

Sumitomo Chemical accelerates next-gen biz utilizing synthetic biology

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Launches SynBio Hub, a New Organization in the US



Japanese firm Sumitomo Chemical has decided to establish a new organisation, SynBio Hub, within the Biorational Research Center of Valent BioSciences LLC (VBC), a US subsidiary of Sumitomo Chemical in Illinois. By setting up this organisation tasked to build technologies using synthetic biology in the US, a prolific site for innovative technologies in the field, Sumitomo Chemical will further accelerate its efforts to create next-generation businesses.

By merging synthetic biology with the chemical technologies it has cultivated over the years as a diversified chemical company, Sumitomo Chemical is developing highly functional products that cannot be manufactured by chemical synthesis alone, as well as highly efficient, clean, and energy-saving processes so that new businesses can be created. Sumitomo Chemical is actively investing in research and development in the field of synthetic biology, not only through its investment in Conagen and its partnership with Zymergen, but also through various initiatives with startups and academia.

In addition to open innovation, SynBio Hub will also collaborate with Sumitomo Chemical's Corporate Venturing Innovation offices (CVI) — innovation exploration bases in the US and Europe — and bases in Japan such as the Bioscience Research Laboratory and the Industrial Technology & Research Laboratory, so that fundamental technologies based on synthetic biology can be rapidly built throughout the Sumitomo Chemical Group.

Sumitomo Chemical will also embark on in-house research, including the development of producing strains and scale-up (chemical engineering) by making use of the technologies it has cultivated through its biorational business and the commercialisation of chemicals. By accumulating technologies, expertise, and experience in synthetic biology through such research, Sumitomo Chemical will pursue synergies with the chemical technologies held by the Group.

In its fiscal year 2019 through 2021 Corporate Business Plan, Sumitomo Chemical has identified accelerating the development of next-generation businesses as one of its basic policies, and aims to create new businesses in four priority areas: reduction of environmental impact, healthcare, food, and ICT. With SynBio Hub, Sumitomo Chemical will continue its group-wide efforts to cultivate technologies and new business domains in order to bring about a sustainable society.