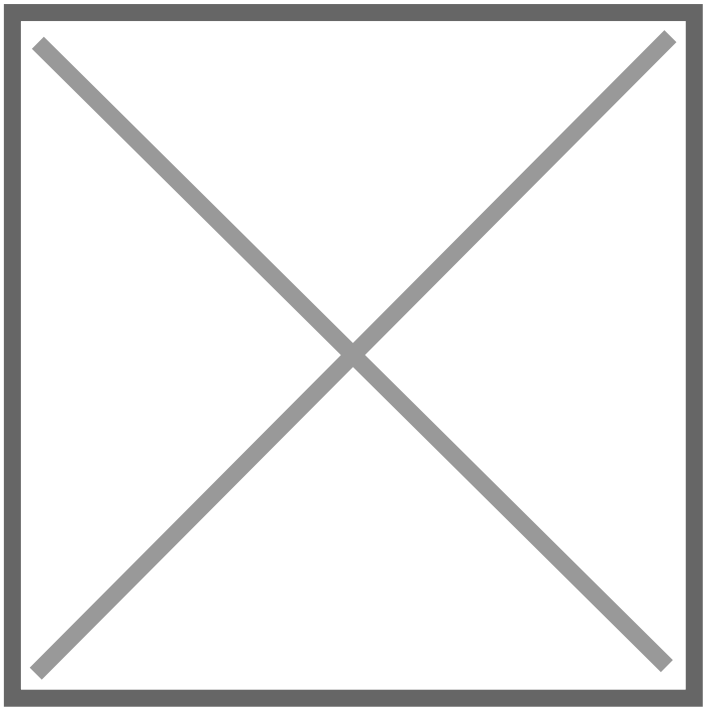
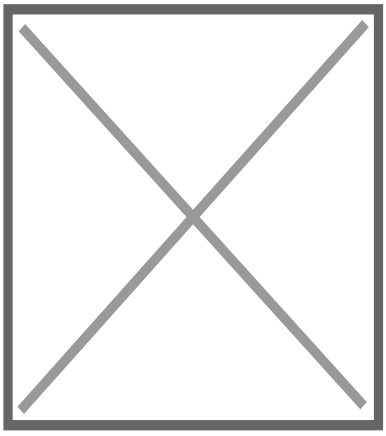
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"We also have a biotech initiative"

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"We also have a biotech initiative"



-Dr Rabinder Buttar, president and CEO, Clintec International

Clintec International, the UK based Contract Reseach Organization (CRO), is all set to foray into drug development and has announced plans to expand its Indian outfit in a major way. Located at Bangalore, the Indian arm of Clintec International will be developed into an important global center and serve as Asia's hub for its international operations. The company is focusing on India in a very big way and aims to bring many global projects to India. It plans to increase the head count in India from the existing 25 to about 100 employees in the near future. ClinTec India contributes about 25-30 percent of Clintec International's global revenues. The Bangalore arm of ClinTec will support and drive the work at ClinTec International's newly opened global clinical research Center of Excellence in Munich, Germany. Dr Rabinder Buttar, president and founder, Clintec International, shares the details.

What is Clintec's current global positioning?

We are just not a global CRO but we also have some biotech initiatives and an American biotechnology division within the company and unlike other CROs we cover many of the emerging companies of the world where no other global CRO is present. We cover the Middle East, North Africa, Central Africa and India as well.

The difference with Clintec is that we also have a biotech division, which will split off into a biotech company. The function of that part of the company is going into partnerships, taking drugs and New Chemical Entities (NCEs) to the global market place and also bring products from other countries like the US and Europe to the global market. We have already been successful in entering into a co-development with Dr Reddy's Laboratories some time back.

What are your contract services offerings?

We offer full services in clinical research. We can do the complete development, right from preclinical stage to clinical development. We advise and guide our clients through the whole development pathway. We guide them with the correct strategy, the trials and the regulatory hurdles. So we offer full consultancy and also do the actual projects, right from writing the pre-development plans to writing the protocols till the clinical trials anything from phase I to phase IV and clinical monitoring and clinical research in more than 35 countries. We have close links with hospitals in more than 35 countries so that we can work with precision.

We put the right protocols together and then our CROs across the globe do the actual clinical trials. We usually start of with the feasibility study and start the work. We also do all the regulatory applications and act on behalf of the pharma companies.

How challenging is the CRO business? What is Clintec doing to meet those challenges?

The CRO business is quite challenging and everyone has to do something different and Clintec has always been different. Clintec is an international organization which is much more flexible. We can do the whole project and we can even guide through any stage of the project when our clients gets stuck. Our flexibility is the key to our success. We can work on the whole development program. We can work on medical writing to data mangement.

Also, the organization is privately owned by myself and there are very few such organizations. In January 1997, we incorporated the company in the UK and we are one of the first clinical organizations in India, Romania, Bulgaria, Eastern and Central Europe and we are the leaders in the Middle East.

One of the most challenging jobs in the CRO is retaining the best staff. Clinical research needs very good researchers. We are facing a major hurdle in that area in India as the attrition rates have been very high. There is a dearth of good researchers. So we are also actively involved in training and have been doing corporate programs. As a result the attrition in Clintec globally is very very low and in India it is close to zero over the last year and that is quite amazing.

How large is Asia-Pacific business for Clintec?

At the moment it is not very large for us but I can see huge potential in Asia Pacific in the coming years. In fact with one of our major client, we have relocated our staff to that part of the world because they want to build a bigger base in Asia Pacific.

Though at the moment, our interest is high in India, we are looking at being one of the pioneers in China. We are actively seeking partnerships and we have been evaluating and talking with some partners to become a very strong force in Asia.

We are considering to tap the Japanese market. We have a large pool of talent who too has worked with Japanese companies. They are very much well versed with the Japanese management. So if there is a Japanese company which requires an European CRO for its clinical trials, we will support it.

Can you elaborate on Clintec's investments in Asia Pacific?

Investments are still going on as we have expanded our operations and we are yet to get major returns on that. We have been spending a lot on training. The training comes from from organizations like ICR, ICRP and European Medical Writing Association which costs us more than an annual salary of an employee. We have substantially increased our training and development budget.

What are some of your future plans?

Apart from the Munich global clinical center of excellence, which focuses on clinical research, we have another new center in Glasgow in Scotland, which focuses on corporate functions and the third controlling center is in Bangalore, India.

The Scottish government has been backing us. We have received a Â£1.534 million grant from the Scottish government to create 230 jobs by the next year. I have also been awarded the Entrepreneur of the Year on November 29, 2007 by the Scottish Deputy Minister and the Minister of Health. So we are really prepared for a strong growth ahead.

Apart from CRO business, are you also looking at diversifying into other areas?

We are looking at biotechnology particularly developing new cancer drugs. You may also be aware of our partnership with Dr Reddy's in developing New Chemical Entities (NCEs). We are also in discussions with several other companies for bringing those to our biotech venture that will also be launched later this year. We are actively developing our biotechnology portfolio and we expect to be a major player in future. In three to five years we may also be looking for an IPO.

Jahanara Parveen

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