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Amgen & Astellas form JV, will co-develop biologics

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Singapore: US-based Amgen and Japanese firm Astellas Pharma have entered into a strategic alliance to co-develop and co-commercialize five Amgen pipeline medicines in Japan.Ã?Â The five medicines, which include four biologics and one small molecule, are focused on the treatment of cardiovascular and bone diseases and cancer.

The pipeline medicines range from early to late stages of development in Japan, with the first potential commercial launch expected as early as 2016.Ã?Â The alliance will also see the establishment of a Tokyo-based joint venture company through which the companies will work together to enable Amgen to rapidly build on-the-ground capabilities in Japan.

The joint venture will operate under the name Amgen Astellas BioPharma and will be led by Mr Eiichi Takahashi, who will serve as general manager. The joint venture will be staffed by seconded employees from Astellas, transferred employees from Amgen and newly hired employees. It is expected that the joint venture will start operations on October 1, 2013, and will become a wholly owned Amgen affiliate as soon as 2020 with the long-term collaboration continuing.Ã?Â

"Through this alliance, Amgen will work closely with Astellas to leverage its extensive knowledge of the local market," said Mr Robert A Bradway, chairman and chief executive officer, Amgen. "With Astellas' strong capabilities and excellent reputation, this alliance will help accelerate development and commercialization of Amgen medicines for patients in Japan. This alliance reflects our long-term commitment to the Japan market and is an important step in our global expansion efforts."

"We look forward to entering this alliance with Amgen and believe it will strengthen our pipeline to address unmet medical needs, as well as enable us to obtain growth drivers," said Mr Yoshihiko Hatanaka, president and CEO, Astellas. "We will work closely with Amgen to build the joint venture, which will provide innovative medicines to patients in Japan."