

Intas Bio eyes European market

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Leveraging on its European Union's GMP (EU-GMP) certification, Intas Biopharmaceuticals Limited (IBPL) will soon start clinical trials of its Filgrastim brand Neukine in Europe. The company has also scheduled its clinical trials of Erythropoietin and Interferon Alpha in the European market next year.

The certification gives strong advantage to IBPL as the company is looking to strengthen its presence in Europe through alliances and exploring opportunities of clinical trials in the region. The process of clinical trials is mandatory and a pre-requisite for the company to develop the products

and market them in Europe.

On the Research & Development (R&D) front, IBPL has significant presence in North America with agreements and MoU with three technology companies. The company, in January 2007, committed Rs 13 crore towards conducting clinical trials and produce Factor IX, a drug used for treatment of Haemophilia-B, through novel transgenic platform. Thereafter, IBPL inked MoU with Canada-based Viropro Inc. for an undisclosed molecule and signed an agreement with US-based Virionics for co-development of HPV therapeutic vaccine.

Besides North America, Europe is a crucial market for the company. Speaking on the development, Dharmajay Patankar, Chief Technical Officer and Head (R&D), IBPL,

said, "We are looking for newer opportunities in the regulated markets after receiving the EU-GMP certification."

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In Europe, the certification allows simplification of norms and procedures for product registration by significantly reducing the time required by the company to get the product registra-

tion. Moreover, Europe is an ideal market for IBPL to serve the goal of developing innovative research technologies and new molecules related to biopharmaceuticals; evaluate technology platforms; identify partnership opportunities, in-licensable IP's, and to build up Novel Drug Delivery System.

The company plans to spend Rs 10 crore a year on R&D, Patankar, said. "The target is to produce one product every year." Neukine was the first drug introduced by IBPL in India after which Erythropoietin and Interferon Alpha in the domestic market and a few international markets.

Filgrastim is a class of drugs known as growth factors; it promotes the growth of white blood cells, which

help to fight infections. Filgrastim also is used to increase white blood cell counts in adults with myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) and to treat low white blood cell counts in adults with acute myeloid leukaemia who have received chemotherapy.

Filgrastim has been used to increase white blood cell counts in people who have cancer, follow chemotherapy and take medications that lower white blood cell counts. While, Erythropoietin, a glycoprotein hormone produced by kidneys, is used in treating anaemia, resulting from chronic renal failure, Interferon Alpha, a natural protein produced by the immune system cells, are useful in fighting RNA virus infection, and is especially useful for Hepatitis B and C.