



Anthem infuses ₹100 cr to get into bio-pharma products from its dedicated 2nd unit

Nandita Vijay, Bengaluru, Tuesday, March 19, 2013, 08:00 Hrs [IST]

Anthem Group has planned an investment of ₹100 crore to open its second production facility at the Harohalli Industrial Area in Bengaluru. The facility is coming up on a 15 acre area of the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB). The project was cleared by the Karnataka Udyog Mitra (KUM).

The company has raised the funds largely through debt and internal accruals. The environment clearance from the State Pollution Control Board is pending, said Ajay Bharadwaj, chief executive officer, Anthem Biosciences told Pharmabiz.

The five year-old Anthem, founded by Bharadwaj, Dr Sambasivan Ganesh, and Ravindra Chandrappa, has built up a solid presence in biology and chemistry synthesis. Currently, the ₹140 crore company focusing on contract research and manufacturing services (CRAMS) continues to be in the limelight in the regulated markets. From 2013-2014, it is gearing up to enter the production of bio-pharmaceuticals beginning with diabetic and nephrology formulations.

"We have been doing research and this is part of our backward integration business model. Since we have a sound know-how of biology and chemistry synthesis, shifting to large scale biopharma fermentation process is instinctive, said Bharadwaj.

The facility will focus on large scale production of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and biopharmaceuticals. On a broader canvas we looked at manufacture of brands as part of the risk mitigation strategy, he added.

Under the umbrella of Anthem Group is the Biosciences arm, which is its Discovery Research Alliance Partner (DRAP) that has enabled it to showcase our strengths in biology and chemistry platforms for quick high throughput screening and early stage discovery for customers. Its Cellutions arm, focuses only on bulk actives for enzymes, nutraceuticals, dietary supplements and food additives for which the company has been filing patents.

"This is an age of differentiated offerings by mature companies, as opposed to start ups in the CRAMS space. While we are ranked in the league of dependable CRAMS players in the country along with Syngene, GVK Biosciences, Sai Advantium, Jubilant Lifesciences and Chembiotek, there is every indication that India will not be opted for mere cost but high quality and, fast turnaround time-line deliveries. Moreover, contract research, manufacture services are cyclical in nature. We therefore need to focus and establish bio-pharma drug production as this segment is less vulnerable to global uncertainties. The growing life style diseases have seen the need for advanced formulations and scope for rapid growth of the bio-pharmaceuticals in India and emerging markets, pointed out Bharadwaj.

The company has a staff strength of 450 and expansions in research and manufacture will see it increase its headcount in the coming months, stated the Anthem Group chief.

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