

Saito Life Science Park — leaping ahead

Set among the green hills of northern Ibaraki city and southern Minoh city in Osaka, the Saito Life Science Park has established itself as a leading hub of life sciences research in Japan.

The 22-hectare site currently hosts six major research institutes, including NIBIO, as well as three commercialization incubator facilities with capacity to support 35 start-ups and laboratories.

Occupants are eligible for a range of publically funded subsidies and tax incentives. More than



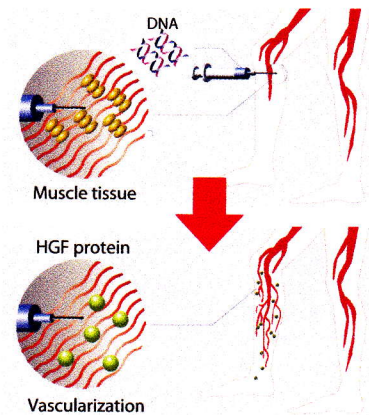
The Saito Bio-Incubator. One of three commercialization incubator facilities in *Saito*.

900 researchers and staff working in the park benefit from its close location to Osaka University and the NCV, providing a basis for close research collaboration.

AnGes MG is one of the innovative biopharmaceutical companies headquartered at the Saito Bio-Incubator, and is currently developing two gene therapy medicines as mainstay projects. Another company, Soiken, is developing various biomarkers and assay systems as well as implementing clinical trials for the development of drugs and functional food. Both companies are using research outcomes from Osaka University and are recognized as frontrunners in Japan's biotech industry.

The Bio-Incubator is not restricted solely to Japanese companies: it also houses a Japanese subsidiary of San Diego-based AntiCancer.

The life science park opened in 2004 as the first part of Osaka's large-scale urban redevelopment plan to create the International Culture Park, an area that has been nicknamed *Saito*. Next year, development will commence in the central area, which will also focus on life sciences research and the innovation industry, with completion scheduled for fiscal 2013.



HGF gene therapy. A new therapy for improving blood circulation being developed by AnGes MG at the Saito Bio-Incubator, now in final approvals.

The life science park offers not only a superb research environment, but also convenience — it is located about 30 minutes by train from downtown Osaka. The grand opening of the park in 2007 was marked by the inauguration of an extension of Osaka's monorail service to the area.

How to better join forces

Matchmaking is a common practice undertaken at biotech events worldwide to introduce laboratory seeds to companies — but the effectiveness of such introductions for creating real outcomes is often questioned.

The Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) has proved to be one of the few successful coordinators of such introductions. Since 2003, the OCCI has organized the Forum for the Industrialization of Next-Generation Medical Systems, an open platform for the joint development of medical instruments for clinical applications. Every month, doctors and scientists make proposals for collaborations based on their ongoing research. If companies participating in the forum become interested in a proposal, the OCCI sets up working groups or individual meetings to promote collaboration.

So far, 244 working groups have been established, covering 90% of presenters, and a quarter of the presenters have subsequently gone on to launch a joint development project in collaboration with a commercialization company. In one example, a laboratory of Fumio Miyazaki at Osaka University and the company Daiken Medical are currently working to develop a robot capable of holding and manipulating an

endoscope during surgery, which could one day replace a human assistant.

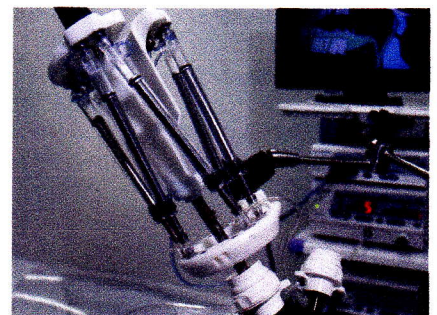
The forum is the most successful activity in the industry in Japan and has become so popular that there is now a waiting list for making presentations.

Meticulous care

Behind the high success rate of the forum is the comprehensive hands-on support of the OCCI's coordinators and administrative staff, who assist in many ways, from advising presentation topics, to offering follow-up support before and after the forum.

Participation in the forum is not limited to Osaka or the greater Kansai area, and the number of participants has been on the rise, now totalling 55 research organizations and 150 companies.

The OCCI is looking to partner with overseas clusters and biomedical associations, and the first such move was made recently with the formation of the BioBusiness Alliance of Minnesota. In Osaka, globally recognized institutes like the NCV, are situated beside the accumulation of medical-related companies. By setting research institutes and medical companies as centripetal forces, the OCCI continues to contribute matchmaking capabilities to create a globally competitive industrial cluster in Osaka.



The endoscope robot developed by Osaka University and Daiken Medical. The Forum for the Industrialization of Next-Generation Medical Systems facilitated the joint development of this much-needed surgical aid.

In addition to the forum, the OCCI also organizes the Drug Seeds Alliance Network, Japan's first and only open platform for attracting business partners in the research and development of drug candidates, biomarkers and diagnostics. Over 600 technologies are currently accessible, and every year 300 new additions are expected. Twelve deals have so far progressed to research collaborations, and the OCCI aims to promote further cooperation by increasing the network's international membership.

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