

Eisai expands India presence

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Eisai, a pharma major from Japan, has given a thrust to their India operations by setting up a manufacturing and process research base in India. The company has made a total investment of nearly Rs 232 crore (\$50 million) on this 50-acre campus located at the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Unlike its Japanese counterparts, Eisai, a pharma major from Japan has set-up a facility in India rather than acquiring an Indian market leader. By setting up a manufacturing and process research base in the country, Eisai, has given a thrust to its India operations. The facility known as the Eisai Knowledge Center, is located at the SEZ at Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

The company has made a total investment of about Rs 232 crore (\$50 million) on this 50-acre campus. The facility, which is scheduled to start full-scale operations by September 2010, will be Eisai's first base to integrate active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), formulation manufacturing and API process research on one site.

According to Sanjit Singh Lamba, president, Eisai Pharmatechnology and Manufacturing, India, this facility would emerge as

the global hub for R&D, formulations and API manufacturing. The center is aimed at stimulating the knowledge creation between the researchers and the production team.

Future global hub

The Eisai Knowledge Center was built to create a future global hub capable of ensuring a stable supply of high quality pharmaceutical products and achieving innovation in API synthesis processes. With this facility, the company's API production will be integrated with the Kashima plant, Eisai's another manufacturing plant in Japan.

The facility in Visakhapatnam employs over 100 people, including 20 research scientists. The company is planning to double its manpower in a year's time. The formulation facility has a capacity to produce two billion tablets annually and the API section has an annual capacity of 30 tonnes.

This facility is the fourth knowledge-based center of Eisai worldwide. The other centers are located at Japan, UK and the US. This is the only API facility of Eisai outside Japan, which is meant for global pharmaceutical market. The company is expecting approval for this setup from various regulatory bodies by the end of 2010.

"Initially, we would use the facility to manufacture two of our blockbuster products — Aricept and Myonal. We are also exploring the option of shifting four other products from the facility in Japan to the Indian facility," says Deepak Naik, managing director, Eisai Pharmaceuticals, Mumbai.

The Alzheimer's drug, Aricept, contributes nearly Rs 14,800 crore (\$3.2 billion) to the total revenue of the company, globally. The drug will go off patent in 2012. According to Naik, the company would work on additional indications for Aricept to add value on it in order to take on competition from generic players.

The company has plans to expand the existing facility to accommodate newer products and it will also build a new 50-acre facility by next quarter, but the location is yet to be decided.

Brings global standards to India

Headquartered in Tokyo, Eisai is a research-based human healthcare company that discovers, develops and markets pharmaceutical products throughout the world. Eisai focuses on three therapeutic areas: integrative neuroscience, oncology, and vascular/ immunological reaction. The company has production facilities in Japan, the UK, the US, China, Taiwan and Indonesia. Its R&D facilities are in Japan, the UK and the US, with over 10,000 employees worldwide.

Eisai has a marketing presence in India since 2004 through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Eisai Pharmaceuticals in Mumbai. The company's pipeline is affluent with eight to 10 new chemical entities in different stages of development. The company also has six monoclonal antibodies in the pipeline, which is in phase II of development. The Eisai team in India will now become a part of the global development process, thereby, bringing Japanese quality standards to India.

The company, which spends 19 percent of its revenues on research and development, would export 51 percent of its production from this facility located at Visakhapatnam to other countries.

Eisai is shifting its focus to oncology and critical care, where there are several unmet medical needs. The last three major acquisitions the company executed, throw light on this. In October 2006, it acquired four anti-cancer products from the US-based Ligand Pharmaceuticals, while in April 2007, it acquired US-based bioventure, Morphotek, that has proprietary human antibody technologies. The acquisition of another US firm, MGI Pharma, in January 2008 added key products such as Aloxi, an anti-emetic agent and Dacogen, a DNA hypomethylating agent to the company's pipeline.

Ajeesh Anand in Visakhapatnam