

Avesthagen eyes expansion with over Rs 200 cr investment plan

Avesthagen Ltd, a systems biology platform company focusing on convergence of food, pharma and population genetics, is looking at phase II and phase III expansion plans with an estimated investment of over Rs 200 crore in the next three to five years in Andhra Pradesh, subject to availability of right sites and government clearances. The company hopes to combine IP and product development for long-term sustainable revenue generation with collaborative research programmes.

"We have invested heavily on RandD in the last seven years and now we have a full basket of products for commercialisation from systems biology which are predictive, preventive and personalised healthcare," Viloo Morawala Patell, founder and MD, said during the sidelines of the BioAsia 2009 conference. Avesthagen has so far invested about Rs 40 crore in its Hyderabad operations. It has a nine-acre campus in the SP Biotech Park.

Under its bioNutrition programme, the company has developed the commercial production of DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and will soon start a 50,000 litre fermentation facility at the SP Biotech Park, Hyderabad. For starters, DHA is required in high levels in the brain and retina as a physiologically-essential nutrient to provide for optimal neuronal functioning and visual acuity.

The project cost works to about Rs 40 crore. The company had started work on DHA project as part of the new millennium Indian technology leadership initiative (NMITLI) programme funded by the government of India which has eventually resulted in AvestaDHA proprietary technology.

Meanwhile, the company has also finalised setting of a modern ultra wheat crackers plant which is a vector matrix for clinically-validated plant bioactives like Teestar, Bonaphyte and Smartchol and these bioactives are claimed to be sophisticated preventive healthcare for diabetes, bone health and weight management.

Through its subsidiary, Atash Seeds, with its processing unit fully functional for 800 tonne of maize processing, also plans to expand its field activities by setting up a biosafety facility to test its droughtfit rice, high oil jatropha and self glycogenic pearl millet materials.

Under biopharmaceuticals, a substantial pipeline of biosimilars is being developed in partnership with national and international partners. The group focuses on pathway engineering and development of novel expression systems, development of product-specific bioassays and design of novel animal component free production.

The company has invested in scale-up, manufacturing and supply of commercial scale material and proposes development of biosimilars in a 50-acre state-of-the-art biopharma park in the Genome Valley of AP with an investment of Rs 150 crore.

