

Sanofi, Lonza join hands to build biologics plant

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Singapore: Global drugmaker Sanofi has joined hands with Lonza to build and operate a large-scale mammalian cell culture facility for monoclonal antibody production in Visp, Switzerland, with an initial investment of â‚¬ 270 million (about \$ 285 million). The joint venture combines the strong biologics development pipeline of Sanofi with the expertise of Lonza to design, construct, start-up and operate a state-of-the-art large-scale mammalian cell culture facility.

Lonza , one of the world's leading suppliers to the pharmaceutical, biotech and specialty ingredients markets, has previously built and licensed three similar facilities in the US and Singapore. The initial phase of the facility will commence construction in 2017, pending necessary regulatory approvals, and is expected to be fully operational by 2020.

The deal enables Sanofi to scale up its bio manufacturing capacity and increases its capability to launch high-quality, next generation biologic medicines and ensure consistent access for patients. It also provides Lonza with needed capacities to respond to growing manufacturing demands for large-scale mammalian cell culture based therapeutic proteins, therefore

allowing Lonza to better serve its customers. By adding flexibility in this way, this model will help to optimise biologics production capacity across the whole industry.

The plant, which is expected to employ 200, will be built at Lonza's site in Visp, Switzerland. Mr Philippe Luscan, Sanofi's executive VP of Global Industrial Affairs, said Sanofi needs the extra capacity because 60% of the French drugmaker's pipeline is made of biologics, including monoclonal antibodies.

"The joint venture between Sanofi and Lonza emphasizes our commitment to provide access for patients to high quality therapeutic monoclonal antibodies. Approximately sixty percent of our pipeline is made up of biologics, including monoclonal antibodies, dedicated to key disease areas such as cardiovascular, immunology and inflammation, neurology and oncology. Lonza is a highly experienced partner in this field and the capabilities which this joint venture will create are critical to meeting our patients' needs for these important therapies," said Mr Luscan.

Mr Marc Funk, COO Pharma & Biotech, Lonza, added, "By entering into this long-term strategic relationship we have developed a tailor-made business model that best fits both Sanofi's and Lonza's requirements. It provides to Sanofi dedicated capacity, which allows for a clear win-win situation for all participants. As part of our strategic roadmap, we will develop further innovative business models based on the requirements of our customers. We intend to address these long-term market needs by establishing a state-of-the-art strategic biologics manufacturing platform. The strategic partnership with Sanofi represents the first module in this undertaking; and we are convinced that with this future-oriented approach, we can serve additional customers."