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Pfizer, Glaxo, Siemens form A*Star R&D consortium

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Singapore: Pfizer Asia Pacific, Glaxo Wellcome Manufacturing and Siemens have signed on as founding members of a new A*STAR R&D Consortium Programme - Innovative Processing of Specialties and Pharmaceuticals (iPSP). Launched by A*STAR's Institute of Chemical and Engineering Sciences (ICES), the consortium offers a platform for pharmaceutical and specialty chemicals industry players to address various challenges such as costs, regulatory compliance and responsiveness in production and processes to bring drugs from trials to markets.

The consortium programme brings together industry leaders to address an increasingly urgent need to access emerging 'next generation manufacturing' technologies that provide quantum change improvements in cost, quality, environmental impact and process robustness in pharmaceutical manufacturing processes. The advancement in technologies and adoption of best practices in processing technologies will help companies drive up productivity and maximise manpower development to maintain their competitive edge.

The programme also offers a unique platform for members to interact, develop and grow the industry processing technology knowledge base by facilitating the technology transfer and manpower development in advanced chemical processing technologies. The programme draws on established resources and capabilities at ICES. These include the Kilo Scale Laboratory, pilot scale multipurpose continuous plant, a fully equipped development laboratory and staff experienced in process development and operation.

The Institute's core skill areas including chemistry, chemical engineering, analytics, control, formulation science and catalysis form a strong basis for the development of innovative manufacturing approaches. The programme will see research activities undertaken in industrially relevant areas like process analytics (PAT), Quality by Design (Qbd) as well as continuous manufacturing systems.

"ICES has built strong and deep capabilities in the understanding of process science and technologies and the time is ripe for such depth and breadth of knowledge to be applied to the chemicals and pharmaceutical industries. By identifying common research focus, companies can mutually benefit from joint research. This will enable companies to address industry-wide challenges and further reinforce the competitiveness of Singapore's chemicals industry," said Dr Keith Carpenter, executive director, ICES.

"For Singapore manufacturing business to sustain global competitiveness, employing technological advancements in the areas of energy management and manufacturing operations is essential. The iPSP programme provides a great platform to move ideas in technology to real world solutions," said Mr George Routhier, MD, Pfizer Asia Pacific, Singapore.

"At a time when companies in the pharmaceutical industry are challenged on speed in new product development, manufacturing process innovation, consistency in product quality, regulatory conformance and environmental sustainability, an integrative approach to the application of cutting edge technologies will be crucial to future success. The launch of iPSP is very timely," said Mr. Lim Hock Heng, Managing Director of GlaxoSmithKline's Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Sites Singapore.

"The cooperation with ICES in research for innovation in process manufacturing is a great step towards creating advance knowledge for Singapore. To be selected as the technology partner for ICES is a great honour for Siemens in Singapore. With our comprehensive knowledge and technology, we are sure that we can add great value to the projects," said Mr Matthias Gronstedt, VP, sales, Industry Automation and Drive Technologies Division, Siemens, Singapore.