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ASIA EDITION

Merck announces winners of Emerging Biotech programme in APAC

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Program extended this year to Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, South Korea

Merck, a leading science and technology company, has announced the winners of its Emerging Biotech (EB) Grant Programme in Asia Pacific (APAC). The Award is designed to support biotech startups with resources to enable emerging companies to discover, develop, optimize, and commercialise therapeutics faster and more efficiently.

Merck experts selected the winning submissions based on the scientific and societal merit of the therapy in development and process challenges and expertise gaps that may impact ongoing development. In-kind technologies and services from Merck will be awarded to the winners in Australia & New Zealand and Taiwan to help solve these challenges.

Merck first started the EB grant programme in 2014 in the United States and has expanded its reach to include Europe, China, South Korea and Taiwan in recent years. In 2024, the EB Grant was extended to Australia & New Zealand and is open to Taiwan and South Korea (the winners for South Korea were announced in July 2024). To-date, Merck's EB Grant programme has awarded technologies and consultation to over 40 biotechnology companies around the world, supporting their efforts to improve patient outcomes for various diseases such as cancer, brain tumors, osteoarthritis, and cardiovascular disorders.

Southern RNA for enabling the manufacturing of mRNA for personalised medicines emerged as the winner in Australia & New Zealand; Other winners include- Institute for Drug Technology for enabling the manufacturing of antibody-drug conjugates; Psaio for developing bispecific antibodies targeting prostate-specific antigen to treat prostate cancer; and Kimer Med for developing a family of broad-spectrum antiviral biologics to treat infectious diseases, and for pandemic protection.

In Taiwan, HanchorBio emerged as the winner for developing clinical-stage and next-generation immuno-oncology therapies through innovation in cutting-edge designer biologics with novel, multi-functional modalities; Other winners include- Pell Biomed Technology for developing more efficient and cost-effective gene-modified cell therapies; Glyconex for glycan-directed cancer therapies including antibody-drug conjugates to treat a range of solid tumors such as gastrointestinal cancers; and Shine-On BioMedical for developing targeted exosomes as a platform for drug delivery as well as tri-specific antibody for cancer treatment.