

Press Release

Astellas and YASKAWA Agree to Establish a Joint Venture Focused on Cell Therapy Manufacturing

- Joint venture will aim to develop a cell therapy manufacturing platform through robotics and will offer access to startups and academic institutions -

TOKYO, March 6, 2025 – Astellas Pharma Inc. (TSE: 4503, President and CEO: Naoki Okamura, “Astellas”) and YASKAWA Electric Corporation (TSE: 6506, President and CEO; Masahiro Ogawa, “YASKAWA”) signed a definitive agreement to establish a joint venture for the development of a cell therapy product manufacturing platform utilizing the dual-arm robot “Maholo.” In addition, the joint venture will offer platform access to startups and academic institutions, fostering collaboration and innovation in the field of cell therapy.

In the pharmaceutical industry, the commercialization of cell therapy faces many challenges stemming from the complex nature of the manufacturing process, in particular, related to the accuracy and reproducibility of cell manufacturing. Furthermore, the need for a skilled workforce, coupled with the time and cost investments required for technology transfer to manufacturing facilities, presents additional hurdles. Based on the memorandum of agreement signed in May, 2024, Astellas and YASKAWA have been advancing discussions toward establishing a joint venture to leverage their mutual strengths and accelerate efforts to address these challenges.

The planned joint venture will leverage Astellas' expertise in R&D and manufacturing for cell therapy and the dual arm robot “Maholo,” developed by YASKAWA's subsidiary, Robotic Biology Institute. The closing and establishment of the joint venture company are subject to certain closing conditions, including receipt of required regulatory approvals.

Joint Venture Company: Overview

Name	To be determined
Capital	4.5 billion yen (includes capital reserve)
Capital Structure	Astellas 60%, YASKAWA 40%
Establishment (tentative)	September 2025
Business	<p>Develop a cell therapy product manufacturing platform and offer access to startups and academic institutions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explore a manufacturing process with high precision and reproducibility using 'Maholo' and optimize the digitized manufacturing process with AI2. Transfer the digitalized manufacturing process to 'Maholo' at other manufacturing facilities via one-click* transfer and develop a cell manufacturing platform that meets GMP conditions3. Develop manufacturing processes for cell therapy product candidates of partners, such as academia and startups, as well as manufacture investigational drugs in GMP facilities

* GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice):

A standard for ensuring the safety and quality of pharmaceutical product manufacturing

* One Click Transfer:

Rapid transfer of established manufacturing process to facilities without hands-on training of workers

Through the establishment of a joint venture and the development of a cell therapy manufacturing platform, Astellas is committed to addressing the challenges of commercializing cell therapy and supporting academia and startup companies in implementing innovative cell therapies. By integrating advanced technologies into its cell therapy expertise, Astellas aims to develop potentially transformative cell therapy for patients with limited or no treatment options. Please visit [this](#) for more details.

YASKAWA has provided automation solutions for medical testing processes, including cancer genome diagnostics, iPS cell culture, and PCR testing, through delivering "Maholo." With the establishment of a joint venture, YASKAWA aims to expand the use cases of robots in the field of cell therapy beyond the existing life science field.

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.

Astellas Cautionary Notes

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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