



INTERNATIONAL PRECISION MEDICINE INNOVATION CENTRE: A NEW PLATFORM FOR PRECISION MEDICINE IN BEIJING

Opened in 2019, the International Precision Medicine Innovation Centre is an exciting new R&D facility and incubator based in Beijing that focuses on advancing innovative precision medical technologies and building an industrial ecosystem to enable developments in the fields of genetic testing, proteomics, and gene and cell therapies in young companies.

"We provide professional industrial services, such as product R&D, inspection, and testing, and link upstream and downstream enterprises, such as gene testing and cell therapy companies, to form an industrial ecology closed-loop," explains Mo Wang, CEO of the Beijing Champion Global Technology Corporation (BCGT), which oversees the center.

At present, BCGT employs a 30-person team of experts, drawn from international medical and health companies working across drug development, gene sequencing, medical equipment, medical services, and other areas, who are on hand to enable the center's growth. The company has been lucky enough to attract talent from high-profile universities in China and abroad, such as Peking Union Medical College and Brandeis University, and industry experts from leading companies, including Thermo Fisher Scientific, CrownBio, and Lepu Medical Technology.

Giving startups a place to grow

BCGT is a subsidiary of the Beijing Changping Technology Innovevelop Group (CTID), an investment platform that helps grow businesses in medicine, health, intelligent manufacturing, and other industries, via its investment parks and its asset management, industrial investment and financing, and industrial services. CTID is part of a government-funded initiative in Beijing's Changping District, and has been led by CEO Wang Ying for the past five years. At CTID, startup businesses are given opportunities to thrive. Scientists work closely together across a range of areas, such as diagnostics and drug therapies, for example, to encourage the creation of an industrial system that operates more like a natural ecosystem—a paradigm known as "industrial ecology."

Already established at the center are cell-sequencing companies GrandOmics Biosciences and Geno-Truth Diagnostics; an antibody-drug company, Gene Quantum; gene-editing teams MenloBiotech and CorreGene; and personalized diagnostic equipment specialists Deepwise.com and Shukun Technology. These companies all have international connections. For example, MenloBiotech's core R&D members come from Stanford University, and many of Geno-Truth Diagnostics' staff hail from Harvard University.

To accelerate the development of its partners, the center offers a range of services, such as laboratory animals, animal experiments, preclinical development, third-party medical testing, pilot contract development, and manufacturing organization. Wang and her team offer companies a high-spec laboratory and office environment, alongside investment channels.

Working on tomorrow's therapies today

At present, the center is working on a collaboration between cell therapy programs at the Peking University Health Science Center, the University of Florida, and Stanford University, to develop tumor immunotherapy drugs.

According to Wang, one of the center's most promising projects is in development with MenloBiotech.

"The work of Menlo is focused on modifying T cells to recognize cancer cells. They have developed unique techniques in CAR T[-cell] modification and gene editing," she says. "We hope they will create a universal and cost-effective CAR-T therapy that will significantly improve the accessibility of the treatment."

The center also encourages individual startup companies to connect with others in similar research fields in order to increase the impact of their work and their overall operational efficiency. For example, single-cell sequencing company Geno-Truth Diagnostics is working with third-generation sequencing company GrandOmics and Oxford Nanopore, a nanopore sequencing platform company, to create an industrial upstream and downstream technical partnership that will amplify the productivity of each team.

The center hopes to offer a wraparound business development service to new companies that need support to grow. As well as providing access to laboratory and office services, the center will link startup teams to domestic and international investment funds available for medical and health research in their specific fields.

"Our ambition is to enable the rapid development of incubated enterprises, by providing corporate financing services as well as practical support," says Wang. "We want to offer a holistic, commercial environment for young companies to thrive."

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