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Lonza to invest $15 mn in antibody manufacturing

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Singapore: Lonza plans to invest $15.07 million (S$18.5 million) to expand its antibody drug conjugate (ADC) manufacturing capacity in Switzerland. Oncology therapeutics, including ADCs, represent one-of-the-fastest growing segments of the pharma and biotech industry and the deployment of ADC targeted therapies has intensified in recent years.

Because cGMP manufacturing of ADCs presents unique challenges, facilities must be designed to handle both biological species and highly potent cytotoxic small molecule drugs. Lonza has been a pioneer in the manufacturing of ADCs since its initial investment in 2006 which established manufacturing suites for both small and large scale projects, dedicated R&D labs, and quality control facilities specifically for ADCs. Since 2010, Lonza has validated large scale manufacturing of platform technologies primarily utilized by ADC drug developers.

The expansion of the ADC facility will double the existing large-scale manufacturing capacity in Switzerland while allowing current operations to continue without interruption. It is the next step in bringing challenging new technologies to one of Lonza's main sites. The capacity expansion, expected to be complete in the second quarter of 2014, has the potential to bring new job opportunities across all functions in Visp.

"We have witnessed significant growth in the ADC market in the past 24 months and this investment is necessary to continue to support the growing product demands from our customers" said Dr Stefan Stoffel, head, chemical manufacturing business unit, Lonza. "Lonza Visp will continue to offer a fully integrated end-to-end development and manufacturing solution for ADCs, including the cytotoxic small molecules used in these products and all associated analytics. In addition, Lonza can support protein development and manufacturing via our global biologics development and manufacturing sites."

Lonza's continued investment to increase ADC capacity and highly trained personnel allows its customers to capitalize on the unique infrastructure of the Visp site and limit their own investment in the expertise, assets, and infrastructure required to work with these highly potent biological products in a highly regulated environment.