

Axcelead Drug Discovery Partners, Inc.

## **Achieved the First Milestone in Drug Discovery Support to Otsuka Pharmaceutical**

May 27, 2024 – Axcelead Drug Discovery Partners, Inc. (HQ: Fujisawa-city, Kanagawa; “Axcelead DDP”) announces that the first milestone has been achieved in the drug discovery project to support Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. (HQ: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, President: Makoto Inoue; “Otsuka Pharmaceutical”) in the area of central nervous system diseases, which had been started in June 2020.

Axcelead DDP provided promising lead compounds which were created through established evaluation platforms and in-depth modification of seed compounds derived from the IND-Enabling Projects\* owned by Axcelead DDP, to Otsuka Pharmaceutical. Given further drug discovery research activities at Otsuka Pharmaceutical, a compound was discovered to meet the pre-determined criteria of pharmacological properties, resulting in the first milestone. With this achievement, Axcelead DDP will receive a milestone fee under the agreement. Otsuka Pharmaceutical will significantly accelerate its drug discovery by leveraging the IND-Enabling Projects.

“We are pleased that the new drug candidate discovered from our unique asset, the IND-Enabling Projects, has met Otsuka Pharmaceutical's expectations. I believe that this milestone achievement demonstrates that the IND-Enabling Projects can make unique values for customers,” said Kengo Okada, PhD, Representative Director and CEO of Axcelead DDP. “We have gained confidence in the ability of the IND-Enabling Projects to deliver high-quality new drug candidate compounds in a short period of time, continuing to contribute to improving the efficiency of drug discovery research for those who take challenges around the world.”

### **\*About IND-Enabling Projects**

The IND-Enabling Projects (Formerly named A-HiT projects) are an asset owned by Axcelead DDP, which have multiple hit or lead compounds and a primary evaluation system for specific drug targets (hereinafter “target”). Currently, Axcelead DDP has more than 150 target assets, and about 60% of the projects are in the drug discovery research stage beyond lead generation. More than half of these targets have not yet launched marketed drugs and are

novel targets with potential to be first-in-class projects. The target list also represents a wealth of opportunities for drug repositioning programs beyond the assumed indications. Additional features include the availability of co-crystal structures in about 30% of the targets, which can be expected to accelerate compound optimization. By leveraging the IND-Enabling Projects, a significant reduction in the period of initial drug discovery steps and cost reduction can be expected.

### **About Axcelead DDP**

Axcelead DDP is Japan's first drug discovery solution provider established in July 2017 by inheriting the drug discovery platform from Takeda Pharmaceutical. Screening, medicinal chemistry, pharmacology/biology, DMPK, and safety research functions are integrated into one center with a state-of-the-art research base and original compound library. This enables Axcelead DDP to create drug candidates by utilizing the vast amount of past drug discovery research data. By leveraging these strengths, we provide solutions to various challenges faced in the process from exploratory research to clinical in drug discovery. For more information, please visit <https://axcelead-us.com/>