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Zeon Corporation to construct at its Kawasaki City site a new co-creative innovation facility as a launchpad for disseminating technologies worldwide by leveraging its strategic location in the Tokyo metropolitan area

Zeon Corporation

Zeon Corporation (Zeon; head office: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; President and CEO: Tetsuya Toyoshima) will construct a new co-creative innovation facility that will be open to both internal and external participants at its Kawasaki Plant and Research & Development Center in the Kawasaki waterfront area.

Zeon is leveraging the strategic location of its two existing facilities in the Tokyo metropolitan area to accelerate new product development. We are doing this by providing a space for co-creating with customers and partners around the world and integrating the results with Zeon’s core technologies. We also envision that the new facility will become a central launchpad for groundbreaking advances, with the Kawasaki Plant making significant progress in R&D. Additionally, we plan to drive continuous innovation through a rapid cycle of product design, manufacturing technology development, and commercialization.

The new co-creative innovation facility will be a symbolic presence as Zeon aims to achieve its 2030 Vision of becoming a company that lives up to societal expectations and the aspirations of employees under the STAGE 30 Medium-Term Business Plan. It will also position the company to take on the challenges of generating innovations for years to come.



Image of exterior



Creating spaces to foster interaction among internal and external participants

The Kawasaki waterfront area, home to Zeon’s Kawasaki Plant and Research & Development Center, is rapidly evolving into an urban center for new business creation, with an increasing concentration of leading companies in the life sciences and other fields. Also, the opening of the Tamagawa Sky Bridge over the Tama River has significantly improved access to and from the Haneda Airport area. This has allowed for more business activity and made it easier to exchange goods. Against this backdrop, the area is expected to boost Japan’s international competitiveness and promote sustainable economic growth.

The co-creative innovation facility will be established as a foundation for strengthening internal and external collaborations by leveraging the advantages of this strategic location and the proximity of the plant and research center. With respect to developing materials for lithium-ion batteries, which is a Group-wide strategy in the Medium-Term Business Plan, the facility will be equipped with an open laboratory, where Zeon will apply its strengths in evaluation and analysis technologies for lithium-ion batteries to identify customer challenges at an early stage and accelerate product development. The laboratory will also handle processes and material development for the dry formation technology*¹ as a new method for manufacturing electrodes.

The new facility represents an unprecedented space without borders, bringing together in one building the central control room at the heart of the plant, laboratories for advanced materials, and Zeon’s largest open laboratory for co-creation with customers, where plant and laboratory employees work on the same floor and can gather with opportunities for serendipitous creativity. The building design embodies the concept of an environment in which employees are motivated and work with pride, and we hope it will serve as a stage for disseminating to the world a succession of technologies and products created through the exchange of new ideas.

*1 Zeon’s new method for manufacturing electrodes for lithium-ion batteries (press release dated December 2023)

<https://www.zeon.co.jp/en/news/assets/pdf/231205.pdf>

Outline of the new facility

1. Building	Site area: approximately 4,000 m ² Total floor area: approximately 23,000 m ² (8 stories)
2. Location	1-2-1 Yako, Kawasaki-ku, Kawasaki, Kanagawa 210-9507, Japan (on the site of Zeon’s Kawasaki Plant and R&D Center)
3. Completion of construction	FY2026
4. Main functions and spaces	(1) Supporting co-creation with external participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open laboratory that enables the fast, high-quality development of products through co-creation with customers • Laboratories for co-creation with nearby research facilities and startups
	(2) Facilitating collaboration with internal participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration space for encouraging cross-organizational communication and innovation • Laboratory with the versatility to respond flexibly to changes in the business environment
	(3) Providing workplaces in which employees are motivated and work with pride <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable, high-efficiency offices that allow employees to choose where to work according to their current tasks • A cafeteria featuring tasty food and an enjoyable and relaxing space where employees can switch out of work mode and feel refreshed
	(4) Incorporating disaster countermeasures and energy conservation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of the plant’s central control room, disaster prevention center, and regional evacuation center will be determined with due consideration for seismic resistance and tsunami risks • Energy conservation and generation through the installation of high-efficiency equipment and solar panels

Outline of the Kawasaki Plant

The Kawasaki Plant started Japan’s first mass-production of synthetic rubber in July 1959. It is Zeon’s main plant located in the Tokyo metropolitan area and manufactures oil-resistant, heat-resistant specialty rubber for automotive belts and hoses, synthetic latex used for work gloves and cosmetic puffs, and materials for lithium-ion batteries. The site area is 75,500 m², and the number of employees is 209 as of April 1, 2024.

Outline of the R&D Center

The R&D Center was established in 1959 on the site adjacent to the Kawasaki Plant. Its proximity to the manufacturing site enables the alignment of manufacturing and technology while also providing a flexible and efficient R&D system. The site area is 15,000 m², and the number of employees is 460 as of April 1, 2024 (Kawasaki area) .

For more information, contact:

Department of Corporate Communication, Corporate Sustainability Division, Zeon Corporation

Phone: +81-3-3216-2747