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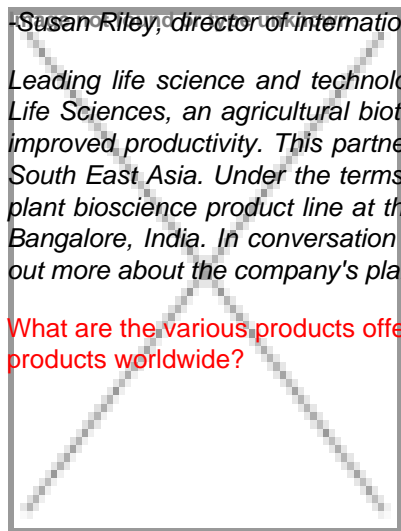


"India seems primed and ready for a biotechnology growth phase"

Susan Riley, director of international business development, Sigma-Aldrich

Leading life science and technology company Sigma-Aldrich recently announced a partnership with India-based Metahelix Life Sciences, an agricultural biotechnology company focused on developing traits and technologies for crop protection and improved productivity. This partnership will bolster the range of applications for Sigma-Aldrich's plant bioscience products in South East Asia. Under the terms of the agreement, Metahelix will assist in developing applications data for Sigma-Aldrich's plant bioscience product line at the Sigma-Aldrich Center for Plant Bioscience, which will be housed at Metahelix's facility in Bangalore, India. In conversation with Susan Riley, director of international business development at Sigma-Aldrich, we find out more about the company's plans ...

What are the various products offered by Sigma Aldrich for the biotech industry? What have been the most revenue grossing products worldwide?



Our research biotech business unit supports life science researchers in pharmaceutical, biotechnology, academic, clinical research and government institutions. We provide high-value and innovative tools, solutions and services that enable scientists worldwide to do their work in every phase of the life science workflow. Some of the Primary products include: gene silencing technology, DNA extraction/amplification tools, knowledge-based research tools, protein purification tools and highly characterized human antibodies

How big is your global biotech business and how much of it is derived from the Asia-Pacific region?

Global sales for Biotech in 2007 were \$299 million and we are on target to exceed growth goals of 10 percent while the market grows at only 4-5 percent. Our CAPLA region, of which India is a part, has been growing at more than twice those rates.

How do you see the life sciences market in India as compared to the more developed markets?

We currently see the biotechnology sector in India as fairly nascent but certainly recognize the growth potential. There is a continuum of life science research and in that hierarchy India seems primed and ready for a biotechnology growth phase. This is one of the reasons we have focused so much on infrastructure in India, making sure we had industry leading service levels (which requires superior logistics) and qualified local personnel to support the increasingly sophisticated customer base.

When was the manufacturing facility set up in India and how has your business grown since then?

The Bangalore SIAL facility was completed in August of 2006 and this facility has contributed significantly to our growth in the region. It is a state-of the art facility and one that both our employees and customers can be proud of. And we are already considering an expansion.

You recently partnered with Metahelix Life Sciences for developing applications data for Sigma-Aldrich's plant bioscience product line.

As these and other faster-growing markets develop, we plan to continue to leverage our global reach and establish partnerships with companies that complement our business model and provide the support needed for the developing markets. Metahelix is an example of a company that has expertise in an area we have interest in, does not compete with our business model, and was willing to provide the support we desired. And if a company like Metahelix can benefit in the process by having access to the latest technology and support, it makes sense for all.

Are you looking forward to any future investment in the country?

At this point Metahelix is a prototype relationship for us but if such partnerships continue to add value we would be very motivated to see additional partnerships in India or any of the developing markets. The key to this successful relationship is indeed the specialized nature of the Metahelix team.

How many sales centers does the company have in India?

We have 10 sales offices in India, four customs-bonded warehouses, four administrative offices, and one manufacturing facility. Our growth plan for this infrastructure is proportional to the growth in the Indian market and we continue to make future oriented investments.

Shalini Gupta