

## Emcure Signs Deal to Manufacture Roche's Anti-Cancer Drugs

DIVYA RAJAGOPAL  
MUMBAI

Swiss drug major Roche, which is often at logger heads with Indian generic drugmakers over patent rights, has made a shift in its strategy by signing a manufacturing contract with Emcure Pharma for its blockbuster biologics drugs Herceptin and MabThera. This is the first time that an Indian drug maker has got a biologic drug manufacturing contract. Herceptin and MabThera are anti cancer drugs.

"This deal will equip Emcure to manufacture products which are sophisticated Monoclonal Antibodies. We look at this project as Emcure's first project with Roche," said Mukund Ranade, director, Emcure Pharmaceuticals.

"Depending on the success of the same, we hope cooperation would become broad based," he said. Biologics drugs are highly complicated molecules and require sophisticated manufacturing capabilities.

Emcure will manufacture these drugs for Indian market and depending on the success of this drug it will be taken to other developing countries. Roche is the only company that sells Herceptin and there is no generic substitute for this drug.

These drugs, which are currently under process development, are expected to hit the market by 2013. Emcure though has not revealed if it is a mere contract manufacturing or a voluntary licence deal.

Analysts said this development is interesting because Roche has historically stayed away from striking such deals in India. Instead, it has taken Indian generic makers to court for violation of Intellectual Property Rights, rather than signing any voluntary license deals.



"This deal with Emcure is a smart move by Roche, with this it can deter the entry of other generic companies, and also offer affordable drugs for a country like India," said Anjan Sen, director, life sciences and health-care, Deloitte India.

Roche has been under pressure from various health activists and the government for reducing the price of Herceptin, which costs ₹1 lakh for a single dosage in India. Since the drug is patented, there is no generic substitute making it only available drug for breast cancer patients. This pressure has forced the drug major enter into a contract with a local company, which might lead to fall in prices, said analysts. Big pharma companies across the world have come under pressure to reduce their prices on life saving drugs like cancer and HIV Aids.

"Companies like Roche are facing massive dual pricing pressure, and these deals are a way forward towards addressing those issues," said an analyst from a consulting firm who has advised Roche in its India strategy.

In the past Emcure had signed licensing deals with US-based biopharma giant Gilead Life Sciences for drugs such as Tenofovir and with Johnson and Johnson for Darunvir, both of which are anti-HIV drugs.

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