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Japan's Astellas Pharma inks oncology deal worth $800 M with US-based biotech startup Kelonia

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Research and license agreement to develop novel immuno- oncology therapeutics



Japan headquartered Astellas Pharma and US-based biotech startup Kelonia Therapeutics have announced a collaborative effort between Xyphos Biosciences, Inc. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Astellas) and Kelonia to develop innovative immuno-oncology therapeutics.

Kelonia specialises in genetic medicines using its in vivo gene placement system called iGPS, which efficiently delivers genetic cargo to target cells within the patient's body. Xyphos possesses a proprietary technology platform called ACCEL, which involves its convertibleCAR technology on immune cells.

Under the agreement, the companies will combine Kelonia's iGPS with Xyphos' ACCEL technology to develop novel in vivo CAR-T Cell therapies targeting up to two programmes.

Xyphos will lead the development and commercialisation efforts for products arising from this collaboration. Kelonia will receive an upfront payment of $40 million for the first programme, with an additional $35 million contingent upon Xyphos exercising its option for the second programme, and potential milestones and contingency payments approaching $800 million in total. Kelonia will also receive R&D funding for its contributions to the collaboration and is eligible for tiered royalties on net sales.