BioSpectrum the business of Bio & Health Sciences ASIA EDITION

Challenge No 8: Partnership problems

May 17, 2012 | Analysis | By BioSpectrum Bureau

Partnerships can be tricky for life sciences businesses in APAC

Finding the perfect partners in the supply chain, marketing channels and co-development collaborations to ensure maximum speed and growth of product development, finding the best partner for every activity locally in a small country such as Singapore and fledgling relationships between universities and academic institutions with the biotech industry are few issues before the industry.

"Geographical remoteness can be a negative factor in the minds of potential partners in the West who may succumb to an unintentional 'out of sight, out of mind' attitude," says Dr Deborah Rathjen of Bionomics, Australia. "However, advances in communications technology have broken down some of these barriers. A global manager is now an expectation in Australian biotechnology companies."

Dr Noel Moore of HistoIndex points out the flip side of being in a small state like Singapore. "One often struggles to find the best partner locally for every activity. There is an emotional hurdle that must be overcome and the company management must realize that partners need not always be local. This is especially true if your product is cutting-edge where local skills may not match. However, there should be an awareness that working with remote partners can put a strain on your resources and deadlines and introduce cross-cultural issues and exchange rate risks. For us, we found the optimal partners outside our home base and dedicated the resources to manage and drive those relationships. In the end, this actually saved us time and money and resulted in a better product development cycle," he says. Considering the above facts, there needs to be better cooperation between the academia and the industry at the local level and also outside the country.

"Our main challenge is to find the right partners to take our compounds further into clinical trials. One can regulate the costs in the pre-clinical development of drugs. In the clinic, however, controlling costs become difficult. That is why we are looking for partners. We need to have creative partnerships. Also government funding is another interesting aspect that we might look into for trials. In a drug discovery company, the last word is when the research is translated into a product, " says Dr Suri Venkatchalam CEO, Connexios Life Sciences, India (Read about all 10 challenges for businesses in APAC).

Dr Anna Lavelle of AusBiotech says there is a need to bridge the gap between research and commercialization among the biosciences companies and to "educate these companies to become export-ready much before their development cycle starts to establish links with global markets".

Previous challenge
Next challengeÃ?Â