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Anthem Biosciences on accelerated mode in drug discovery, patents & partnerships

Nandita Vijay, Bengaluru, Wednesday, April 03, 2013, 08:00 Hrs [IST]

Anthem Biosciences is now scaling up the research ladder with three major initiatives. These include research on an oncology new chemical entity (NCE) in partnership with a US company, development of a novel platform technology Genetox and development of chiral intermediates.

The company received a ₹5 crore grant from the department of biotechnology (DBT) to pursue its work on a promising NCE which is an oncology lead optimized candidate. The DBT has looked at this asset and funded it to do a more detailed data collection. This is a pre-investigational new drug and the data is encouraging so far.

"Now we are putting together the data sets and in the next few months will be able to talk to potential partners for a possible technology transfer. By June-July this year, we would be able to fast track this research findings and add more resources to undertake a lot more studies," Dr Ganesh Sambasivam, co-founder and chief scientific officer, Anthem Biosciences Pvt. Ltd. told Pharmabiz.

Anthem which is known for its DRAP (discovery research alliance partnership) strategy since its inception in 2008 bagged the emerging company of the year award at the Bangalore India Bio 2013 proving its mettle in drug discovery efforts and partnering research majors.

The company has also won a Department of Science & Technology (DST) award for its developed Genetox platform which is a novel 3 biosensor system. This is a cell-based assay and has been picked under the 50 top innovations technology awards after being recognised globally. For the development of the platform, Anthem collaborated with leading universities in US and Europe. We have also filed for a global patent, he added.

Genetox is a sensitive technology requiring minimal compounds and is high throughput enabled. It is extensively validated and identifies toxicity associated with metabolites, proving its economies-of-scale in time and cost.

On the green chemistry front, Anthem has teamed up with Cellworks Group Inc. which is a proteomics-driven therapy design company to devise unique platform technology to carry out bio-transformation in chiral intermediates. The platform will be beneficial to industries spanning from agro-chemicals to cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. The company is now working on its global patent application.

"The proof-of-concept study of the new technology allows us to screen samples to detect H1N1, SARS and H5N1 or bird flu. We would also like to partner with a suitable diagnostic kit companies which could use the platform technology. Therefore it is a promising space to be in terms of innovation. The patent grants, collaborations and licensing opportunities carve out a niche area and it is heartwarming to note that considerable novel research efforts is coming out from India," said Dr Sambasivam.

"The novel assay expression which will be a patented technology will bring in a paradigm shift in the biotechnology and enzymes field, said Ajay Bharadwaj, chief executive officer and founder, Anthem Biosciences.

Further, the company has also gone into expanding its research labs for DMPK (dermatopharmacokinetics) studies, increase its platform technologies to focus on chemistry and protein production. The new research block will also have a vivarium.

In the area of contract research manufacturing and research services the company generates its maximum revenues from the markets of US and Europe besides making significant headway in Japan.

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