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ASIA EDITION

Hilleman Lab invest $20M to launch new ACES cGMP Facility in Singapore

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The only multi-modality vaccine and biologics development and manufacturing organisation in Singapore capableof end-to-end product development

On 9 November, Hilleman Laboratories opened its ACES current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP) facility in Singapore with an investment of $20 million (SGD$27 million). The organization is committed to developing affordable vaccines and biologics against infectious diseases with unmet medical needs.

The opening ceremony was graced by Ong Ye Kung, Singapore's Minister for Health, and attended by Jacqueline Poh, Managing Director, Economic Development Board, Sanat Chattopadhyay, Chairman of Hilleman Board of Directors, members of MSD and the Wellcome Trust, UK.

The 30,000-square-foot facility was started in February 2022, and is now operational and capable of producing affordable, high-quality vaccines and biologics in compliance with local and international regulations. The facility will primarily focus on supplying clinical trial materials for development up to the Phase II stage and has the built-in capability to pivot to producing vaccines and biologics for Singapore's use during future pandemics and public health emergencies.

The ACES cGMP facility is designed to achieve agile manufacturing, through a highly compact and configurable design, with end-to-end production capabilities. Portable, skid-mounted, single-use systems allow the facility's manufacturing model to remain platform-agnostic and product-independent, thus enabling production to remain agile and easily adaptable for future or emergency needs without significant disruption to ongoing operations.

Additionally, the facility is also capable of parallel production in controlled isolated suites and is supported by in-process testing to rapidly generate test results to facilitate GMP decision-making.

“The opening of the ACES facility marks a significant milestone in our commitment to advancing global public health through innovation and research. To date, we remain the only vaccine R&D and manufacturing organisation in Singapore capable of developing both drug substance and drug product (to fill and finish). We believe that Hilleman Laboratories is well-poised to share our expertise in vaccine and biologics manufacturing to foster local capabilities while bolstering Singapore's resilience against disease outbreaks, especially those with a pandemic possibility,” said Dr. Raman Rao, CEO of Hilleman Laboratories.

Through the ACES facility, Hilleman Laboratories can supply scale-up batches and clinical trial materials to local and global research and development (R&D) partners to facilitate early phase clinical development of new and cost-effective vaccines and biologics.

Hilleman Laboratories is also facilitating technology transfers to larger manufacturers in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to improve access to vaccines for populations in the region.

“Singapore has been deepening our vaccine manufacturing capabilities to enhance our pandemic resilience and improve regional vaccine access. Hilleman Laboratories’ new GMP facility will build on its existing R&D presence in Singapore, to bring advanced vaccines and biologics development and manufacturing expertise to our ecosystem, and drive training and collaboration opportunities with our local institutions,” said Ms Jacqueline Poh, Managing Director of the Singapore Economic Development Board.

Hilleman Laboratories has invested extensively in vaccine platforms such as mRNA and viral vectors to develop and manufacture vaccines that can help prevent outbreaks in Singapore and globally. Locally, Hilleman Laboratories is collaborating with the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) to test if a novel circular ribonucleic acid (circRNA) technology could be used to develop a biologically stable and thermostable RNA vaccine against pathogens with outbreak potential.

Hilleman Laboratories also uses a live viral vector platform to develop thermostable vaccines for viruses such as Ebola that are prevalent in LMICs. Through the use of these vaccine platforms, Hilleman Laboratories aims to support the development of affordable, high-value vaccines that meet global public health needs.