



November 14, 2023
Kao Corporation
NANO MRNA Co., Ltd.

Kao and NANO MRNA Agree a Comprehensive Collaborative Research for mRNA Drug Discovery

TOKYO, November 14, 2023 - Kao Corporation (Kao) and NANO MRNA Co., Ltd. (NANO MRNA) have entered into a comprehensive collaborative research agreement to develop mRNA therapeutics using Kao's proprietary nucleic acid sequence technology "SNAREVAX™" *1.

*1 A technology that employs a nucleic acid sequence design that fuses a specific protein to an antigen, and is expected to promote an immune response to that antigen. This technology is a trademark for which Kao has applied for registration.

Kao has been developing various products for cleanliness, health and beauty by utilizing its long-standing research assets related to interface science and life science. This time, Kao has deepened its research in the area of life science and created an immune modulation technology that can be applied to mRNA therapeutics.

As a pioneer in mRNA drug discovery and development, NANO MRNA is promoting a business focused on mRNA drug discovery by utilizing its wealth of knowledge in drug development. It is committed to deliver the mRNA medicines that people need through its drug discovery activities, including collaborations with partners who possess new technologies.

Kao has focused on NANO MRNA as a partner to utilize this new technology. Based on the wish of both companies to contribute to patients around the world with mRNA therapeutics, Kao and NANO MRNA have jointly conducted validation of SNAREVAX™ in mRNA drug discovery since 2022 and have confirmed that it has excellent immunomodulatory functions.

In this comprehensive joint research project, drug discovery of innovative mRNA therapeutics using SNAREVAX™ in the field of allergic diseases and other areas. Allergic diseases are one of the most serious social issues, and those who suffer from allergic diseases not only have a significant decrease of QOL, but also asthma attacks, anaphylaxis by food allergies, and other severe symptoms. According to the World Allergy Organization (WAO), 240 to 550 million people worldwide are affected by food allergy, and 40 to 50% of the world's children are reported to have one or more allergens. In addition, the prevalence of allergic diseases has continued to rise in industrialized countries for more than 50 years *2.

*2 WAO White Book on Allergy 2013 update

Kao and NANO MRNA will promote research and development that will contribute to people suffering from diseases who are not adequately treated with existing therapeutic modalities (therapies).

About Kao Corporation

Representative : Yoshihiro Hasebe, Representative Director, President and Chief Executive Officer

Address : 1-14-10 Nihonbashi Kayabacho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, Japan

No. of employees (consolidated) : 35,411 (as of December 31, 2022)

Business description : Consumer products businesses, including Hygiene & Living Care, Health & Beauty Care, Life Care, and Cosmetics, and the Chemical business to meet the needs of industry. With the purpose of "to realize a Kirei world in which all life lives in harmony.", Kao has been promoting the Kao Group Mid-term Plan since 2021 with its vision of "protecting future lives" and "sustainability as the only path".

About NANO MRNA Co., Ltd.

Representative : Shiro Akinaga, President and CEO

Address : 2-5-1 Atago, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan

No. of employees (consolidated) : 28 (as of March 31, 2023)

Business description : IP Generation business, specializing in mRNA therapeutics which is an emerging modality. mRNA drug candidates which reach to preclinical stage will be licensed out to pharmaceutical companies. NANO MRNA is the first mRNA therapeutics company in Japan and has a wealth of experience, an extensive network, and a proven track record.