
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation

New partnership with AbCellera will create jobs, help address global health-care challenges

VANCOUVER – A commitment from the Province and the Government of Canada to AbCellera will support a made-in-B.C. anchor company to expand in Vancouver and solve global health-care challenges while creating hundreds of new, high-paying jobs.

“AbCellera is an amazing local success story and today’s commitment represents the largest single private investment in a life-sciences project in our history,” said Premier David Eby. “This partnership will ensure British Columbians see the benefit of access to innovative therapies through clinical trials, while creating hundreds of good jobs and local training opportunities as we position B.C. as a global hub for life sciences and biomanufacturing.”

Building on B.C.’s new Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy, the Province of B.C. is contributing \$75 million toward AbCellera’s expansion in Vancouver. The Government of Canada is contributing \$225 million toward the project, which has a total value of \$701 million.

“This project, and the commitment to co-invest alongside the governments of Canada and British Columbia, is a major step toward building the capabilities in Canada to translate scientific breakthroughs into new medicines that will benefit patients here and around the world,” said Carl Hansen, founder and chief executive officer of AbCellera. “With a decade of building our teams, technology and expertise, this co-investment will accelerate the execution of our strategy and bring new treatments into clinical development.”

The project will see AbCellera build a state-of-the-art biotechnology campus that will include a new preclinical development facility and upgrades to existing facilities in Vancouver, creating more than 400 highly skilled jobs, as well as new training opportunities in life sciences and biomanufacturing. The project will enable locally invented treatments in areas, such as oncology and immune diseases, to be developed and trialed in B.C., which will benefit patients in B.C. and around the world. It also builds the capability needed to conduct Phase 1 clinical trials in B.C.

“In 2020, our government made a promise to Canadians that we would build back our life sciences ecosystem. And today, we are once again delivering on that promise by partnering with AbCellera, a company at the cutting edge of technology. Its project will make sure that Canada is at the forefront of antibody drug development, while also strengthening our life sciences sector,” said François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. “We are not only making our country a major player in the global biomanufacturing and life sciences industry, but also boosting Canada’s economy and creating good jobs for Canadians.”

The new B.C. Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy outlines key actions developed in

close consultation with industry and academia to position British Columbia as a global hub for life sciences and biomanufacturing, and as a leading centre for commercial-scale biopharmaceutical and medical manufacturing.

“Ensuring local, made-in-B.C. companies have the resources they need to succeed on a global scale is a key part of our StrongerBC Economic Plan,” said Brenda Bailey, B.C. Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation. “It wasn’t long ago that AbCellera emerged out of the University of British Columbia to become a global biotech leader saving lives around the world. We’ve supported AbCellera from the very beginning, and this commitment to its success is a commitment to the success of a strong and sustainable economy right here in B.C.”

Supporting B.C. life-sciences and biomanufacturing companies to grow is part of the StrongerBC Economic Plan, which is moving British Columbia forward by tackling the challenges of today while growing an innovation economy that works for everyone.

Quick Facts:

- AbCellera is a Canadian technology company that is breaking the barriers of conventional antibody drug discovery to bring better medicines to patients sooner.
- AbCellera’s engine integrates expert teams, technology and facilities with the data science and automation needed to propel antibody-based medicines from target to clinic in nearly every therapeutic area with precision and speed.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, AbCellera and its partners brought two antibody treatments to patients, including the first antibody treatment to be authorized by the Health Canada and U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- AbCellera’s COVID-19 antibodies have been used to treat more than 2.5 million patients and are estimated to have saved tens of thousands of lives.
- Globally, AbCellera has more than 60,000 square metres (650,000 square feet) of lab, office and manufacturing facilities in use or under development; more than 170 programs under contract with more than 40 partners; and AbCellera and its partners have brought nine molecules to the clinic.
- AbCellera emerged out of the University of British Columbia in 2012, originally with six employees, and now employs more than 500 across its locations in Vancouver; Boston; Sydney, Australia; and Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Learn More:

For information about B.C.’s Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/technology-innovation/life-sciences-biomanufacturing>

For information about AbCellera: <https://abcellera.com/>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Life Sciences in B.C.

- B.C.'s life-sciences sector is adaptable, resilient and on track to become a world leader.
- Almost every COVID-19 vaccine candidate that reached late-stage development in 2020 used components that were initiated, developed or manufactured by a B.C. company or scientist.
- The lipid nanoparticle delivery system that enables messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) to be transported safely into a cell (enabling a vaccine to be delivered safely and effectively into a person's cells) was developed by B.C. scientists.
- The first therapeutic authorized to treat COVID-19 was developed using a B.C. biotech company's unique drug discovery platform technology.
- Disciplines where B.C.'s life-sciences sector has notable strengths include lipid nanoparticles, mRNA, antibodies, radiopharmaceuticals, genomics, oncology, precision medicine and medical device design.
- B.C.'s life-sciences and biomanufacturing sector employs almost 20,000 British Columbians whose salaries are almost 30% higher than the provincial average.
- In 2021, B.C.'s life-sciences sector recorded \$6.7 billion in revenue and generated \$2.6 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) – 30% growth since 2018.
- Of the nearly 2,000 life-sciences companies active in B.C., most have five or fewer employees. In recent years, B.C. has seen 39 companies exceed the 50-employee threshold.
- Although B.C. only counts a handful of companies with more than 200 employees, the province is home to:
 - Canada's largest biotech company, Stemcell Technologies;
 - at least four of Canada's biotech companies with more than \$1 billion in market capitalization; and
 - StarFish Medical, Canada's largest medical device design, development and contract manufacturing company.
- The recently created Michael Smith Health Research BC agency, which merged several research entities, and the new Canada's Immuno-Engineering and Biomanufacturing Hub, will further improve co-ordination between research, industry and the health sector.
- From 2018 to 2021:
 - B.C. life-sciences businesses with employees have increased by 26.5%, compared to 2.7% growth of businesses in all sectors.
 - The number of large businesses, employing more than 50 people, grew by 57%.
 - The life-sciences sector grew faster than the overall B.C. economy in terms of the number of businesses, employment levels and weekly earnings.
 - B.C.'s life-sciences sector ranks third in Canada – after Ontario and Quebec – with respect to the number of businesses, employment, revenue and GDP contributions.

- B.C. is ascending: the number of businesses based in the province grew faster than anywhere else in Canada between 2018 and 2021.

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