

February 05, 2018
Sumitomo Corporation
Summit Pharmaceuticals International Corporation

Serving the UK Medical Research Nonprofit LifeArc as a General Agent

Sumitomo Corporation (Head Office: Chuo-ku, Tokyo; Representative Director, President and Chief Executive Officer: Kuniharu Nakamura) has been serving as the general agent in Japan for LifeArc, (formerly MRC Technology) – through Summit Pharmaceuticals International Corporation (Head Office: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; President and Representative Director: Kenichi Nakamura; hereinafter, “Summit Pharmaceuticals”, and this year marks the 30th anniversary of the start of collaboration with LifeArc.

New medicines get their start with basic research to seek out substances capable of becoming medicines, after which they undergo clinical testing before being commercialized. It is said generally to take more than ten years and cost tens of billions of yen to bring a drug to market. In addition to their in-house drug discovery research, pharmaceutical manufacturers also focus attention on research findings from universities and other academic institutions, but it is not uncommon for differences in research stages to make it difficult to begin development toward the commercialization of even outstanding basic research.

LifeArc was spun-out of the UK’s Medical Research Council (MRC), a national funding agency that supports medical research. It was known as the MRC Collaborative Centre, and increasing partnerships outside the MRC prompted the move to become an independent, nonprofit, today known as LifeArc. The MRC has already produced 32 Nobel Prize-winning researchers, including Drs. Watson and Crick who elucidated the double-helix structure of DNA.

LifeArc solicits promising basic research from the MRC and academics around the world and utilizes its own resources (including personnel, technologies, and funding) to take this research to a level at which its market potential can be discerned. It then partners it with pharmaceutical manufacturers who carry out development and commercialization, thus serving as a bridge to industry.

In 1988 Summit Pharmaceuticals started serving LifeArc (then known as the MRC Collaborative Centre) and it is presently engaged in seeking out and introducing candidate research projects as LifeArc's general agent in Japan. Among other projects, it has been involved in establishing the Teijin Biomedical Laboratory Medical Research Council in the UK and cooperating in the development and technology licensing of humanized antibodies, which were commercialized by Chugai Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., as Actemra®, which has proven highly effective for rheumatoid arthritis. It also assisted LifeArc in concluding collaboration agreements with Daiichi Sankyo Co., Ltd., The University of Tokyo, and Keio University.

Sumitomo Corporation and Summit Pharmaceuticals will continue supporting the business expansion of LifeArc in Japan in order to promote social implementation of the cutting-edge basic research being pursued in Japan in the fields of medicine and life sciences, and to help them be of use in treating people around the world.

<Reference>

■ Profile of LifeArc

Name: LifeArc

Locations: (Office) London, (Laboratories) Stevenage, (Laboratories) Edinburgh

Representative: (CEO) Mr. Dave Tapolczay

Year established: 1992 (*founded as MRC Technology, renamed LifeArc in 2017)

Track record: Contributed to the development of Keytruda® (immune checkpoint inhibitors to treat cancer; manufactured by MSD) as well as Actemra® and other antibody drugs

■ Reference images

• LifeArc logo

The logo for LifeArc, featuring the word "LifeArc" in a bold, green, sans-serif font. The "L" is significantly larger than the other letters, and the "A" has a unique shape with a small gap at the top.

• Exterior of LifeArc Stevenage laboratories



[Inquiries on this matter]

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