

Merck inaugurates its new biomass plant

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German drug giant Merck has commissioned a climate-neutral co-generation plant at its production site in Goa today. The initiative is a part of Merck's company-wide climate protection program. Earlier this year, the drug maker had set up a new co-generation plant at its headquarters in Darmstadt.

The plant was inaugurated by Dr Thierry Hulot, executive vice president, head of global manufacturing and supply and member of Merck Pharmaceutical Executive Committee. This co-generation unit, which has a power output of three megawatts is expected to generate electricity and steam for the pharmaceutical and chemical production operations in Goa.

The company is mainly recycling shells of cashews and coconuts, two crops that are farmed in the region, to use as biomass. It is estimated that the initiative will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by around 11,500 metrics tons, corresponding to around 85 percent of the site's total CO₂ emissions.

Speaking at the event, Dr Hulot, said, "Merck's new climate-neutral co-generation plant in Goa has a tremendous power output for our pharmaceutical and chemical production operations. In the manufacturing of our products, we seek to impact the environment as little as possible. As a responsible company, we express our respect to the environment in an industrial plant that provides medicines for millions of patients in India."

The biomass plant will ensure that the production site has adequate power supply and will function independent of the public power grid. Merck is a global leader in the lifesciences sector providing innovative and top-quality high-tech products in the pharmaceutical, chemical and biotech sectors. More than 300 employees manufacture vitamin preparations, industrial and laboratory chemicals as well as microbiological products, among other things.

Mr Pramod Pimplikar, director, Technical Operations, GMS- Merck Serono, said, "We are extremely excited in being able to make a positive difference to our business, the environment and capacity building efforts. With this Green field site, we aim to reduce CO₂ emission by 85 percent and deliver clean, green, efficient, reliable power and steam supply, improving efficiency and contributing to the nation's interest. By 2020, Merck KGaA has committed to reduce its global CO₂ emissions by 20 percent and we are happy to be in a position to contribute to those efforts."