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Merck partners with Siemens for digitalization of production

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Merck invests â?¬ 10 million in modular technical infrastructure



Merck has announced a collaborative partnership with Siemens for the digitalisation of production. This partnership is to result in the development of a process control system for the modular production of innovative materials and products for the electronics, pharmaceutical and life science industries.

A first state-of-the-art, modular plant in this production environment is to be built at the Darmstadt site of Merck by 2022. In the first phase, Merck will invest €10 million in the realisation of this plant. The project is part of a €1 billion investment programme announced last year for global headquarters in Darmstadt up until 2025. It will also be funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy because, thanks to the modular, flexible and efficient technology, the carbon footprint of production can be reduced.

Kai Beckmann, CEO Performance Materials and Executive Board member of Merck responsible for the Darmstadt site said. “The time needed from the product idea to market readiness is a critical success factor. The resulting technology platform for standardised, modular production will also be usable in product development in the future. This allows data-based decisions to be made as early as the product development phase and applied seamlessly to the production process.”

“We are delighted to be partnering with Merck. This will create new opportunities for us to drive forward modular production and to meet growing requirements for chemical and pharmaceutical processes in our joint development work,” said Eckard Eberle, CEO, Siemens Process Automation.

The objective of this collaboration between Merck and Siemens is the joint development of an overall system for automating the modular production of tomorrow.

Special software components (Module Type Packages, MTP) form the basis for managing modular production equipment. Using a supervisory control system, known as the process orchestration layer (POL), various production modules can be interlinked to an overall process. In the future, this should occur without additional programming effort – similar to the USB standard for electronic devices. Merck is taking on the establishment of the production infrastructure; Siemens is responsible for the development of POL technology.