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ASIA EDITION

GSK, Biological E to develop 6-in-1 vaccine

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Bangalore: GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and Biological E have signed an agreement to form a 50:50 joint venture (JV) for early stage R&D of a six-in-one combination paediatric vaccine to help protect children in India and other developing countries from polio and other infectious diseases. The partnership reinforces the commitment of both companies to support the World Health Organisation's (WHO) global polio eradication programme.

The first-of-its kind vaccine would combine GSK's injectable polio vaccine (IPV) and Biological E's pentavalent vaccine for diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough (whole cell pertussis), hepatitis B, and Haemophilus influenzae type b. The vaccine would enable fewer injections for children thereby improving compliance in immunization schedules. The fully liquid formulation of the vaccine also means that it would be ready to use with no additional ingredients or materials required, freeing up space at local storage facilities.

The JV will bear the development costs for the candidate vaccine, which is expected to enter phase I development in the next two years. A small initial cash investment will be made by both companies to cover start-up costs for the JV and subsequent development costs will be split equally. Completion of the transaction is expected in 2013, subject to several conditions including regulatory approval of the JV.

Mr Christophe Weber, president, GSK Vaccines, said that, "We are delighted to be working with Biological E, an established company in the global vaccine market. This agreement is fully aligned to GSK's vision of providing high quality vaccines to those in need and by leveraging Biological E's strengths, this particular vaccine has the potential to be play a significant role in the fight against polio."

Mr Vijay Kumar Datla, chairman, Biological E, said that, "We are excited to be working with GSK and this relationship is a validation of the investments we have made in vaccine technology and quality. We expect to leverage this partnership to accelerate the development of the hexavalent vaccine and make IPV accessible for developing countries in the post eradication phase for polio. We hope to continue playing our part in support of the public health community."