

Irish pharma firm APC to create 120 jobs to make Covid vaccines

Irish pharmaceutical R&D company [APC](#) has revealed plans to invest €25m and will create 120 new jobs through the formation of a ‘Global Centre of Excellence for Vaccine and Advanced Therapeutic Research and Manufacturing.’

As a global ‘medicine accelerator’, APC’s expanded facility will enable the rapid research and manufacture of vaccines, including Covid 19 vaccines, and other advanced therapeutics for rare diseases.

It will provide supply chains nationally and across Europe with these vital medicines, positioning Ireland as a significant contributor on the international stage to the manufacture of Covid vaccines and other critical Advanced Therapeutics.

€8m of this investment involves the construction of an additional 12,000 sq. ft of laboratory space and associated research infrastructure at APC’s existing 60,000 sq. ft headquarters in Cherrywood, Dublin.

The expansion, which will be fully operational by the end of June 2021, will add 50 new highly skilled jobs to the existing team of 140 people, with roles in chemistry, biology, chemical engineering, analytical sciences coming on stream immediately, along with other various professional pharmaceutical positions.

Made in Ireland

At the same time, APC is also announcing a €17m investment in the creation of VLE Therapeutics Ltd. to focus on the manufacture of Vaccines and Advanced Therapeutics, including Cell and Gene Therapies.

This will be the first Irish-owned facility expressly designed to provide Ireland and Europe with a local supply chain for these critical medicines. Stage 1 of VLE will have a new manufacturing facility in place by the end of 2021, with an annual full-scale capacity of up to 50 million vaccine doses.

Up to 70 new jobs are planned as part of this investment across manufacturing operations, supply chain, engineering, QA / QC, and regulatory.

Stage 2 of VLE's manufacturing capability will deliver a new bespoke 80,000 sq. ft manufacturing facility by the end of 2023. This facility will provide a world-class platform for the Drug Substance and Drug Product clinical and commercial manufacture of a wide range of Vaccines and Advanced Therapeutics with dose capacity in the hundreds of millions.

Enterprise Ireland is supporting the investment in APC's 'Global Centre of Excellence for Advanced Therapeutic and Vaccine Research and Manufacture'. Through the Covid-19 Products Scheme, Enterprise Ireland has supported APC's new research facility for the accelerated process development of vaccine candidates and new medicines. Enterprise Ireland is also providing strategic funding for APC's sister company VLE to manufacture advanced therapeutics and vaccines, including Covid-19 vaccines.

Established in 2011 by CEO Dr Mark Barrett and CTO Professor Brian Glennon, APC combines its platform technology, ACHIEVE, BioACHIEVE and iACHIEVE, and its globally recognised research team, to accelerate how drug and vaccine manufacturing processes are researched and developed.

"In development since July 2020, this €25m investment is a culmination of our ambition for an Irish company to stand tall and contribute, on both the national and global stage, to the development and manufacture of Covid Vaccines and other critical Advanced Therapeutics," said Barrett.

"Ireland is a global powerhouse for pharma manufacturing and we believe our technological advancements can work hand-in-hand with this track record to accelerate the development and manufacture of these critical vaccines and advanced therapeutics for people in Ireland, Europe and around the world. We're also delighted to have a strong longstanding partnership with Enterprise Ireland and their investment was integral to this entire project."

APC works with pharmaceutical and biotech companies globally on this medicine acceleration mission, with 80pc of its activities export focused. The business is the largest employer in Ireland of PhD qualified chemical engineers and one of the country's largest employers of PhD-level scientists.

In 2020 APC, through the combination of IP and customers, spun out VLE Therapeutics to drive scientific and digital led manufacture of Vaccines and Advanced Therapeutics. In addition to Covid-19 vaccine research and manufacture, APC is currently working on 20+ medicines for a variety of cancers, respiratory diseases, Alzheimer's disease and HIV at its HQ in Dublin.

"From the start, Enterprise Ireland has supported APC's R&D and scaling agenda to become a global leader and a unique disruptor in the global pharma industry," said Leo Clancy, CEO of Enterprise Ireland.

"APC has an exceptional track record, delivering game changing disruptive technology to the

largest global pharma and biopharma companies in the world to optimise and accelerate the development and production of medicines, including vaccines. Today's announcement is hugely significant to deliver the next frontier of biopharma manufacturing, and further strengthens Ireland's position in the global value chain of vaccine development and manufacturing."

The investment was welcomed by Taoiseach Micheál Martin, TD, who said: "The fact that this is all happening in Ireland, thanks to the work of a 100pc Irish owned company, is testament to the wealth of talent and vision we have here in this country in the biotech and pharmaceutical space. It is remarkable to think that, thanks to APC and VLE, Ireland will shortly have the capacity to manufacture hundreds of millions of vaccine doses a year, a move that is set to be totally transformative not just for patients, but for the entire sector, at both a domestic and international level."

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Published: 10 June 2021