ECI
Effector Cell Institute

News Release

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ECI, Inc.
(Nagoya Stock Market, Centrex:4567)
4-7-7 Aobadai Meguro-Ku,
Tokyo 153-0042
Japan

ECI Enters into a Joint Research Agreement for Development of a Novel Antibody Drug against Cancer

ECI, Inc. is pleased to announce that it has come to agreement on joint researches toward development of a novel antibody drug against cancer with Prof. Matsushima, of the Graduate School of Medicine, The University of Tokyo, Prof. Irimura, of the Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, The University of Tokyo, and two companies as outlined below. This agreement is based on the resolution adopted by the company's board of directors at its meeting held today.

1. Overview

Prof. Matsushima and Prof. Irimura, The University of Tokyo, have long dedicated themselves to search after specific targeted molecules in cancer cells, aiming at development of antibody drugs against cancer, whilst ECI is strong in the field of cell assay technology. In view of these circumstances, we have come to agreement on joining forces with each other with the additional participation of two domestic pharmaceutical companies in which the development of cancer antibody drugs is ongoing. More specifically, this joint research aims to seek for specific targeted molecules against cancer and manufacturing of antibody drugs.

2. Description of the Joint Research Agreement

(1) Effective period of agreement: Three years from September 15, 2008 to September 14, 2011

(2) Scope: Search for specific targeted molecules in cancer cells and development of a fully human monoclonal antibody based on the discovered targeted molecules

3. Background for Joint Research

Discovery/development of low molecular weight compounds by conventional chemosynthesis is often discontinued on the way due to detected adverse side effects and/or problems in the virtue of the drug. Effects specific to cancer cells can be expected from a cancer antibody drug because it directly acts upon the targeted molecules in cancer cells in addition to reduced possibility of adverse side effects. It is the field attracting a good deal of public attention throughout the world as antibody drugs can be a new breakthrough for therapy of intractable cancers, progressive cancers, and metastatic carcinomas.

As the market for antibody drugs is growing year after year; the total global sales of about 440 billion yen in 2001 grew more than sixfold in 2007, attaining sales of around 2,890 billion yen worldwide, and sales of around 5,390 billion yen are estimated for the year 2013. (Source: Datamonitor Inc.)

As previously announced, we are in the stage of establishing the clinical protocol for the cancer drug ECI301 that has been proven to be very effective when used in combination with radiotherapy. Some types of cancers, however, do not allow the application of radiotherapy. The new joint research is intended to achieve the development of a drug that will be effective for a wide range of cancers through search for specific targeted molecules in cancer cells and development of a novel antibody drug against the discovered targeted molecules.

We will further concentrate our energies upon development of cancer drugs from multilateral aspects, adding antibody drugs as a new pipeline.

4. Expected Results and Effects

While the company's research expenses will increase as a result of the conclusion of this joint research agreement, their impact on the company's business outlook for this fiscal year will not be significant.

(Contacts for inquiries or additional information)

ECI, Inc.
Administrative Department
Tel: +81-3-5452-0662(DID) Fax: +81-3-5452-0663
http://www.effectorcell.co.jp