

Press Release

Astellas Announces a Partnership with the “Korea Institute of Startup and Entrepreneurship Development”, an Umbrella Organization of the “Ministry of SMEs and Startups”, a Korean Government Agency, for the Operation of the “Partnership with Global Companies Program”

- Supporting Korean Startups’ Drug Discovery Research and Global Expansion -
- First Pharmaceutical Company from Japan to Actively Support the Operation of the Program -

TOKYO, July 17, 2025 – Astellas Pharma Inc. (TSE: 4503, President and CEO: Naoki Okamura, “Astellas”) today announced that it has agreed on a memorandum of understanding (“MoU”) with the Korea Institute of Startup and Entrepreneurship Development (President: Jong-pil Yoo, “KISED”), an umbrella organization of the Ministry of SMEs and Startups, a Korean Government Agency, for the operation of the Partnership with Global Companies Program, which aims to identify Korean drug-discovery startups and support their business growth and global expansion.

Under the terms of the MoU, KISED will provide overall management and research funding for the Partnership with Global Companies Program. Astellas will provide Korean drug-discovery startups, which are selected together, with KISED 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.

Through this program, two Korean pharmaceutical and biotech startups—TCUBEit Inc. (a next-generation T-cell-based immunotherapy developer) and AAVATAR Therapeutics (specializing in AAV viral vector engineering technology)—have been selected. They will begin full-scale collaboration by moving into SakuLab™-Tsukuba.

Tadaaki Taniguchi, M.D., Ph.D., Chief Research & Development Officer (CRDO) of Astellas

“We are very pleased to agree on a MoU with KISED for the Operation of the Partnership with Global Companies Program. In today's world, where new drug discovery ideas and technologies are emerging one after another, Diverse perspectives, expertise and experiences are essential to turning innovative ideas and technologies into VALUE for patients. Astellas is committed to fostering innovation in collaboration with startups by providing knowledge and expertise we have gained through our research and global network. We expect that the signing of this MoU will further strengthen and accelerate drug discovery research together with Korean startups, ultimately contributing to the creation of innovative medical solutions.”

Jong-pil Yoo, President of KISED

“This agreement will serve as a significant opportunity to accelerate the global expansion of promising Korean startups in the bio and pharmaceutical sectors through strategic collaboration with Astellas, a global pharmaceutical company. In particular, as new drug development requires a high level of expertise and infrastructure, this program—enabling startups to leverage Astellas' research assets and global network directly—is expected to provide substantial support for their growth. KISED will continue to strengthen its partnerships with global corporations to ensure that Korean startups can enhance their competitiveness in the global market.”

The impact of this partnership on Astellas' financial results for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, is expected to be minor.

About Astellas

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.

About Ministry of SMEs and Startups

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups is a central government agency in South Korea, dedicated to enhancing the competitiveness and fostering innovation among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and venture businesses. Initially established in 1996 as the Ministry of SMEs, it was rebranded in 2017 as the Ministry of SMEs and Startups to more accurately reflect its expanded focus and objectives. MSS is committed to developing and implementing policies that support startup growth, promote corporate development, and strengthen the competitiveness of small businesses within the national and global markets. Learn more at <https://www.mss.go.kr/site/eng/main.do>

About KISED

KISED carries out strategic initiatives aimed at advancing the startup ecosystem, enabling tailored and successful startups, securing sustainable future growth engines, and realizing creative and innovative smart management. Learn more at <https://www.kised.or.kr/index.es?sid=a2>

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.

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