Bayer AG
Communications
51368 Leverkusen
Germany
Phone +49 214 30-1
www.bayer.com/en/media

News Release

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Joint press release from Bayer, BIH und Charité:

More than just a groundbreaking ceremony: Construction begins for the Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies

- Start of construction just one year after the official launch of the project
- Vice Chancellor Lars Klingbeil acknowledges the significance of the project for Germany as supporting environment for innovative companies
- Opening of the center planned for 2028

Berlin, September 16, 2025 – A groundbreaking ceremony kicked off the construction work for the Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies (BC GCT) – a project with the potential to make Berlin a hotspot for the development of innovative therapies. Bayer AG and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin first presented their plans for the joint project in June last year. Today, construction officially began in Berlin-Mitte alongside their new partner, the Berlin Institute of Health at Charité (BIH), in the presence of Federal Minister of Finance Lars Klingbeil and Kai Wegner, Governing Mayor of Berlin.

By focusing on the “translation” of medicine, the Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies aims to accelerate the rate at which groundbreaking technologies are translated from basic research into treatment options more quickly. Gene and cell therapies bring hope to people when conventional therapies have failed or when no effective treatment options exist.

This initiative aims to create a biotech ecosystem which supports start-ups to bring their novel therapeutic approaches into clinical development. The center is significantly funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research as well as the State of Berlin.

Since the project's launch in June 2024, Charité and Bayer have welcomed the Berlin Institute of Health (BIH) as an additional partner. Today, together with project developer iQ spaces, the three partners participated in a groundbreaking ceremony for a new building that will serve as the centerpiece of the project.

At Berlin's Nordhafen, a state-of-the-art building with approximately 20,000 m² is being constructed to house the BC GCT. Among the tenants will be Bayer Co.Lab, Bayer's start-up incubator that has been supporting biopharma startups since 2024 with fully equipped labs, offices, expertise, and networks. With its relocation and expansion in 2028, Bayer Co.Lab will contribute its experience to the new project and the community that is taking shape around it.

The BC GCT will feature an incubator with fully equipped laboratory and office space, providing room for 15 to 20 start-ups at various stages of development. An additional aspect is a facility certified by Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) production facility for the development of gene and cell therapies up to clinical phase II.

The architectural firm HENN has been commissioned with the general planning. The incubator will be operated by Gene and Cell Therapies Incubator Berlin GmbH, which Charité and Bayer founded specifically for this purpose. BIH has commissioned the Berlin-based CDMO ProBioGen AG to operate the GMP facility. The Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies is scheduled to open in 2028.

Comments on the groundbreaking ceremony

Lars Klingbeil, Federal Minister of Finance: "We are investing in growth and innovation. In doing so, we are focusing specifically on future-oriented industries such as biotech. The Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies supports startups in bringing innovative treatments directly to patients – while also creating high-quality jobs with strong prospects for the future in Germany."

Dorothee Bär, Federal Minister of Research, Technology, and Space: The groundbreaking ceremony today for the Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies demonstrates a successful public-private partnership between Charité, the Berlin Institute of Health, Bayer AG, and ProBioGen AG, and serves as an exemplary model for Germany's High-Tech Agenda. The Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies brings

together researchers and entrepreneurs, thereby enabling real innovations. This also signifies that the National Strategy for Gene and Cell Therapies has become a reality. This not only brings new momentum to the biotech sector in Germany but also offers hope to a large number of patients and those affected by severe and rare diseases.

Kai Wegner, Governing Mayor of Berlin: "Our goal is clearly defined: we want to create a ‘Boston on the Spree’ – and develop novel, future-ready therapies for patients here in Berlin in a biotech center. The translation Center for Gene and Cell Therapies is the first essential building-block of a Life Science Campus in the heart of Berlin, at which science and research, start-ups and established companies will work on the future of medicine. With the ground-breaking ceremony for the new biotech center, two top players in the health economy – Charité and Bayer AG – have shown an impressive commitment to Berlin as a science, innovation and technology location.”

Franziska Giffey, Mayor and Senator for Economics, Energy, and Public Enterprises of the State of Berlin: "This groundbreaking ceremony is a milestone for a flagship project that will have an impact far beyond Berlin! It sends a clear signal about the future of medicine in Berlin and strengthens Germany's position in the global biotech competition. Work is being done here to better diagnose, treat, and, in the best case, cure previously incurable diseases. This means hope for patients and a boost for our city's healthcare industry. The close cooperation between science, industry, and start-ups demonstrates the strengths of Berlin's ecosystem. My thanks go to everyone who is working tirelessly for the success of this project—together, we are securing Berlin's place as Europe's leading innovation metropolis."

Dr. Henry Marx, State Secretary for Science and Research of the State of Berlin: "With the new Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies, we are further expanding Berlin's position as one of Europe's most important science locations. The project impressively demonstrates how groundbreaking research is being conducted here, from basic research to therapy for patients – all under one roof. This proves once again that when it comes to medicine and life sciences - Berlin is leading the way."

Stefan Oelrich, member of the Board of Management of Bayer AG and Head of the Pharmaceuticals Division: "The groundbreaking ceremony of the new building for the Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies and the Berlin Co.Lab is a signal that Germany wants to play a leading role in the key technologies of the 21st century as an innovation

and industrial location. Our goal is for startups 'Made in Germany' to grow locally and for globally successful therapy options to continue to be developed in Germany. The public-private partnership between Charité, the Berlin Institute of Health, and Bayer demonstrates how crucial collaborative engagement is to fully unleash the potential of transformative technologies – for the benefit of patients worldwide."

