

GE Healthcare, Akeso Pharma to expedite novel therapy manufacturing in China

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GE Healthcare Life Sciences will supply Akeso Pharmaceuticals with the FlexFactory™ platform to accelerate the production of antibody drugs in the Guangzhou region and is expected to be operational by end of 2020 creating up to 150 jobs upon opening



Akeso Pharmaceuticals, a biotech company specializing in the development and commercialization of novel biologics, will open a new facility in Guangzhou, China, based on GE Healthcare Life Sciences' FlexFactory platform. It will be designed for efficient and cost-effective manufacture of recombinant biologics.

GE Healthcare Life Sciences will speed up Akeso's access to antibody production in support of Akeso's pipeline of biopharmaceuticals, including therapies for the treatment of cancer, auto-immune diseases, arthritis, and Crohn's disease.

Dr Michelle Xia, Chairman and CEO of Akeso Biopharma, says: "We strive to provide affordable and high-quality therapeutics to patients. In 2016, we were the first user of FlexFactory for monoclonal antibody-manufacturing in South China. Once again, we chose to collaborate with GE to deploy new product lines and boost the production of next-generation immunotherapy drugs in China."

The FlexFactory will be located on Akeso's manufacturing site in Guangzhou Knowledge City. It is configured with capacity for 4 x 2000L bioreactors to support the clinical and commercial production of therapeutic antibodies and is cGMP compliant. This becomes the 15th automation-integrated FlexFactory platform provided by GE Healthcare Life Sciences in China, and the 64th FlexFactory supplied globally to manufacturers of biopharmaceuticals.

Olivier Loeillot, General Manager of BioProcess at GE Healthcare Life Sciences, says: "Akeso is one of China's most innovative manufacturers of next-generation therapies. Rapid access to proven biomanufacturing technologies and cost-efficient capabilities - supplied by trusted and seasoned industry partners are key to realize the potential of the industry. We are supporting the growth of Guangzhou's biotech with flexible and scalable technologies, like FlexFactory and KUBio, as we recognize the needs of bio manufacturers to succeed in this highly competitive environment."

China's biopharmaceutical service sector has been growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 30% and is poised to surge to \$1.4 billion by 2021. The monoclonal antibody market size in China is projected to reach RMB120.7 billion or \$17 billion by 2025.

Akeso Pharmaceuticals is a joint venture between Akeso Biopharma and the Guangzhou Development District. The FlexFactory will support the company's aim to expand its operations to large-scale manufacturing of biopharmaceuticals, with an initial focus on bispecific antibodies. Akeso's plant is expected to be operational by end of 2020 and create up to 150 jobs upon opening.

GE Healthcare Life Sciences supports the growth of biomanufacturing in Guangzhou, China:

- To date, GE Healthcare Life Sciences supplied 21 FlexFactory platforms in China, 5 of which are in Guangzhou.
- In 2019, BeiGene opened a KUBio biomanufacturing facility in Guangzhou, China
- In 2018, Lonza announced an agreement with GE Healthcare, under which GE Healthcare will develop a biologics centre featuring a KUBio biomanufacturing facility in Guangzhou, China. The centre is expected to be operational in 2020.