



xFOREST Therapeutics and Axcelead DDP Launch Joint Research Initiative on RNA Structure-Targeted Small Molecule Drug Discovery

Kyoto and Kanagawa, Japan, September 18, 2025 – xFOREST Therapeutics Co., Ltd. (“xFOREST”) and Axcelead Drug Discovery Partners, Inc. (“Axcelead DDP”) today announced the launch of a joint research collaboration aimed at developing RNA structure-targeted small molecule therapeutics for multiple diseases.

xFOREST has developed a proprietary drug discovery platform, “FOREST Technologies,” which integrates a custom-designed RNA structure library and high-throughput screening technology. The platform specializes in identifying small molecule compounds that target RNA structures—regions previously considered “undruggable” by conventional drug discovery approaches. In addition to its internal R&D efforts, xFOREST actively collaborates with pharmaceutical companies, positioning itself as a practical and innovative partner in the RNA-targeted drug discovery space.

Axcelead DDP, a drug discovery solution provider with a strong foundation in pharmaceutical R&D, continues to expand and strengthen its capabilities through both in-house development and strategic partnerships. The company offers integrated drug discovery services to a wide range of drug discovery businesses. Axcelead DDP views RNA-targeted small molecule drug discovery as a next-generation modality for small molecule therapeutics and is investing to expand its technological foundation in this field.

In this joint research, xFOREST and Axcelead DDP will work together to strengthen the RNA structure-targeted small molecule drug discovery platform, aiming to improve research efficiency and increase the probability of generating candidate compounds, with the ultimate goal of advancing the development of innovative RNA-targeted small-molecule therapeutics. Under the agreement, xFOREST will retain exclusive rights to develop and commercialize any selected small molecule compounds, while Axcelead DDP will be entitled to milestone payments from xFOREST.

“We are thrilled to begin this new joint research initiative with Axcelead DDP,” said Shunichi Kashida, Ph.D., Representative Director, President and CEO of xFOREST. “By combining Axcelead DDP’s extensive expertise in small molecule drug discovery with our advanced RNA analysis technologies, we are confident that we can accelerate the development of innovative RNA-targeted therapeutics, including those directed at mRNA and pre-mRNA. Driven by this challenge, we remain committed to delivering new treatment options to patients as swiftly as possible.”

“We are delighted to embark on this joint research with xFOREST, a leading company in RNA structure-targeted small molecule drug discovery,” said Kengo Okada, Ph.D., Representative Director, President and CEO of Axcelead DDP. “We are confident that this collaboration will further enhance our technological



capabilities in this field. By strengthening our RNA drug discovery platform, we aim to provide high-quality solutions to clients facing complex research challenges, and contribute to the creation of innovative medicines.”

About xFOREST

xFOREST Therapeutics is a drug discovery platform provider, founded in Kyoto, Japan in May 2020, specializing in small molecule drug discovery targeting RNA. Leveraging its proprietary "FOREST technologies," the company enables the identification of small molecules that selectively bind to RNA and exhibit biological activity. This innovative approach opens new avenues for addressing disease areas driven by RNA targets that have been difficult to approach using conventional methods. Building on this advanced technological foundation, xFOREST Therapeutics offers comprehensive support across various stages of early drug discovery—from RNA structure-based molecule screening to evaluation and optimization. As a pioneering partner in RNA-targeted drug discovery, xFOREST Therapeutics is committed to advancing the field and unlocking new therapeutic possibilities.

<https://www.xforestx.com/>

About Axcelead DDP

Axcelead DDP is Japan's first drug discovery solutions provider, established in July 2017 after inheriting the drug discovery platform from Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited. We provide comprehensive drug discovery services through a fully integrated research platform that consolidates all essential functions and infrastructure—including a large-scale compound library, screening, chemistry, pharmacology/biology, DMPK and safety—under one roof. Furthermore, by combining our extensive experience and expertise with a proprietary AI platform, we can rapidly generate high-quality novel drug candidate compounds. This integrated setup enables us to deliver efficient and flexible one-stop solutions through a seamless framework, tailored to meet diverse needs in drug discovery from target identification to bridging into clinical development.

For more information, please visit <https://axcelead-us.com/>