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Sojitz Corporation

Sojitz Invests in Kobe University-based Start-ups
–Advancing the Smart Cell Industry through
Industry and University Collaboration to Create a Sustainable Society–

Sojitz Corporation will underwrite a third-party allotment of shares to invest in two Kobe University start-up companies, which include leading biotechnology company Bacchus Bio innovation Co., Ltd. (Head Office: Kobe; Representative Director: Mikio Tanji; Main Business: Integrated biofoundry; Established: 2020) and Synplogen Co., Ltd. (Head Office: Kobe; Representative Director: Hideaki Miyake; Main Business: DNA synthesis R&D; Established: 2017).

In 2019, Sojitz began the Hassojitz Project to realize innovative ideas as new business projects. Participants were gathered together through a company-wide open call, and young employees have taken the lead on the project to create business that anticipates the future in 2050. The advancement of the smart cell industry is a project realized from the first year of the Hassojitz Project.

In a variety of industrial sectors including the medical, agricultural, industrial, consumer, and foodstuff fields, there is global mass consumption of fossil fuel materials such as petroleum, coal, and natural gas, as well as rare materials derived from animal products like seasonings and collagen that has led to sustainability issues from resource depletion. The smart cell industry utilizes biotechnology and digital technology to artificially enhance microorganisms called “smart cells” with improved metabolic functions for producing materials sustainably. The smart cell industry is expected to provide solutions to a myriad of issues across multiple industries. Sojitz will collaborate together with biotechnology research leader, Kobe University, and Kobe University’s start-up companies to promote the smart cell industry moving forward.

Bacchus Bio innovation will leverage the technologies it has developed through projects with the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) to build smart cells, and the company plans to make advances in the smart cell industry by creating smart cells that meet customer needs. Sojitz will partner together with Bacchus Bio innovation to provide customers with a comprehensive service that includes everything from R&D to production, while simultaneously working to provide new and original products to the market. Shimadzu Corporation (Head Office: Kyoto; Representative Director: Teruhisa Ueda) will also underwrite a third-party allotment of shares in Bacchus Bio innovation.

Synplogen's DNA sequencing OGAB technology makes it possible to accurately sequence up to 100,000 bp of DNA quickly and cost effectively. DNA sequencing is needed to create the smart cells for producing useful substances such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, biomaterials, and general-purpose chemicals. Synplogen will contribute to the development of smart cells by supplying the required long-chain DNA. Through this partnership, Sojitz and Synplogen aim to pursue business creation in areas such as the long-chain DNA sequencing business and the development and analysis of viral vectors for gene therapy.

Sojitz has deep historical ties to Kobe as the city where the company was first founded. In 2016, Sojitz began offering a company-endowed lecture series at Kobe University as one of its social contribution activities. Additionally, Sojitz has provided a scholarship starting in 2019 for Kobe University students demonstrating academic excellence.

[For questions regarding this press release, contact:]

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