

Novartis to setup lab in world's largest R&D park

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Singapore: Novartis is planning to expand its \$1 billion Holly Springs, North Carolina, US, biomanufacturing campus with an investment of \$47 million and is also going to open a new R&D center in Research Triangle Park (RTP), which is the largest research park in the world located near Durham, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill, in the Research Triangle region of North Carolina.

Mr Chris McDonald, head, Novartis' Holly Springs facility, said that the company has signed a five-year lease on the RTP lab and office space. Some 30 technical development scientists will initially relocate there from Holly Springs, but the RTP site will eventually accommodate about 100. The company has some 760 employees working at the Holly Springs biomanufacturing campus.

The RTP staff will work on so-called "pipeline products." Mr McDonald said that those include such things as the company's joint effort with the National Institutes of Health to develop an HIV vaccine, and another group working on a vaccine against cold-like infections from respiratory syncytial virus.

Mr Brent MacGregor, president, Novartis' US vaccines operations and head of the North American region, said that, "North Carolina got out in front of other states. We saw the potential, and grabbed onto it. The 'first-mover' advantage is key - it snowballs onto itself. Now every state competes with North Carolina. They all want these high-skill, high-paying jobs that North Carolina has created so well."