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"Tailor-Made" Solutions Will Better Support Biopharma Manufacturing

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The challenges of the bioprocess supply chain during the COVID-19 pandemic have given many new players with opportunities for growth. Now, these suppliers are no longer limited to the local market and have started actively exploring a broader market.



Among them, India stands out as an important emerging bio-pharmaceutical market. The bio-pharmaceutical industry here has experienced rapid growth in recent years, attracting the attention of an increasing number of bio-processing suppliers. These suppliers believe that India is key to supporting sustainable business growth. Duoning is one such bioprocessing supplier. One year after officially announcing its entry into the Indian market, BioSpectrum Editorial spoke with Leo Xie, Senior Vice President of Duoning Biotechnology Group, to learn about the company's current operations in India and its future plans.

How do you perceive the market space for life science service companies in India?

India's pharmaceutical industry is developing rapidly and has strong policy support. India has a vast demographic dividend and significant unmet medical needs. The Indian healthcare industry has expanded rapidly in recent years and is expected to surpass $500 billion by 2025. At the same time, the local government has been actively promoting the development of the pharmaceutical industry, which includes establishing funds to produce pharmaceutical ingredients domestically. As the pharmaceutical industry develops, the country is emerging as a high-potential market for life sciences services. This is backed by strong government support, rising private investments, and a growing trend of outsourcing to emerging Asian markets.

Improving efficiency and reducing financial stress are the primary objectives for the development of local biopharmaceutical companies. The Indian pharmaceutical industry accounts for a substantial share of the global pharmaceutical industry, and it is projected that pharmaceutical exports will reach $30 billion by 2025. Biopharmaceutical startups often face financial challenges due to the unique nature of their products. They require extensive research and development, as well as rigorous trials, to bring products to market. Therefore, increasing the efficiency of biopharmaceutical development and reducing development costs have become essential requirements.

The biopharmaceutical manufacturing industry has become a key driver of development. As the pharmaceutical industry continues to evolve, ensuring the integrity and efficiency of the supply chain is critical. Key areas of the Indian pharmaceutical industry are experiencing continued growth, including the expansion of physical and manufacturing capabilities, enhancement of cold chain and packaging capabilities, improvement of process capabilities, and increased investments in research and development (R&D), among others. This provides opportunities for life science service companies to enter the Indian market.

How does Duoning fulfill market demands, and what business progress has it made this year?

Duoning is dedicated to providing comprehensive bioprocessing solutions and assisting customers in establishing a seamless connection between all stages of bio-pharmaceutical development. This is achieved through solutions that encompass both the upstream and downstream processes. At the same time, biotechnology is a highly regulated industry, and internationally unified quality standards also enable us to serve the global market. The interconnected process flow from Duoning can reduce data errors in bio-pharmaceutical validation and better align the development needs of bio-pharmaceuticals at each stage. This, in turn, reduces development costs and improves efficiency.

In 2023, we expanded our product line and production capacity even further. Through the acquisition of Prefluid, a specialized supplier in the development and production of peristaltic pumps, we have expanded our product portfolio in fluid management and added a manufacturing site spanning approximately 10,000 square meters. Moreover, we anticipate that our new manufacturing site for bioreactors and fluid management systems will be completed and operational in the first quarter of 2024. At present, Duoning has 12 sites that cover a wide range of products, including cell culture media, bioreactors, filters, chromatography resins, single-use technologies, peristaltic pumps, and other process-related products. These facilities are capable of meeting the demands of mainstream bio-pharmaceutical production, including antibodies, mRNA, cell and gene therapies, and ADCs.

What are Duoning's plans for the Indian and other Asian markets?

The uniqueness of the Indian market lies in the burgeoning bio-similar industry, which necessitates large-scale production. Therefore, we will focus more on direct sales of biotechnology products and expand our coverage to include South and Southeast Asian countries, with India as a hub. In addition, considering India's diverse pharmaceutical manufacturing market, we will also provide technical services to offer customized product portfolios.

For other Asian countries, Duoning will rely more on economic cooperation policies among nations. This can help us overcome regional barriers more effectively and establish a network to distribute our products or even build new facilities to produce products locally.

In fact, India and several other Asian countries are expected to emerge as significant players in the global bio-pharmaceutical market. The current substantial investment in bio-manufacturing infrastructure in these regions will be a

crucial factor contributing to the high growth potential of these markets. We hope to seize this opportunity and be a part of it.

What challenges do you expect life science services companies to encounter when expanding into the Indian market?

For the biopharmaceutical supply side, there are primarily market and policy challenges. For biopharmaceutical manufacturers, the quality of products provided by suppliers is always the primary consideration, followed by stable supply chain and cost factors. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided small suppliers and those from emerging markets with an opportunity to expand. However, as the market recovers, it remains uncertain whether these suppliers can sustain their success against mainstream suppliers. This is true for many markets worldwide, including the Indian market. Therefore, in the future, we will focus more on product quality and technological innovation. While ensuring a faster and more stable supply chain, we will also listen to the genuine needs of our customers and provide "tailor-made" products to better support biopharmaceutical manufacturing.