

Ambition: Cutting-edge biotech products

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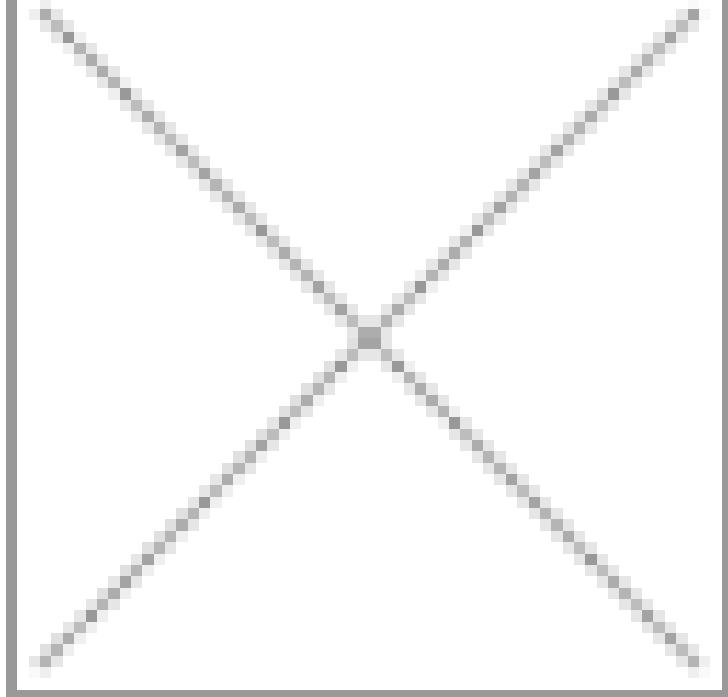


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Premas Biotech, located in sprawling 20,000 sq. ft., is a 100 percent FDI, cGMP compliant, contract research and manufacturing services

'PREMAS' is the acronym for "Production of Recombinant Molecules for Advancement of Science". The company has been offering services in contract research in cloning, expression and purification, cell

It has a client base that includes major Indian and foreign drug firms such as Cipla, UCB, Cell Tech, AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Galderma,

Premas is also a part of the \$38 million (Rs 173 crore) Open Source Drug Discovery (OSDD) program initiated by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in 2008 to facilitate collaborations and

combined efforts to find cure to many diseases including TB.

The company has 45 employees, of whom 55 percent are postgraduates and doctorate degree holders. Its revenues last year were Rs 33 crore, of which Rs 25 crore came from Illumina business and the rest from the CRAMS and drug metabolizing enzymes (DMEs).

Initial hiccups

The company was founded in May 2005 and was incorporated in November 2005, however, it took about 16 months to setup the laboratories in Manesar in Haryana. It was in May 2004 that the five founders of the company-Avijit Das, CEO; Dr Rajeev

Soni, President and COO; N Kousik, VP Finance and HR; Dr Prabuddha K Kundu, Head of Manufacturing; Praveen Gupta, Head, P&A Unit-came up with the idea of starting a company but investor interest in India was bleak and the founders searched for funding options in Europe. Once the money came in, it was an easy job for the founders to build a state-of-the-art laboratory in molecular biology and biotechnology. They also filed provisional patents for applied research technologies such as diagnostic technology for infectious diseases and proprietary vectors for protein expression in bacteria, yeast and mammalian cells.

â€œPeople here have problems in understanding the life sciences business model and the returns are expected overnight at par with IT, which is unimaginable in case of biotech industry. Earlier, there were very few who venture out into biogenerics in life sciences field. We knocked on every big door for one-and-a-half year to get investments but unfortunately none believed in our project,â€? says Dr Rajeev Soni, President and COO, Premas Biotech.

â€œFor us, 2007 was the year of commercial success. In March 2007, we started the fully-equipped functional labs and in May 2007, we received the first CR project and then again in the same month proprietary DNA isolation technique was developed,â€? adds Dr Soni.

Strategies for growth

Premas has implemented the E-Lab Notebook and Scientific Database Management System (SDMS) that aids its customers to view their experimental data via security-controlled web access, coupled with 21 CFR Part 11 compliance, which is of fundamental importance for data submission. Electronic Laboratory Notebooks record what was done during the course of a scientific experiment, and particularly the inventions that were made for future reference.

The company has also been following a unique approach towards reducing wastage in labs. To minimize wastages, one person is trained in doing one key repeatable activity, thus saving time and minimizing human error in order to increase reproducibility to a greater extent. Adopting this technique has allowed the company to reduce the delivery time of proteins from 18 weeks to four weeks plus maximum delivery of about 70 proteins per year.

Aiming high for future

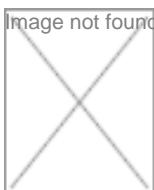
Premas wants to work with the government and is open to any partnership that can help this niche sector to expand its horizons.

On being asked about the aspirations of Premas for future, Dr Soni, says, â€œAs far as finances are concerned, we have reached the neutral stage of financial success and we aim to develop at least five-to-six new technologies from India within next five years.â€?

â€œWe want to make the niche, cutting-edge biotech products from India and that is the aspiration of Premas Biotech for the near future. And the research minds at Premas are working to create the novel products relevant to industry in coming years,â€? concludes Dr Soni.

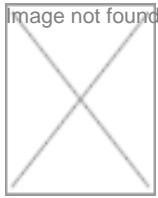
Major milestones of Premas Biotech

- Incorporation in November 2005
- Became India's first EOU for services and manufacturing at single site in July 2006
- Constructed a 20,000 sq. ft. fully-equipped functional labs in April 2007
- Got the molecular diagnostics breakthrough in the form of a novel nucleic acid detection technology in 2008



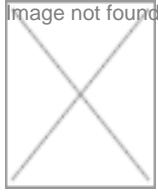
"We aspire to be a partner of choice in providing the integrated drug discovery solutions"

- **Dr Rajeev Soni**, president & COO, Premas Biotech.



"We demonstrated and distinguished ourselves as a capable scientific player in protein expression and purification market by cloning the toughest classes of proteins and also coming out with the innovative solutions to contract research problems"

- **Mr Praveen Gupta**, VP-business development, Premas Biotech



"Premas business strategy aims at gaining efficiency and enabling faster delivery with multi-fold increase in capacity"

- **Dr Prabuddha Kundu**, VP, Manufacturing, Premas Biotech

Rahul Koul in New Delhi