Prof. Heyo K. Kroemer, Chairman of the Executive Board of Charité: "With gene and cell therapies, we are pushing the boundaries of what is medically possible. By bringing together both research and production of these highly innovative drugs under one roof, the Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies shortens the path from the experimental stage to application. In this way, we are ensuring that patients benefit from significant medical advances as quickly as possible. With this center, Charité is fulfilling its responsibility as a university hospital while also strengthening Berlin's profile as an internationally visible biomedical location."

Prof. Christopher Baum, Chairman of the BIH Executive Board and Director of Translational Research at Charité: " With the groundbreaking ceremony of BC GCT, the National Strategy for Gene and Cell-Based Therapies is becoming a reality: With the help of funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, which amounts to €76.5 million over the next 10 years, we are building a state-of-the-art GMP facility for the production of gene and cell therapeutics within the center. We are delighted to have found a competent and experienced partner in the Berlin-based company ProBioGen AG for the construction and operation of the GMP facility. This will enable us to set new standards for the safe and sustainable manufacture of pharmaceutical products and bring research directly into application."

About gene and cell therapies

Gene and cell therapies (Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products, ATMPs) are among the most important innovations in healthcare. They have the potential to fundamentally transform the treatment of cancer, autoimmune diseases, neurodegenerative diseases, and many rare genetic diseases. These novel therapies are based on genes, tissues, or cells and therefore often contain living components. These products, also known as "living drugs," can be tailored to individual patients more effectively than traditional medicines and are particularly suitable for treating diseases that were previously untreatable or difficult to treat. Although hundreds of clinical trials are underway to develop gene and cell therapies, only a few products have been approved in Europe to date. Bridging this

translation gap is the goal of the Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies, a joint initiative of Charité and Bayer.

About the Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies (BC GCT)
The Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies is an innovative public-private partnership that brings together research, development, and production of gene and cell therapies under one roof. The initiative was launched by Bayer AG, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, and the Berlin Institute of Health at Charité. With an incubator for start-ups that can host 15 to 20 companies, as well as a GMP-certified manufacturing facility, the center creates optimal conditions for the translation of novel therapies from the lab to clinical application. Funding from the State of Berlin and the Federal Ministry for Research, Technology, and Space supports the expansion of the infrastructure and ensures the long-term quality and safety of medicinal products. The GMP facility is operated by ProBioGen AG, ensuring compliance with international quality standards. The building is being developed by iQ spaces as project developer and is in proximity to the Bayer campus in Berlin, with completion scheduled for 2028.

About Bayer
Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the life science fields of health care and nutrition. In line with its mission, “Health for all, Hunger for none,” the company’s products and services are designed to help people and the planet thrive by supporting efforts to master the major challenges presented by a growing and aging global population. Bayer is committed to driving sustainable development and generating a positive impact with its businesses. At the same time, the Group aims to increase its earning power and create value through innovation and growth. The Bayer brand stands for trust, reliability and quality throughout the world. In fiscal 2024, the Group employed around 93,000 people and had sales of 46.6 billion euros. R&D expenses amounted to 6.2 billion euros. For more information, go to www.bayer.com.

About Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin
With more than 100 departments and institutes across four campuses and 3,293 beds, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin is one of Europe’s largest university medical centers. At Charité, the areas of research, teaching, and medical and patient care are closely interconnected. Averaging about 20,600 employees Charité-wide and some 24,300 across the entire group of companies, Berlin’s university medicine organization remained one of the capital city’s largest employers in 2024. Charité is a leader in diagnosis and

treatment of particularly severe, complex, and rare diseases and health conditions. A medical school and university medical center in one, Charité enjoys an outstanding reputation worldwide, combining first-class patient care with excellence in research and innovation, state-of-the-art teaching, and high-quality training and education. Everything Charité does revolves around people and their health. Charité pursues translational research in which scientific findings are applied to prevention, diagnostics, and treatment and clinical observations inform new approaches in research in turn. At Charité, the goal is to actively help shape the medicine of the future to benefit patients.
https://www.charite.de/en/

About the Berlin Institute of Health at Charité (BIH)
The Berlin Institute of Health at Charité (BIH) is dedicated to biomedical translation. Its mission is to translate research findings into personalized prevention, diagnostics, and therapies to benefit patients and provide the scientific community with effective tools. With approximately 750 employees, the BIH specializes in translational method development, precision medicine, regenerative therapies, and biomedical data science. Closely integrated with Charité, the BIH promotes excellent research and facilitates the accelerated transfer of new discoveries into clinical practice through its supporting platforms and programs. Through these efforts, the BIH builds strong partnerships and fosters innovation-driven medicine in both national and international context.

Links
Photos from the event (© Bayer & Charité | Norbert Ittermann; Picture to follow as soon as possible)

Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies

Gemeinsam für Innovation: Charité und Bayer gründen Berlin Center for Gene and Cell Therapies (Pressemitteilung vom 21. Juni 2024)

Gen- und Zelltherapien: Charité und Bayer gründen gemeinsame Gesellschaft (Meldung vom 4. Dezember 2024)

Nationale Strategie für gen- und zellbasierte Therapien

Contact for media inquiries :

Bayer
Ulrike Schröder, phone +49 30 4681 92206
E-Mail: ulrike.schroeder@bayer.com

Charité:
Markus Heggen, phone +49 30 450 570 400
E-Mail: markus.heggen@charite.de

BIH
Mirjam Kaplow, phone +49 30 450 543 343, mobile +49 162 7247266
E-Mail: mirjam.kaplow@bih-charite.de

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