



## **Kurita Therapeutics and SCOZIA PHARMA Announce Strategic Licensing Agreement for Ophthalmic and Dermal Rights to SCO-116, A Novel Nrf2 Activator**

*- Kurita is granted exclusive worldwide rights to develop, manufacture, and commercialize asset for ocular and dermatologic diseases with localized therapeutic application; SCOZIA PHARMA to receive upfront payment plus up to 67 million USD in potential regulatory, development, and commercial milestones*

Kanagawa, Japan and Little Rock, Arkansas, USA, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Kurita Therapeutics, Inc., a US pharmaceutical company developing novel therapeutics for ophthalmic and dermal diseases, and SCOZIA PHARMA, Inc, a Japanese biotech company dedicated to developing medicines for lifestyle-related diseases with high unmet needs, today announced that the companies have entered into a licensing agreement under which Kurita may develop, manufacture, and commercialize worldwide the locally delivered formulations of SCO-116, one of SCOZIA's internally discovered novel Nrf2 activators, for prevention and/or treatment of eye and skin diseases. The initial topical ophthalmic solution product candidate containing SCO-116 has been designated by Kurita as KTX-101.

Under the terms of the agreement, SCOZIA PHARMA will receive an upfront payment as well as additional milestone payments of up to USD 67 million if certain global regulatory, development, and sales milestones are achieved. SCOZIA PHARMA is also eligible to receive tiered royalties as a percentage of net sales. Kurita will be responsible for worldwide development, manufacturing, and commercialization in the selected indications with the oversight of a Joint Steering Committee comprised of individuals from both companies, while SCOZIA PHARMA retains the worldwide rights for SCO-116 for local delivery other than for eye and skin diseases as well as the systemic formulation.

The Nrf2 pathway is widely recognized as the master regulator of the antioxidant response, and plays a key role in cellular defense against external insults and pathogens, as well as the regulation of the inflammatory response. Activation of Nrf2 may be beneficial in a wide array of diseases of the eye and skin involving oxidative stress and inflammation, and has been demonstrated to be beneficial in preclinical models of multiple eye diseases, including ocular surface disease, corneal dystrophies, glaucoma, macular degeneration, and diabetic eye disease. The R&D team at SCOZIA has discovered SCO-116, a novel, potent, selective activator of the Nrf2 pathway with demonstrated activity in multiple animal disease models. The licensing agreement announced today will allow Kurita to develop locally delivered formulations of SCO-116 in ophthalmic and dermal disease.

“We are excited about the opportunity to initiate our development efforts with the Nrf2 activator discovered by SCOZIA PHARMA”, stated Dr. Keith Ward, President and Chief Executive Officer of Kurita Therapeutics. “The R&D team at SCOZIA executed a world-class discovery effort to identify and characterize a series of novel Nrf2 activators, and we are honored to partner with such a high-quality team to explore the therapeutic potential of SCO-116 in multiple ophthalmic and dermal diseases”.

“With their deep knowledge and experience in ophthalmology and the development of Nrf2 activators, we are confident that Kurita will be an excellent partner to accelerate development of SCO-116 and deliver it to patients with skin and eye diseases awaiting novel therapies”, added Masanori Watanabe, President, CEO, and CSO of SCOZIA PHARMA. “Kurita's development of locally delivered therapy directly to affected tissue will complement our efforts to develop SCO-116 systemically in diseases of the liver, kidney, and other organs and add significant value”.



**About SCO-116:**

SCO-116 is a novel Nrf2 activator originated by SCOHA which selectively inhibits the interaction of Nrf2 and KEAP1\* through non-covalent binding. Unlike many other putative Nrf2 activators under development which covalently bind to KEAP1, SCO-116 is expected to exhibit a favorable safety profile because of its selectivity. Initial one-week toxicity studies in rats and monkeys with SCO-116 have demonstrated a favorable safety and tolerability profile. SCO-116 has the potential to prevent and/or treat diverse diseases with high unmet medical needs such as chronic kidney diseases, diabetic kidney diseases, and liver diseases such as nonalcoholic steatohepatitis, as well as eye and skin diseases.

\*KEAP1 acts as a regulator of Nrf2 by targeting it for ubiquitination and subsequent proteasome-dependent degradation.

**About Kurita Therapeutics, Inc.:**

Kurita Therapeutics, Inc. is a US-based pharmaceutical company dedicated to the development of novel therapeutics for ophthalmic and dermal disease. We are a team of seasoned life science executives and entrepreneurs with decades of experience in building biotechnology companies, running complex multi-national development programs, managing alliances with partners, and building relationships with clinicians, investors, vendors, and patient groups. For detailed information about Kurita Therapeutics, Inc., please visit [www.kuriatx.com](http://www.kuriatx.com).

**About SCOHA PHARMA, Inc.:**

SCOHA PHARMA, Inc. is a drug discovery bioventure focusing on the field of lifestyle-related diseases such as cardiovascular, metabolic, and renal diseases where high unmet medical needs still remain. Our R&D team has a rich pipeline and track record in each stage of drug development, including compound discovery, drug evaluation, and clinical development, which makes us special. For detailed information about SCOHA PHARMA, Inc., please visit <https://www.scoha.com/eng/>.

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