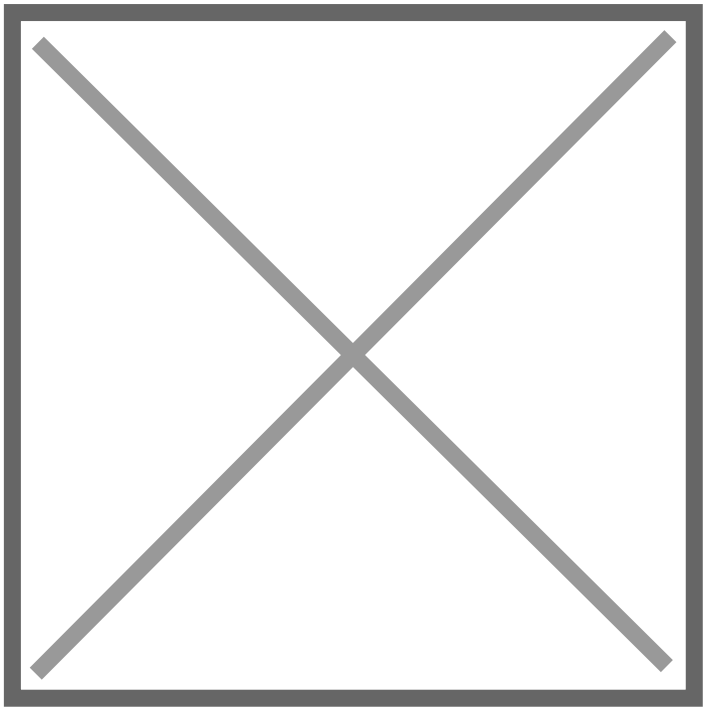
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Bullish on Asia-Pacific

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Dr Chetan Tamhankar
CEO, SIRO Clinpharm



Looking at the growing preference of global biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies towards the Asia-Pacific region for clinical trials, SIRO Clinpharm is leaving no stone unturned in order to tap into this high growth region

One of India's leading CRO, SIRO Clinpharm, had a global strategy to set foot in the European and Asian markets. Over the past 12 years, it has effectively followed the game plan. Both these markets made strategic sense to the company's overall business model because of the large number of pharma biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies situated in these regions. In addition, apart from targeting the traditional regulated markets like the US and the West-European markets, SIRO differentiated itself from the other Indian CROs by choosing to tap the unexplored regions of the East-European countries which offered the same advantages as India. Says Dr Chetan Tamhankar, CEO, SIRO Clinpharm, "In 2008, SIRO entered European clinical trials market through an acquisition of a mid-sized European CRO with a presence in several countries in Europe. At present, we have operational capabilities in 21 countries in Europe. In Asia, SIRO has operational capabilities in India."

Global Mantra

Presently, SIRO's strategy is to aggressively expand in both, Europe and Asia. Recently, it has launched operations in Malaysia. Adds Dr Tamhankar, "We have operational presence in 10 more countries in Europe through alliances or freelancers. The year 2011 will also see SIRO strengthening its field force presence in the US." SIRO has operational presence through its clinical monitors in India, Malaysia, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Poland, Russia, Greece, Spain, Romania, Czech Republic, Estonia and Lithuania.

Currently, global biopharma companies are increasingly looking at conducting large multi-center, multi-geographic trials in order to quickly get their products in the global market. In such a scenario, SIRO is looking at leveraging its international footprint into these countries to effectively conduct trials. Moreover, these regions have a ready pool of highly skilled clinical research associates, data managers, biostatisticians, statistical programmers. But having a direct base there, SIRO will also have access to GCP-trained investigators.

SIRO is bullish about the Asia-Pacific region. "We have seen that the number of clinical trials being conducted in Asia has skyrocketed in recent years. According to data (from clinicaltrials.gov) the number of clinical trials being conducted in Asia grew 67% between the years 2007-09. Also, many global biopharma companies rate India and China as top two destinations for outsourcing based on market potential and cost saving opportunities," adds Dr Tamhankar.

Future
With the aim to serve clients better and to be close to the market, SIRO will be rolling out a phased expansion plan. The main focus of the expansion would be in countries of Asia-Pacific and Eastern Europe, while in the medium term the expansion plan includes North America. In addition, its presence in Asia will be further augmented by the launch of operations in the Philippines and Thailand, later this year.

Operational presence of the company in Europe will get a significant boost with a scheduled roll out in vital markets like the UK and Russia. SIRO will further penetrate into Europe by establishing operations in Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain. Aggressive expansion plan also includes forging new alliances in the Balkans, Scandinavia and Turkey. At the end of this expansion, SIRO will have an operational presence in over 30 countries.

Nayantara Som in Mumbai