

'The distribution hub will help Invitrogen grow faster'

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INTERVIEW
Mr Devashish Ohri,
MD,
Life Technologies,
South Asia

Life Technologies, a global biotechnology company that operates as Invitrogen Bioservices in India, launched a regional distribution hub in the country during July to address the strong customer demand of the South Asian region. The new India distribution center (IDC), located in Bangalore, will boost the availability, timely delivery and quality of Life Technologies' products in

The India distribution center, spread across an area of 25,000 square feet, adopts a hub-and-spoke model, with Bangalore as the regional hub for product distribution throughout India. Since its inception, Life Technologies' volume of items shipped per day in the region has increased four-fold, and order fulfillment time, which was up to 50 percent faster in most cases.

Life Technologies, which commenced operations in 2005 from Bangalore, India, acquired a part of Labindia, a long-time distributor for its Applied Biosystems-branded instrument products. The firm has become a full service business that offers end-to-end solutions in areas such as research,

diagnostics and forensics.

In an interview with *BioSpectrum*, Mr Devashish Ohri, managing director of Life Technologies, South Asia, shares his plans and speaks about the opportunities in India and South Asia of the company. Excerpts from the interview:

Q How much investment has Life Technologies made in setting up the IDC in Bangalore? What is its USP?

Life Technologies has invested around \$3 million to open a new distribution hub in Bangalore. The IDC will help us in accelerating delivery and in shaping discovery in India by creating localized solutions, like product and technology availability, ensuring faster turnaround time in product delivery, creating best-in-the-class facility, and also help make available a wide

range of products and specialized technology in India. We are also committed to understanding the groups of customers that we serve and their exact needs.

Q With the growth of the scientific community in India and the opening of the IDC, how do you see the growth of Life Technologies in India and South Asia?

With the IDC, we're fulfilling our commitment of accelerating scientific exploration by researchers and shaping discovery. We'll be able to provide customers with the products they need within 24 hours to 48 hours. This timing better suits the dynamic needs of our customers. This important milestone will definitely help us to accelerate science in the country and will help Invitrogen grow faster than the existing market growth rate. This exciting growth curve will also be supported by an extensive sales, scientific support and service network of Life Technologies.

Q What are the other initiatives taken to serve customers in the South Asia?

We are committed to the growth of India's biotechnology sector. The IDC is one of the strategic investments in this direction. Apart from this initiative, we're also involved in R&D in specialty areas, like stem cells and bioinformatics; manufacturing capabilities for cellular analysis products; technical and customer support team to support global markets; and best-in-the-class demonstration labs where customer can work on a wide range of technologies and equipment to get hands-on experience.

Q Pricing is a key factor in South Asia. How do you address this issue to increase customer base?

We understand the importance of quality products and optimal pricing for customers. We are working on pricing models that are dynamic in nature and are able to incorporate local pricing needs to reach the middle and the bottom of the pyramid for value-conscious customers. The IDC initiative will definitely help to address this issue to a certain extent.

Q In a country like India, which has a vast geography, networking and distribution are important. How has the acquisition of Labindia in 2010 helped?

Life Technologies was created by the combination of Invitrogen Corporation and Applied Biosystems and, as you already know, Life Technologies operates in India as Invitrogen BioServices India, a 100 percent subsidiary company, to leverage our systems, consumables and services; and to enable researchers accelerate scientific exploration, driving discoveries and developments that make life better. We have offices located in Gurgaon, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore and we have a strong distributor chain and commercial team of about 100 people. This helps us to cater to the vast geography and meet different customer needs.

Please elaborate on your India R&D center.

Life Technologies' winning formula relies on its integrated state-of-the-art lab facility in Bangalore, where the R&D is focused on development of proprietary technologies in immunology and stem cell. The manufacturing division is tailored for production of the products developed on site for global usage. The vision for India is to build a center of excellence focused on innovation and quality with the goal of improving human conditions.

Q What are the other major challenges before suppliers in India and South Asia?

We have a customer-centric business model coupled with reliable and innovative brand value, strategic leadership, strong service delivery, a dedicated workforce and a global presence.

The major challenges from a supplier's perspective remain regulatory issues, the dynamic nature of science, evolving applied markets, and matching business process standards vis-à-vis developed markets, like in the US and Europe.

— Narayan Kulkarni