BioSpectrum the business of Bio & Health Sciences ASIA EDITION

ITOCHU Corp signs capital alliance agreement with MOLCURE Inc. for AI-based drug discovery in Japan

October 14, 2026 | News

With smooth transition of newly created drug candidates to preclinical and clinical development

ITOCHU Corporation has signed a capital alliance agreement with MOLCURE Inc., which possesses AI-driven drug discovery technologies for antibodies and peptides.

In recent years, the diversification of pharmaceuticals and therapeutic approaches, increasingly sophisticated research and development, and rising development costs have created a need to improve efficiency throughout the entire R&D process, from drug discovery through clinical development.

Against this backdrop, expectations are growing for AI-driven drug discovery technologies that support the identification and design of drug candidates in the early stages of drug discovery research.

MOLCURE has an AI-driven drug discovery platform that combines various technologies and resources, including its proprietary large language model (LLM), physical simulation technologies, and high-quality experimental data obtained through its bio laboratory. MOLCURE's strength lies in its technological capabilities for designing and optimizing antibody candidates and other candidate molecules, an area expected to experience particularly strong growth within the AI-driven drug discovery market.

With these capabilities, MOLCURE supports pharmaceutical development by pharmaceutical companies and research institutions in Japan and overseas, focusing primarily on antibodies and peptides.

In the healthcare and life sciences sector, ITOCHU has been strengthening its business platform to support the entire R&D process, from drug discovery through clinical development, primarily through A2 Healthcare Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary engaged in clinical development across a wide range of therapeutic areas.

Under this alliance, ITOCHU aims to establish an integrated support system for pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies by combining MOLCURE's advanced AI-driven drug discovery technologies with the pharmaceutical development support functions and domestic and international business networks of the ITOCHU Group. This system will provide consistent support, ranging from the creation of new drug candidates through AI-driven drug discovery to preclinical and clinical development.

Through these efforts, ITOCHU will support the advancement of drug discovery research with the use of AI and the smooth transition of newly created drug candidates to preclinical and clinical development. In doing so, ITOCHU will contribute to innovation and the development of the industrial base in the life sciences sector.