

JLABS Korea Celebrates One-Year Anniversary



John Choi
Head, JLABS Korea

As we mark the one-year anniversary of JLABS Korea, I believe it is important to pause and reflect on the significant milestones we've achieved in collaboration with The Ministry of Health and Welfare over the last 12 months.

At Johnson & Johnson, our mission is to find and help unleash the best early-stage innovations that could transform health outcomes for patients, wherever they originate. We've had the privilege of growing our portfolio to over 21 JLABS member companies, with 77% based in Korea, working across the pharmaceutical and medtech spaces. Our team has been hard at work providing the personalized support, mentorship, and local and global exposure these early-stage companies need for growth - and seeing incredible results. Just last month, JLABS Korea member company Prazer Therapeutics successfully raised approximately USD 20 million in a Series B funding led by Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JJDC, Inc. (JJDC), the corporate venture capital organization of Johnson & Johnson.

Over the past year, we launched the first Korea Innovation QuickFire Challenge and selected three incredible awardees to receive grant funding and JLABS Korea membership, with access to the global JLABS network, based on their novel research and potential. We organized a successful Global Ecosystem Roadshow, a three-day event that showcased the innovative potential of our JLABS member companies and facilitated meetings with top-tier international VC's, while bringing together leaders from across JLABS member companies and Residents, J&J, the investment community and the broader life sciences space. We've created a vibrant, collaborative space that fosters creativity, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas.

These milestones are just the beginning. As we move into our second year, I'm excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. With our talented team, passionate partners, and the incredible entrepreneurs in our community, we are poised for even greater success.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication. Together, we can continue to innovate, grow, and make a lasting impact on addressing the unmet medical needs of patients.

Korea: A launchpad for life science innovation

Global Market Access:

Korea provides easy access to Asia Pacific markets and direct pathways to North America and Europe, opening the door to new trade networks, investors, research facilities, and essential healthcare partnerships.

Government Support:

It is a policy priority of The Ministry of Health and Welfare (MoHW) of the Republic of Korea to promote the development of the pharmaceutical, biomedical, and medical device industries as core sectors of Korea's economy. The government is investing in the development of new-generation technologies, such as regenerative technology and precision diagnosis technology for cancer, as well as safe and efficient utilization of medical big data.

Source: MOHW: Challenges & Tasks Ahead (2025)

Ideal Environment for Growth:

South Korea's government continues to ramp up investment in its pharmaceutical and medtech sector in 2025, including a 7.2% hike for the Ministry of Health and Welfare's budget and a near 15% increase in funding to research and develop innovative biotechnologies.

Source: Bioworld (2025)

Key JLABS Korea metrics



21+ JLABS Korea member companies onboarded since 2024 opening

- 64% pharmaceutical companies
- 36% medtech companies
- 77% based in Korea



140+ firms in Global Investor Hub

25+ added to local network



Experts from across the J&J ecosystem have been mobilized to support our portfolio companies in their work:

- 16 JPALS serving JLABS Korea



105 meetings organized between JLABS Korea member companies and sector stakeholders, Life Science asset developers, investors and JLABS personnel

Sample of member companies highlights



Hutom has partnered with Johnson & Johnson MedTech Korea for joint promotional activities of its AI-based surgical navigation platform.



Mediwhale raised \$12m in their Series A2 financing round. The company are focused on developing Reti-CVD, an AI diagnostic solution that autonomously assesses future cardiovascular disease risk using an eye scan.



Prazer Therapeutics raised approximately USD 20 million in a Series B funding round to be used for new drug research and development and global commercialization. The investment round was led by Johnson & Johnson's corporate venture capital organization, Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JJDC, Inc. (JJDC).

JLABS Korea member companies



AIRS Inc. aims to digitize surgical procedures by seamlessly integrating artificial intelligence and robotic technology. Their robotic system "RONAVIS" is designed for assisting in fracture surgery to promote better health outcomes for patients.



