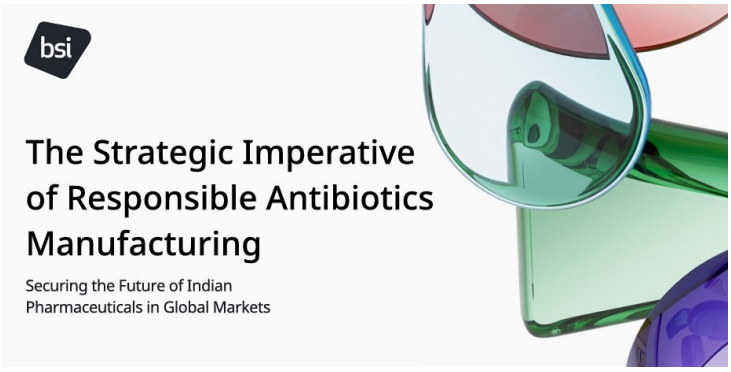
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Strategic imperative of responsible antibiotics manufacturing for Indian Pharma: BSI Group report

27 July 2026 | News

Emerging AMR standards should not be viewed as barriers to trade but as filters



India's pharmaceutical industry stands at a pivotal moment. Having established itself as the "Pharmacy of the World," the sector now faces a shift in global expectations, where environmental stewardship and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) management are becoming as important as quality, cost, and manufacturing scale. According to British Standards Institution (BSI Group)'s latest whitepaper, responsible antibiotic manufacturing is evolving from a sustainability initiative into a strategic business imperative that will increasingly determine market access, commercial competitiveness, and long-term growth.

Market Access Will Depend on Responsible Manufacturing

The whitepaper argues that global healthcare systems, particularly in the UK and Europe, are moving away from procurement models based solely on the lowest price towards value-based procurement that incorporates environmental performance into purchasing decisions. This transition reflects growing recognition that antibiotic manufacturing practices have direct implications for public health through their contribution to AMR. As a result, manufacturers that can demonstrate responsible production practices will be better positioned to access high-value regulated markets.

India's Opportunity and Responsibility

For India, the challenge is especially significant. While the country supplies approximately 20% of the world's generic medicines by volume, 40% of generic demand in the United States, and around 25% of medicines used by the UK's NHS, it also carries one of the world's highest AMR burdens. Environmental discharge of antibiotic residues from manufacturing facilities creates selective pressure that accelerates the emergence of drug-resistant bacteria, making responsible manufacturing not only an environmental responsibility but also a business necessity.

Certification as a Competitive Differentiator

The whitepaper identifies certification against internationally recognised AMR standards, particularly the BSI Kitemark for Minimized Risk of AMR, as a key differentiator for Indian manufacturers. In the UK, certification is becoming a prerequisite for participation in NHS antimicrobial procurement programmes, while Nordic countries have integrated environmental criteria into pharmaceutical tenders, allowing certified manufacturers to compete on value rather than price alone. This fundamentally changes the industry's competitive landscape by rewarding responsible manufacturing with improved market access and stronger commercial positioning.

Building Future-Ready Manufacturing

To prepare for this shift, Indian pharmaceutical companies begin by evaluating their export portfolios and identifying products exposed to evolving UK and European procurement requirements. Manufacturers should conduct internal maturity assessments, undertake gap analyses, and engage early in certification readiness rather than waiting for procurement requirements to become mandatory.

Operationally, the report calls for a closer integration of environmental, health and safety (EHS) functions with commercial strategy. Environmental performance can no longer be treated as a compliance function operating independently from business development. Instead, investments in advanced wastewater treatment, Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) systems, and manufacturing processes designed to minimise antibiotic discharge should be viewed as strategic investments that enhance competitiveness and unlock premium market opportunities. Embedding these capabilities into new facilities from the design stage can also reduce long-term costs while future-proofing operations against tightening regulatory expectations.

Repositioning India as a High-Value Manufacturing Hub

Beyond compliance, the whitepaper encourages Indian pharmaceutical companies to reposition themselves globally. Rather than competing primarily on low-cost manufacturing, the industry has an opportunity to differentiate itself through responsible production, transparency, and environmental leadership. Companies are encouraged to communicate these credentials to customers, procurement agencies, investors, and other stakeholders as evidence of reduced regulatory risk, stronger governance, and long-term sustainability.

Looking Ahead

In conclusion, the emerging AMR standards should not be viewed as barriers to trade but as filters that favour manufacturers able to demonstrate responsible practices. For India's pharmaceutical industry, embracing responsible antibiotic manufacturing offers a pathway to secure high-value global contracts, strengthen brand reputation, protect public health, and reinforce the country's leadership as the world's trusted pharmaceutical manufacturing hub.