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Eppendorf Makes South East Asia Its Next Global Manufacturing Base for Lab Instruments

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The company expects production to begin in 2028, with the Malaysian site supplying customers worldwide through its Centrifuges & Instruments business.



Penang offered Eppendorf a combination it was looking for in a new manufacturing base — engineers experienced in precision manufacturing, specialist suppliers and proximity to key Asia-Pacific markets. In conversation with **BioSpectrum Asia**, **Jonathan Haaße, Director, NewCo Operations & Business Transformation at Eppendorf**, explains how the site will help keep instruments moving to customers when supply routes are disrupted. He also discusses opportunities for Malaysian suppliers and plans to build a predominantly local workforce of around 130 by the end of 2029.

What made Penang, Malaysia, the preferred location for Eppendorf's first manufacturing facility in Southeast Asia?

Penang emerged from a careful review of how Eppendorf's global manufacturing footprint should develop over the long term. Our objective is to be a more balanced, flexible, and resilient network that supports competitiveness and reliable customer supply. This is a strategic decision, not a response to a single short-term market trend. Penang offered the right conditions to establish a modern facility within that long-term plan.

The region combines a strong industrial base and skilled workforce with an established high-tech and MedTech ecosystem and extensive precision-manufacturing expertise. These capabilities are relevant to producing scientific instruments to the standards our customers expect. A production base in South-East Asia also brings us closer to important Asia-Pacific growth markets, while complementing our existing sites rather than operating as a stand-alone facility.

Which products will be manufactured at the facility, and which markets will it initially serve?

Penang will manufacture selected products from Eppendorf's Centrifuges & Instruments business. We expect Penang to support customers worldwide, including Asia Pacific and other international markets. Finished products will move through Eppendorf's existing global hubs and distribution structures. This allows us to add manufacturing capacity in Asia while serving regional and global needs through one coordinated network.

How will the Malaysian facility strengthen supply resilience and improve delivery times for customers across Asia Pacific?

Adding a production base in South-East Asia makes Eppendorf's global manufacturing footprint more balanced and reduces reliance on any one region. This gives us greater flexibility to respond to geopolitical, logistics-related and broader supply chain challenges, supporting reliable supply for customers worldwide.

Penang is also a strong location for resilience in its own right. The region has a well-established industrial ecosystem with experienced suppliers in precision manufacturing, plastics, automation and electronics, as well as good international transport connections. Over time, this gives us additional sourcing options and shorter supply routes for the Asia-Pacific region, and it complements the supplier relationships of our existing sites. Penang will be integrated into our existing manufacturing and logistics network.

Delivery times for Eppendorf products are generally already short, so customers should not expect an immediate change. Production will start gradually as individual lines are commissioned and qualified, while distribution continues through our established structures. The investment is intended to strengthen resilience, flexibility and scalability over time, rather than promise a lead-time reduction for every product or market. Over the longer term, manufacturing closer to important Asia-Pacific growth markets gives us more options as customer needs and operating conditions evolve, and a more regionally balanced network helps us maintain continuity when particular routes or sites face disruption.

What milestones will guide the phased production launch in 2028 and subsequent ramp-up through 2030?

Milestones will progress from construction to equipment installation and then qualified production. A general contractor was appointed in October 2026; site preparation and foundation work are scheduled to begin in November 2026. Foundations are expected to be completed by Q1 2027, with construction of the building superstructure scheduled to begin in 2027. Building completion and installation of production equipment are expected by early 2028.

Regular production is expected to start during 2028. Penang will follow the same testing procedures and quality standards as our other sites. We will advance according to readiness and qualification gates, not dates alone, to protect product quality, operational stability and continuity of supply. The facility is designed to scale in line with business needs. Current planning anticipates approximately 130 employees by the end of 2029 within the planned scope.

How will Eppendorf recruit and develop local talent, and are partnerships with Malaysian universities or training institutions planned?

Our objective is to build the Penang workforce primarily through local recruitment, supported by targeted international expertise from Eppendorf, particularly during start-up and ramp-up. Hiring will match the needs of each phase. We aim to combine strong local leadership and market understanding with experience from colleagues across our global manufacturing network. They will support structured knowledge transfer through training, established processes, operational documentation, and close collaboration with the Penang team.

Current workforce planning anticipates approximately 130 employees by the end of 2029. We are already in good exchange with Malaysian universities and training institutions, such as the Penang Skills Development Centre (PSDC), whom we are a member of.

What opportunities could this investment create for Malaysian suppliers and the wider life sciences ecosystem?

Eppendorf combines local, regional, and global sourcing, and intends to expand sourcing in Southeast Asia gradually where it supports quality, supply security and efficiency. This is an opportunity for capable suppliers to qualify. Materials and components will need to meet our technical and quality requirements and support dependable supply.

The wider opportunity is capability-building. Penang already has a high-tech and MedTech ecosystem and extensive precision-manufacturing expertise. Establishing the facility creates a setting in which local colleagues can develop manufacturing, engineering and quality skills through recruitment, training and collaboration with experienced Eppendorf teams. The project can also deepen links between local capabilities and an established international manufacturing network.