

Syngene

www.syngeneintl.com

Syngene

Syngene's integration calculus

Syngene, a subsidiary of Biocron Ltd, India's largest biotech company, has grown from 7 scientists in 1994 to more than 1250 employees spread across over a million square feet of infrastructure in 10 acres of area at Biocron Park, Bangalore and is generating revenues of more than \$50 million.

Pharmaceutical and biotech companies needing to cut their research and development costs without compromising on quality need to look no further than Syngene International. "Our stated mission is to be the preferred CRO for the pharma and biotech industries by providing high quality and timely delivered services coupled with Indian cost advantages," noted Dr Goutam Das Syngene's Chief Operating Officer.

"We intend to do become a global leader in custom research & manufacturing by creating value, identifying opportunities, developing a fully integrated service pipeline and delivering quality," added Dr Das. So far, Syngene's client list reads like a Who's Who of the global pharma and biotech world.

A testament to the quality and depth of the relationships the company has so far developed with the international pharma industry is the joint R&D facility with Bristol-Myers Squibb Co that Syngene opened in Bangalore in March 2009.

"Our joint R&D facility will advance Bristol-Myers' work in discovery and early drug development from initial hit to phase I and phase II clinical studies. The facility will tap into the integrated drug discovery and development capabilities in medical chemistry, biology, drug metabolism and pharmaceutical research that we have at Syngene," explained Dr Goutam Das.

Since the company's creation in 1994, Syngene has emerged as a fully integrated contract research and manufacturing organization with multidisciplinary skills in chemistry and biology services covering all areas from early drug discovery and process development through to completion of Phase I/II clinical trials, at Clinigene Intl Ltd, Syngene's Bangalore-based sister company.

While many of the collaborations with international pharma and biotech companies Syngene has in place are competitively-priced fee-based projects, Dr Das is now looking to establish more risk and reward-sharing relationships with international partners. Indeed, in collaboration with the Swedish biotech Creative Antibiotics AB, formerly known as Innate Pharmaceuticals AB, Syngene chemists are working on a small molecule designed to treat diarrheal diseases through a proof-of-concept Phase II trial.

"Creative Antibiotics identified the first set of hit molecules, sent it to us and together we have developed lead optimization, assays and even suitable animal models. The development costs are shared and we already have various scenarios laid out for making it a successful business case," explained Dr Das.

Some of Syngene's international partners, including Bristol-Myers Squibb, now consider the company to a virtual extension of their own R&D activities. Indeed, writing in the MerckSerono in-house R&D magazine, Dr Agnes Bombrun, Head Chemistry in Geneva, Switzerland noted how successful Syngene chemists were at making compounds and libraries based on MerckSerono chemists' ideas and intuition, especially when coming up with two compounds that were subsequently identified as very potent antagonists in one MerckSerono's programs. "They're much more than just the main service provider for chemistry in Geneva. They've become an integrated extension of our labs," added Bombrun.

Significantly, this R&D work is provided by Syngene at a much lower cost than how much it would be if conducted in Western Europe and the U.S. without compromising quality. "We are much less expensive. I think having us do the work would be 30% to 40% of what it might cost in Europe. Other places, such as companies in Eastern Europe, might also be able to offer low cost services but they will not have the track record for delivery. Quality, speed and cost are important. We do things that would be highly credible anywhere else," Dr Das added.

Syngene has invested more than \$100 million in its facilities and has more than one million square feet of working space, of which half is devoted to chemistry and biology alone.

"We have 150 people in biology; our animal research facility was recently accredited by the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC). We have a cGMP pilot plant for chemistry and biologics as well as GLP analytical facilities. We can provide customised services to pharma and biotech majors, on a strong platform of confidentiality and intellectual property protection," added, Dr. Das.

Indeed, Syngene is able to offer a range of key molecular biology services including gene cloning and heterologous expression in various prokaryotic and eukaryotic host systems including mammalian cells, downstream processing and purification of recombinant proteins, screening of libraries to isolate novel genes and metabolic pathways, site-directed mutagenesis of proteins and patch clamp studies. Syngene also runs projects on monoclonal antibody developments and offers a full suite of bioanalytical studies for novel biologics.

Syngene is also offering a suite of sophisticated chemistry, process development, including hazard analysis, and scale-up from gram to kilograms of material. The company's small molecule team designs the synthesis of complex organic molecules; the combichem team provides custom-synthesised chemical building blocks for combinatorial libraries, while the custom synthesis unit is making sophisticated molecules for some of the world's top laboratories and companies. Syngene has recently opened its Formulation Development Center to further integrate and expand the discovery services.

In some cases, Syngene has partnered with other companies to be able to provide a fully integrated drug discovery and development service. Earlier this year, Syngene partnered with Sapient Discovery LLC, a San Diego, California-based company, to offer third parties structure-based drug discovery services. Sapient is providing its Genes-to-Leads, Fragments-to-Leads, and X-ray crystallography technologies for structure-based discovery and optimization to complement Syngene's chemistry and biology services. "The integration of these technologies will provide dramatic reductions in the time and costs associated with compound synthesis and screening and eventually will bring the much desired value addition to our clients in their discovery efforts" added, Dr. Das.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Mr. Narendra Kumar
Head – Syngene Corporate Business
Development
narendra.kumar@syngeneintl.com

Biocron Park, Plot 2 & 3
Bommasandra Industrial Estate – Phase-IV
Bommasandra-Jigani Link Road
Bangalore 560 099
India
Tel: +91 80 2808 2808
Fax: +91 80 2808 3150