

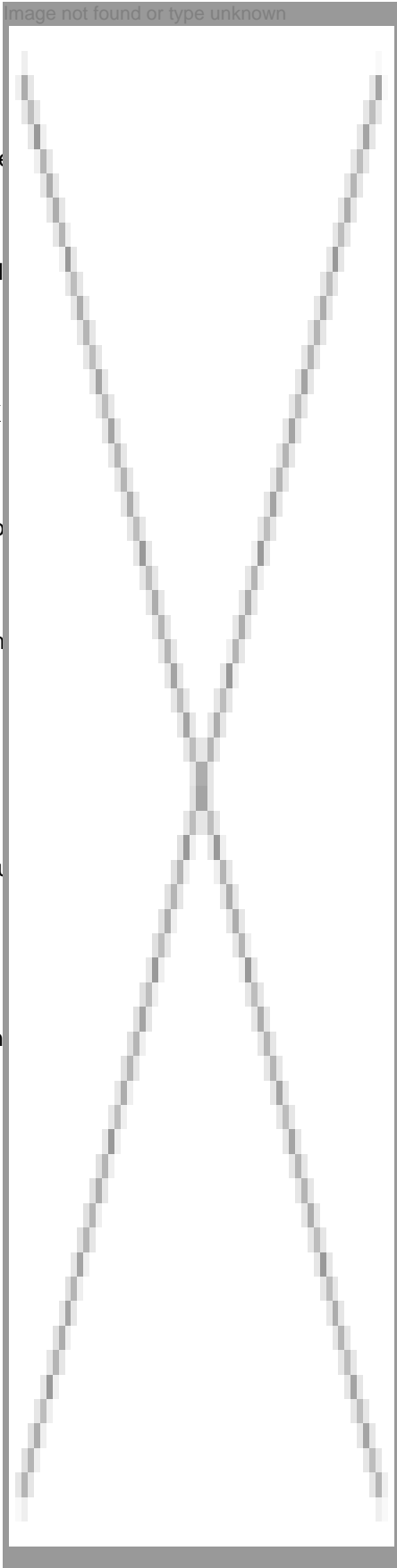
Shantha marches ahead with new launches

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Shantha Biotechnics' commitment to breaking new ground in modern biotechnology to address critical healthcare needs of the developing world was further consolidated in 2008-09.



Shantha Biotechnics, which is part of the Merieux Alliance Group, logged an estimated Rs 250 crore turnover during fiscal year 2008-09 up from Rs 150 crore the previous year. A pioneer in the field of biotechnology, Shantha Biotechnics is the first Indian company to develop, manufacture and market a recombinant human

Shantha is currently focusing its R&D efforts on the development of generic biologicals, novel therapeutic antibodies, proteins and vaccines. The company conducts exploratory research in the fields of oncology, infectious diseases and

Shantha Biotechnics has recently launched the oral cholera vaccine, Shanchol. "The company has spent about Rs 4.72 crore to set up facilities. Initially 50 lakh doses are planned. It is the first among more than a dozen vaccine projects which has reached commercial scale, supported by the Bill Gates Foundation," stated Dr. Varaprasad Reddy, Chairman of Shantha.

"The vaccine would be priced at Rs 300 a dose. It would be commercially available in the country from June 2009. The only other WHO approved oral cholera vaccine available is Dukoral, a Swedish vaccine, which costs about Rs 1,885 and is difficult to use in a rural setting," Dr. Varaprasad Reddy added.

Shantha Biotechnics has got enquiries from Bangladesh and Zimbabwe for the supply of bivalent oral cholera vaccine. Supplies are to be routed through the Gates Foundation. The WHO prequalification would be obtained in a couple of

Shanvac-B is the first Indian hepatitis-B vaccine to be pre-qualified by WHO, Geneva, for supplying to the UN agencies globally. Today, Shantha caters to major international markets including Asia Pacific, Africa, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Latin America in addition to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Shantha has also obtained WHO pre-qualification for its combination vaccine of DPT+ hepatitis-B vaccine, Shantetra, enabling supplies to the UN agencies. The company is also producing monoclonal antibodies and pegylated proteins.

French healthcare company, Merieux Alliance, has about 60 percent stake in Shantha Biotechnics. Merieux bought the stake from Oman-based financial firms, which had invested in Shantha a few years ago. This alliance favors synergies in terms of research and clinical development between the group companies. Shantha Biotechnics also has access to the support provided by Merieux Alliances

The contract research work undertaken so far has been in the areas of gene cloning, monoclonal antibody development, expression and purification of recombinant proteins by fermentation, fermentation and purification process optimization, development of polyclonal antibodies, development of WCB and MCB and analytical methods.