



PHARMACEUTICALS EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL

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'China & Russia are on our radar'

MG Arun

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At a time when Reliance Industries is aggressively beefing up its overseas presence, the company's life sciences arm is bracing itself to tap global opportunities in the regulated, semi-regulated and emerging markets. Following its plans to enter the regulated US, Japan, Australia and Europe markets through formulations export in four therapeutic areas, Reliance Life Sciences (RLS) is in the process of registering products for biosimilars and plasma proteins in the semi-regulated markets. The company, which grew 60% in 2009-10, has set up offices in Dubai, Sao Paulo and Singapore. Russia and China are now on its radar, says KV Subramaniam, president & CEO, in an exclusive interview with MG Arun. Excerpts:

There is intense activities among Indian companies in the biopharma space . How geared up is RLS to tap the global opportunity in this space?

Reliance Life Sciences has the largest biosimilars pipeline in the industry. We have launched four biosimilars — ReliFeron (recombinant interferon a), ReliPoietin (recombinant erythropoietin), ReliGrast (recombinant granulocyte colony stimulating factor) and MIREl (recombinant reteplase – tissue plasminogen activator). Three biosimilars are expected to be launched by March 2011, making Reliance Life Sciences the largest in terms of the product offering. ReliFeron, ReliPoietin and ReliGrast are being exported to semi-regulated markets. Reliance Life Sciences will launch these products in foreign markets with the help of distribution partners.

You have decided to make a selective entry into the pharmaceutical space after the global slowdown impacted your large-scale plans. What will your focus be in pharma?

We had to reconfigure our plans for the pharma space owing to the downturn in the commodity business, where our parent firm is involved. Now, our focus is on the specialty range of pharmaceutical products. The company has launched four formulations — temozolomide, capecitabine, pemetrexed and imatinib — in India. We plan to export these formulations to semi-regulated markets as well as also enter regulated markets such as the US, Europe, Australia and Japan. Drug master files have been filed in the US for three molecules. We are also building a new oncology formulation facility at Navi Mumbai.

What are the new markets you will enter in your global pursuit?

We are going through a product registration process for biosimilars and plasma proteins in many semi-regulated markets. We have set up offices in Dubai, Sao Paulo and Singapore. The next destinations would

be Russia and China. We do believe that China will be an attractive market for our product portfolio. We are working on registering our products in there.

What are the high points of the progress RLS made in biofuel space?

We are developing an India-centric, global biofuel initiative covering biodiesel (from jatropha and other non-food oil seed crops), bioethanol (from cellulosic biomass) and biobutanol (from cellulosic biomass). The Reliance biofuels initiative is based on the principles of using marginal land and staying away from fertile land used for food crops; working with marginal farmers to help improve quality of rural livelihood and incomes; promoting multi-culture agronomy and building a business that is robust to low prices of crude oil. Reliance has successfully grown jatropha along with horticulture and medicinal inter crops. It has also developed hybrid varieties of Jatropha and a plant tissue culture protocol for Jatropha. It has commissioned a 6,500 tonne per year pilot plant in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh for biodiesel production and developed second-generation processes for production of bioethanol and biobutanol at a lab scale.