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Korea's SK Biopharma enters MENA through strategic partnership with Hikma

August 21, 2023 | News

SK Biopharmaceuticals aims to expand from small molecule targeted therapy into biologics



London-based Hikma Pharmaceuticals PLC has announced a new strategic partnership and exclusive licensing agreement with South Korean firm SK Biopharmaceuticals, a global biotech company focused on the development of treatments for central nervous system (CNS) disorders and oncology, for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Under the terms of the agreement, Hikma will have priority rights for the commercialisation and manufacture of SK Biopharmaceuticals' current and future pipeline of innovative products for 17 countries in the MENA region.

The term of the agreement is for 20 years from the commercialisation of the first product. In addition, Hikma will have the exclusive rights to manufacture and commercialise SK Biopharmaceuticals' first pipeline product, cenobamate, an innovative anti-seizure medication for patients with epilepsy, in MENA markets.

Cenobamate is in clinical development in Asia. Ono Pharmaceutical and Ignis Therapeutics have the rights to develop and commercialise cenobamate in Japan and in the Greater China region, respectively.

Commenting on this agreement, Mazen Darwazah, Hikma's Executive Vice Chairman and President of MENA, said, "This agreement gives us access to a strong pipeline of innovative products in CNS and oncology, two strategic areas of focus for us with a high unmet need in the MENA region. SK Biopharmaceuticals also aims to expand from small molecule targeted therapy into biologics and we are excited to be their partner to ensure patients' access to these innovative therapies in MENA."