

France's Sanofi opens research hub in China

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French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi opened a research hub in Shanghai Thursday, the company said, as foreign drug firms face government scrutiny after drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) was found guilty of bribery last week.

The facility, the fifth global hub for the company and its first in Asia, groups 12 countries including the world's most populous nation of China, Sanofi said.

The China-based operation will employ 1,400 people, it said. Sanofi officials declined to give an investment figure.

"With the launch of the hub, we will continue to pioneer R&D (research and development) in Asia-Pacific," said Frank Jiang, Sanofi's head of R&D in Asia-Pacific.

Shanghai has sought to attract multi-national companies to set up regional headquarters in the city with the number reaching 470 as of mid-year, according to state media.

The Shanghai facility will research and develop products in four broad areas—biopharmaceuticals, vaccinations, disease and animal health—in cooperation with other global hubs, company officials said.

The [company](#) already has existing R&D capabilities in China, along with seven plants producing mainly for the China market, they said.

The opening comes just days after China fined British drugmaker GSK 3.0 billion yuan (\$490 million) for bribery and handed jail terms of up to four years to five executives.

Chinese state media has reported that authorities have visited offices and requested information from other foreign pharmaceutical companies following the GSK case.

The 21st Century Business Herald newspaper last year reported that an anonymous whistleblower had raised allegations of [bribery](#) against Sanofi in China.

But a spokeswoman for Sanofi told AFP on Thursday that they were not aware of any misconduct.

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