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ASIA EDITION

Novartis unveils its investment and expansion plans for China to boost biopharm R&D footprint

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Novartis is set to expand its presence in China with an investment exceeding RMB 3.3 billion to bolster R&D, production, and operations, aiming to support the innovation and high-quality development of the country's biopharmaceutical industry.

Novartis is expanding its investment in China, including a 2026 large-scale expansion plan to enhance innovation and manufacturing. Its Changping plant, established in 1987 with a capacity of 3 billion tablets/capsules and 550 million boxes annually, is undergoing a RMB 1.5 billion upgrade to add new facilities, production technologies, and equipment like aseptic processes and liquid filling.

Furthermore, Novartis's Shanghai campus, home to its China headquarters, will celebrate its 10th anniversary of operation this year. Novartis has planned to jointly invest RMB 1.8 billion with investors to launch the second phase of the Shanghai campus project.

In addition, Novartis is advancing the radioligand therapy (RLT) industry in China by focusing on high-quality innovation and submitting policy recommendations to strengthen regulatory governance and clinical application systems. The company proposes enhancing the lifecycle regulatory framework for radiopharmaceuticals, standardizing drug management, and optimizing localization production policies to ensure safe and innovative industry growth.

Additionally, Novartis emphasizes improving hospital access, clinical application mechanisms, and medical insurance policies while strengthening nuclear medicine infrastructure to increase patient accessibility. As a global leader in RLT, Novartis's targeted PSMA therapy has been approved for two indications in China, and its Haiyan, Zhejiang manufacturing base is nearing operational readiness to support localized production. This initiative aims to provide a stable supply of RLT for precision cancer treatment in China, reinforcing the country's role in advancing innovative therapies.

Novartis is actively increasing its R&D investment in China with notable milestones like, expanding its clinical research scale to accelerate the development of innovative drugs tailored to the Chinese market. Additionally, it aims to utilize China's efficient and high-quality clinical research environment to prioritize early-stage (Phase I/II) clinical studies, thereby accelerating the progress of its global pipeline.

Novartis is identifying and engaging with local innovative companies at an earlier stage and fostering deeper collaborative innovation with Chinese partners. Since 2024, the company has established partnerships with several Chinese pharmaceutical firms, committing potential investments exceeding RMB 80 billion. These collaborations are focused on advancing promising treatments in critical areas such as cardiovascular diseases, oncology, kidney diseases, and neuroscience, with the goal of bringing these innovations to more patients in need.