Research Institute and Astellas Announce Collaboration to Support Pharma Startups in Japan**

*Accelerating the Growth of Globally Active Drug-Discovery Startups from Japan*

**Tokyo, 13 June 2025** – Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc. (“MRI”) and Astellas Pharma Inc. (“Astellas”) today announced that they have agreed on a memorandum of understanding to provide drug-discovery startups in Japan with support in their efforts to go global. The pair aims to strengthen Japan’s position as a global hub for drug discovery and foster the growth of its startups that can thrive globally.

The new support represents multiple programs under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare’s Medical Innovation Support Office (MEDISO), which looks to address the lack of practical application of Japan’s advanced life-sciences technologies.

Mitsubishi Research Institute has been entrusted to operate MEDISO since 2018 and has been helping promising drug-discovery startups commercialize their intellectual property since.

“When it comes to practical application, drug-discovery startups need external insights and expertise,” said Hirofumi Suzuki, Executive Officer and General Manager of the Public Innovation Unit at Mitsubishi Research Institute. “Promising startups can substantially speed up the commercialization of their offerings by engaging with globally active pharmaceutical companies early.”

The new partnership looks to leverage the strengths of both companies. MRI will draw from its previous MEDISO work – supporting over twelve hundred startup and academic ventures – and design specific support programs for participants. Astellas Pharma will provide drug-discovery startups participating in the acceleration program conducted through MEDISO with access to laboratory and office space at SakuLab™ -Tsukuba, located on the premises of the Astellas Tsukuba Research Center. Startups residing in SakuLab™-Tsukuba will not only receive support through consultations with Astellas experts in various fields, but will also be able to accelerate their drug discovery research by leveraging networks with fellow residents and Astellas researchers.

“We are very pleased to agree on a memorandum of understanding with MRI. Astellas Pharma is committed to growing and developing innovative ideas and technologies with academia and startups by providing knowledge and experience

gained through research and our global network,” said Tadaaki Taniguchi, M.D., Ph.D., Chief Research & Development Officer (CRDO) of Astellas Pharma. “We expect that the signing of this MoU will further strengthen and accelerate drug discovery research by Japanese startups, ultimately leading to the creation of innovative medical solutions.”

The new support will provide Japanese drug-discovery startups with early access to pharmaceutical-industry insights, enabling them to chart a path toward successful global development and potential out-licensing. This aligns with the *Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2024*, which aims to improve domestic research and development environments while encouraging the participation of global pharmaceutical companies and venture capitalists in building a robust drug discovery ecosystem.

“We are pleased to partner with Astellas Pharma to support startups under the MEDISO initiative, and we are sure that this will be a groundbreaking step for Japan’s drug discovery ecosystem,” said Suzuki. “We are committed to leveraging the strengths of both companies to swiftly deliver innovative pharmaceuticals to patients in Japan and globally.”

Moving forward, MEDISO as a whole aims to collaborate with domestic and international business partners to support the global expansion of Japanese drug-discovery startups while encouraging global investors to invest in Japan’s burgeoning drug discovery field.

#### **About Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc.**

Mitsubishi Research Institute is one of Japan’s foremost think tanks. For over five decades, it has provided the public and private sectors with research and consulting services in fields spanning healthcare, the environment, energy, and digital transformation. This is accompanied by policy recommendations and the real-world application of solutions. Mitsubishi Research Institute will continue to envision the future, resolve societal issues, and lead change to build a sustainable and prosperous world. For more information, please visit: [www.mri.co.jp/en/](http://www.mri.co.jp/en/)

#### **About Astellas Pharma Inc.**

Astellas is a global life sciences company committed to turning innovative science into VALUE for patients. We provide transformative therapies in disease areas that include oncology, ophthalmology, urology, immunology and women's health. Through our research and development programs, we are pioneering new healthcare solutions for diseases with high unmet medical need. Learn more at [www.astellas.com](http://www.astellas.com).

Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc.	
General contact MEDISO Office, Healthcare Division Email: <a href="mailto:mediso@ml.mri.co.jp">mediso@ml.mri.co.jp</a>	Media Contact Group Corporate Communications Division Email: <a href="mailto:media@mri.co.jp">media@mri.co.jp</a>

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

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