Azcuris aims to discover and develop the first-in-class small-molecule PPI inhibitors targeting cytokines that can address medical unmet needs for patients with immune disease.



BrilliantStrings Therapeutics is an early stage medical device company that has developed a breakthrough approach to accelerate healing of damaged connective tissues based on the direct, controlled delivery of functional biologics (e.g., complete human collagen) to the injury.



Cellus Inc. is developing next-generation immuno-oncology (IO) drugs based on tumor-associated macrophage (TAM).



Cenosis Therapeutics is developing a proprietary platform of conjugate RNA combining BBB shuttle and delivery enhancer with the potential to enable highly efficacious and safe RNA therapies



CNCure Biotech is a biotech company dedicated to enhancing people's well-being through our expertise in theranostics-based microbiome and radioactive drug development and cutting-edge imaging technology, striving to discover state-of-the-art innovative solutions for delivering first-in-class immuno-therapeutic and diagnostic platforms.



Gellycle is a biotech startup aiming to advance the medical field with its innovative hydrogel technology, known as "Tetra Gel" which offers precise control over physical properties that have been challenging with conventional gels, including: gelation time, degradation time, elasticity, hardness, swelling behavior, and pore size, enabling tailored solutions for diverse medical applications.



Hutom is a company developing an AI surgical platform, striving to provide a better surgical environment for both patients and medical professionals.



IMBiologics aims to invent novel treatment options for autoimmune diseases and cancer, utilizing antibodies to modulate the immune system through innovative mechanisms of action and platform. IMB's lead asset is IMB-101, a bispecific antibody targeting OX40L and TNF for autoimmune and inflammatory disease.



Lmito Therapeutics is an innovation-driven biotechnology company dedicated to the development of novel and effective therapies for autoimmune diseases and fibrosis, through an emerging concept of 'metabolic reprogramming' within the diverse microenvironments.



LN Robotics' AVIAR endovascular robotic platform integrates advanced technologies to bring intelligence, precision, speed, and operator comfort to complex Percutaneous Coronary Interventions (PCI) procedures.



Mediwhale is the AI-empowered health diagnostics company that uses non-invasive retina scans to help prevent heart and kidney diseases.



Mustbio is a biotech company dedicated to advancing first-in-class and best-in-class multi-specific immuno-oncology therapies. The company focuses on developing highly tumor-selective, next-generation antibody-targeted cytokines (immune-cytokines) through its proprietary platforms, STARKINET™ (Selective Targeting Cytokine) and BICSTA™ (Best-In-Class Specific Targeting Antibody).



Neumous is developing targeted BBB opening by ultrasound technology to deliver therapeutic agents into the brain.



Novelty Nobility is focusing on advanced modalities of fully human antibody therapeutics discovered and developed internally such as bispecific antibodies and ADCs in disease areas suited for antibody treatment such as immune disorders, cancer, and ophthalmic diseases.



Ordaos designs novel, ground-breaking mini-protein drugs and antibodies to reduce development time and patient suffering.



PiMedBio is a biotech company focused on discovery of pluripotent targets and first-in-class drug candidates for those targets for the treatment of cancer and immune disease.



Prazer Therapeutics is a biotechnology company developing orally available, BBB-penetrating small molecule degraders with a novel approach in targeted protein degradation (TPD).



TIBA Biotech is a pre-clinical stage venture developing RNA vaccines and therapeutics based on a novel nanoparticle delivery technology that can package a large nucleic acid payload with a low inflammatory response an improved stability compared to current lipid nanoparticle delivery technologies.



TICARos, Inc. is a biotechnology company focused on the development of enhanced immunotherapeutics using their unique proprietary CAR-T platform. The company aims to create a paradigm shift in the current CAR-T therapeutic landscape by developing immunotherapeutic assets for the complete cure of intractable cancers.



Ubox Therapeutics is a clinical-stage biotech company dedicated to the development of heterobifunctional degrader drugs, also known as PROTACs, with a primary focus on oncology.

Our transformational JLABS Korea team

