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Merck to set up $107 mn plant in China

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Singapore: In a bid to strengthen its operations and base in China, German drug maker Merck has said that it is planning to invest $107.89 million (Ã?Â¢Ã¢â?¬Å¡Ã?Â¬80 million) to set up a new pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in the Asian country.

The company has said that this new facility will be located in the Yangtze River Delta area of Greater Shanghai region and will be set up in the Nantong Economical Technological Development Area (NETDA). The new unit would be spread over an area of 40,000 square meters, with a possible 20,000 square meters extension, officials revealed.

The company added in its statement that the new manufacturing unit would focus on the bulk production and packaging of Merck's leading brands, including Glucophage, Concor and Euthyrox, for the treatment of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and thyroid disorders.

Speaking about the investment plan, BelÃ?Æ?Ã?Â©n Garijo, president and chief executive officer of Merck Serono (biopharmaceutical division of Merck) said, "This further investment in China reflects Merck's long-term commitment to the country where our group has been present for 80 years. We are proud to be one of the first multinational companies investing in a local site focused on the manufacturing of medicines referenced in China's essential drug list, and serve the country's expanding healthcare needs in the areas of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and thyroid disorders, by bringing high-quality medicines made in China to a broader population, in full alignment with the Chinese government's goal to increase access to quality products."

Merck aims to complete the construction of the unit by 2016 and begin commercial production soon after in 2017. "This new facility will become Merck Serono's second largest pharmaceutical manufacturing site in the world and will help ensure that our medicines will always be available to patients who rely on them, which is a key priority for Merck Serono. With our research center, our development capabilities, our commercial presence and this new manufacturing facility, we are building for the future in China by investing across our value chain," said Mr Allan Gabor, general manager and managing director of Merck Serono in China.