

“The shift towards cleanroom garments & pharma manufacturing uniform is not merely a trend, but a calculated movement towards a responsible pharma sector”

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Finland-based Lindström, a leading global provider of workwear, cleanroom workwear, and mat services, is making significant strides in its expansion efforts, particularly in key markets such as India, China, Vietnam, and Turkey. These expansions are strategically aimed at serving a diverse range of industries, including biopharma, pharmaceuticals, and the food sector. In a recent interview with BioSpectrum, Manas Kumar, Global Director Pharma & Director Strategic Marketing and Business Development- APAC at Lindström Oy, sheds light on the company's ambitious growth plans and its commitment to sustainability.

Lindström has recently opened a larger cleanroom facility in Hyderabad. How do you plan to increase your presence in the Indian workwear services market with respect to the pharma and healthcare industry?

We're thrilled about our leadership in workwear and cleanroom services, especially in Hyderabad, India's bustling pharma hub. Our recent moves, like opening our second top-notch cleanroom facility and relocating to a bigger, modern workwear spot in Telangana, show just how committed we are to this vibrant region. It's all part of our big plans to solidify our place as forerunner in the global textile services sector. We're talking about investing in cutting-edge facilities and expanding our capacity to meet the growing needs of industries like biopharma, pharma, and more.

Our new facility is a significant milestone in our growth journey. Doubling our workwear capacity in Telangana means we're ready to tackle the rising demand for top-quality workwear in the biopharma and pharma sectors.

Speaking of numbers, we've got 11 workwear and 2 cleanroom units across India, managing a whopping 2.5 million garments in circulation thanks to our amazing team of over 900 employees. This feeds into our global portfolio of 21 million textiles, showcasing our extensive reach and capabilities in 24 countries across Europe and Asia.

But it's not just about the numbers or the facilities; it's about delivering exceptional services and tailored solutions to our clients in biopharma and pharma. Our Cleanroom Service journey in India started in Pune in 2017, and since then, we've been partnering with big names in the bio pharmaceutical world across Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and even Himachal Pradesh.

We're all about keeping things hygienic, compliant, and efficient, which is why our focus on regulatory standards, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction drives our success in these critical industries. Our latest facility in Hyderabad is equipped with top-notch cleanroom tech, perfect for industries like biotech and pharma where precision is key. Our focus on maintaining stringent hygiene and compliance standards, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction continues to drive our success in these critical industries.

Could you share some details about your expansion plans in the Asian market?

Lindström has solidified its position as a market leader in providing cleanroom services to pharmaceutical companies in both India and China, recognising the pivotal role these nations play as the pharmacy of the world. This commitment underscores our dedication to delivering compliant services and sustainable solutions in the rapidly growing pharmaceutical industry.

In China, Lindström's recent expansion includes the inauguration of a new state-of-the-art facility in Tianjin, the fourth Cleanroom service centre added to our existing locations in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. These centres are strategically placed to meet the evolving needs of industries requiring cleanroom solutions, particularly in the pharmaceuticals and semiconductor industry.

The increasing demand for sustainable workwear solutions that adhere to international hygiene and regulatory standards is a key driver in China, reflecting the commitment of both domestic and international companies to ambitious sustainability goals.

Beyond China and India, Lindström's expansion efforts also extend to South Korea. In 2023, we opened a state-of-the-art compliant workwear unit in Pyeongtaek, doubling our production capacity to cater to the diverse needs of customers across industries such as pharmaceuticals, food processing, and electronics. This expansion demonstrates our ongoing commitment to providing top-notch solutions and services to clients across Asia and beyond.

How is Lindström investing in technology to provide critical workwear services to the pharma industry in Asia?

Asia's pharmaceutical market, representing roughly a fifth of the global industry, is a dynamic landscape with distinct demands in India and China. India focuses on generics and cost-efficient solutions, while China's emphasis is on high-value biotech and biosimilars with stringent requirements. In this competitive environment, outsourcing services have become crucial, allowing pharma companies to concentrate on innovation and core functions.

Traditionally, many companies managed laundry in-house, but today's pharmaceutical facilities often exclude laundry facilities from their designs. This shift reflects the industry's evolving focus on core activity and outsourcing non core to improve efficiency and compliance. Garments are as vital as raw materials in the manufacturing process; any interruption can halt operations. Compliance and data integrity are paramount concerns for companies considering outsourcing, given the industry's strict regulations.

We leverage smart digital technology to provide comprehensive item-level audit trails. Our RFID-tagged garments enable precise tracking of usage and wash-wear cycles, ensuring compliance and data accuracy. This technology-driven approach aligns with the industry's evolving needs, optimising efficiency and transparency throughout the garment lifecycle. Beyond workwear, Lindström offers rental services for reusable goggles and mops tailored to cleanroom requirements. Our use of RFID technology enhances traceability, monitoring each item's journey from laundering to usage for optimal cleanliness and efficiency.

How is Lindström setting its sustainability goals?

As we journey into 2024 and beyond, the dialogue surrounding pharmaceutical gowning is experiencing a significant transformation, with a strong emphasis on reusability and recycling. We recognise the pivotal role that sustainable practices play in aiding the pharmaceutical industry's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint. By prioritising reusability and recycling in pharmaceutical gowning, we can significantly minimise waste and environmental impact.

Our sustainability objectives are deeply rooted in our commitment to environmental stewardship, resource efficiency, and ongoing innovation. We have set ambitious targets aligned with global climate goals, aiming to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 across our entire value chain. This commitment drives us to increase the utilisation of recycled and bio-based materials in our textiles, transition to sustainable energy sources in our service centres, and adopt eco-friendly alternatives in customer deliveries.

A key strategy in our sustainability approach is the promotion of circular economy principles. This entails designing garments for durability, implementing efficient laundering processes, and spearheading recycling initiatives. By prioritising longevity and reducing the need for frequent replacements, we contribute to a more sustainable supply chain and lessen environmental impact.

Our smart digital solutions, including RFID tagging and item-level audit trails, play a pivotal role in enhancing sustainability. These technologies not only optimise operational efficiency but also enable precise garment management, minimising waste and ensuring responsible resource utilisation.

Collaboration and partnerships are fundamental to our sustainability journey. We actively engage with our customers to implement environmentally conscious practices, such as optimised garment usage and efficient laundering schedules, fostering a culture of sustainability throughout the value chain.

In essence, Lindström is dedicated to leading the way in sustainable pharmaceutical workwear by integrating eco-friendly materials, efficient processes, and innovative technologies. Our vision is to create a more sustainable and resilient future for the pharmaceutical industry, where environmental responsibility and operational excellence are interconnected pillars of success. The shift towards a more eco-conscious approach to cleanroom garments and pharmaceutical manufacturing uniform is not merely a trend, it's a calculated movement towards a greener, more responsible pharmaceutical sector.

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