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ASIA EDITION

China's Abbisko deepens R&D collaboration with Eli Lilly for novel drug programmes

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The agreement could provide Abbisko with up to approximately $1.9 billion in milestone payments



China-based Abbisko Therapeutics has entered into a strategic research collaboration and licence agreement with US-based Eli Lilly and Company to discover and develop innovative medicines across multiple targets.

The agreement builds on the companies' existing relationship and expands Abbisko's role as a China-based biopharma company with global discovery and development ambitions. Under the collaboration, Abbisko will conduct discovery and early development activities for novel drug programmes directed against disease targets selected by Lilly.

This is relevant because early-stage drug discovery partnerships remain an important route for Asia-based biopharma companies to access global development expertise, commercial infrastructure and validation from multinational pharmaceutical partners. For large pharma companies, such collaborations can expand access to external innovation and specialised discovery platforms.

Abbisko will receive an upfront payment and is eligible to receive development, regulatory and commercial milestone payments totalling up to approximately $1.9 billion. The company will also be eligible for tiered royalties based on annual net sales of products arising from the collaboration.

The agreement follows a 2022 global collaboration and exclusive licence agreement between Abbisko and Lilly for the discovery, development and potential commercialisation of a novel small-molecule therapeutic. The latest deal indicates that the earlier relationship has expanded into a broader research collaboration.