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Biocon & Equillium expand collaboration to Australia, NZ

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Expand their collaboration and license agreement for itolizumab

India headquartered Biocon Ltd and US based Equillium Inc., a clinical-stage biotechnology company leveraging deep understanding of immunobiology to develop products to treat severe autoimmune and inflammatory disorders, have announced that they have expanded their collaboration and license agreement for itolizumab to grant Equillium exclusive rights for developing and commercializing itolizumab in Australia and New Zealand.

Equillium had originally secured exclusive rights to develop and commercialize Biocon's novel biologic, itolizumab, for the U.S. and Canada markets, in May 2017.

"Biocon is pleased with the development progress of itolizumab achieved by Equillium so far and has agreed to include Australia and New Zealand within the scope of the licensing agreement. As an innovation-led organization we are committed to bring novel therapeutics to the market to address unmet patient needs across the world. We look forward to our continued partnership with Equillium as they develop this molecule further for the treatment of severe autoimmune and inflammatory disorders," said Siddharth Mittal, CEO and Joint Managing Director, Biocon.

"We are pleased to deepen our relationship with Biocon by expanding our licensing agreement for itolizumab. Securing these rights helps strengthen and build upon our existing presence in Australia and New Zealand where we are collaborating with distinguished asthma centers and specialists to conduct the EQUIP clinical trial in uncontrolled asthma patients," said Bruce Steel, President and Chief Business Officer of Equillium.

Itolizumab is a novel first-in-class humanized anti-CD6 monoclonal antibody, which Biocon developed and launched in India under the brand name ALZUMAb™ to treat moderate to severe plaque psoriasis in 2013. In 2017, Biocon partnered with Equillium for this promising asset to develop it for a wide range of autoimmune disorders.

In addition to the EQUIP trial in uncontrolled asthma, Equillium is conducting Phase 1b proof-of-concept clinical trials of itolizumab for the treatment of acute graft-versus-host disease (aGVHD) and lupus nephritis. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted itolizumab Fast Track designation for the treatment of aGVHD and lupus nephritis, as well as Orphan Drug designations for both the prevention and treatment of aGVHD.